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# COMMUNITY GROUPS

## RIVERS CROSSING CHURCH

Community Group Discussion Guide

January 21, 2024

CHANGE Week #3 / Change Our Church

Pastor Andy Ziegenfuss (All Church)

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Questions | Tell us about yourself...
  - Would you rather flip a coin for the chance to win \$100 or immediately win \$50?
  - What's an interesting thing you can see out of your office or kitchen window?
  - What are one or two things you're looking forward to in 2024?
2. What are you looking forward to about being in a Community Group this Winter? If this is your first experience with a group at Rivers Crossing, what led you to join?

### 3. Rivers Crossing 21 Day Fast | Discussion Questions

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, Rivers Crossing began our annual churchwide time of fasting and prayer. Use the following questions to engage with the fast as a Community Group.

- How are you participating in the 21 Day Fast? If you're participating, how has your experience been so far? Have you been able to connect with God in a fresh way?
- Are there specific things, whether personal or churchwide, you're praying for?
- Do you have any questions about fasting or why Christians engage in fasting?

We've curated some incredible resources – Fasting and Prayer Guides and a 21 Day Devotional – to support and equip you during the 21 Day Fast. Those can all be found using the following link: <https://riverscrossing.com/21days>

**Matthew 9:14-15 (NLT)** – <sup>14</sup>One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him, “Why don’t your disciples fast like we do and the Pharisees do?” <sup>15</sup>Jesus replied, “Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

“Fasting is when we hunger for God—for a fresh encounter with God, for God to answer a prayer, for God to save someone, for God to work powerfully in our church, for God to guide or protect us—more than we hunger for the food God made us to live on.”

- Pastor John Piper

## DIVING DEEPER

4. Pastor Andy's primary preaching text was Acts 2:42-47. Read this passage together as a group before discussing the corresponding questions.

**Acts 2:42-47 (ESV)** – <sup>42</sup>And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup>And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup>And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup>And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

- a) What stands out to you most about this picture of the first-century church?

b) Pastor Andy highlighted four attributes of the early church:

- They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching
- They emphasized the importance of fellowship
- They enjoyed the breaking of bread together
- They faithfully practiced the habit of prayer

In what way(s) have you experienced these attributes at Rivers Crossing and/or in your Community Group? If your group is new, how can these attributes serve as a vision for how to operate as a group?

c) Which of these characteristics would you love to experience more of, whether in this group or in Rivers Crossing at large? If you're willing, share about why.

5. As we join a local church and partner with others to carry out its mission, we can experience a tension between our individual identity and our collective identity. Pastor Andy spoke about this tension when he said the following:

"We define ourselves often by what we've accomplished whether that be marketplace success, material acquisition, or even relational status, a good family. What makes you unique? You are special. You are distinctive. While in one sense, this is good. God has made each one of us unique and different in his eyes. We all have a purpose that is specific to us. But when it comes to participating in the local church, there shouldn't be anything that would prevent you and I from collaborating and working together to achieve a common purpose. It's as if our uniqueness takes a back seat in lieu of partnership and collaboration within the mission of the local church."

Is this a tension you've experienced as part of a church, be it Rivers Crossing or another church? If you're willing, share about that.

## TAKING IT HOME

6. Pastor Andy shared that if we're not careful, we can lose sight of Jesus as we gather and operate as the local church. Consider this quote from Pastor Andy...

"Some of us have been moving all the joysticks of church and the Christian life and trying to live the right way and do the right things and the cross of Christ has lost its power in our lives. You probably never decided to ignore Jesus, but somewhere along the way you forgot about him. Maybe some of you today need to stop moving everything around and [say], 'Jesus, I want you at the center of my life. Nothing else, no one else, just you.'"

Read Pastor Andy's words again. If they resonate with you and/or bring about a feeling of conviction, share about that if you're willing. How can you move toward keeping Jesus as the center of your life?

7. Prayer Prompt | How can your Community Group pray for you and your family?

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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## RIVERS CROSSING - THINGS TO KNOW

1. Unity Night | Join us for Unity Night of worship, where churches across Cincinnati will come together to worship Jesus together. We'll be gathering at Vineyard Cincinnati Church on February 4th at 6pm. We can't wait to worship with you!  
Vineyard Cincinnati Address | 11340 Century Cir E, Springdale, OH 45246
2. Baby Dedication | Have you welcomed a new baby to your family over the last year? Congratulations! We're excited to celebrate your child at Baby Dedication on March 9th. The Baby Dedication experience will teach you how to lead your child in their faith, show you ways that Rivers Crossing will partner with you on this journey, and give you the opportunity to dedicate your child. Learn more and register below.  
<https://riverscrossing.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/1978441>
3. Serve at Rivers Crossing | One of the marks of a fully engaged follower is their willingness to invest into God's kingdom with their time, talents, and resources. We have opportunities to serve all throughout the week! Find the team that's the right fit for you and partner with us to create an environment for people to become fully engaged followers of Jesus. Learn more at <https://riverscrossing.com/serve-here/>



# COMMUNITY GROUPS

## MISSION AND VISION

### Groups Mission:

To provide people an opportunity to experience loving community as they pursue being a fully engaged follower of Christ.

### Community Groups Vision:

To gather together regularly to share, study the Bible, and support one another. Community Groups are sermon-based, meaning they study a set of Bible passages and questions connected to the previous weekend's sermon.

### Healthy Community Groups:

Community Groups are designed so that we can love and care for one another and put God's Word into action – all in pursuit of experiencing and living the extraordinary life. As you lead, keep the following in mind for evaluating the health of your group:

- **ENGAGE:** Groups are only successful when people invest their time and energy to genuinely engage the process by attending regularly, being honest, and developing relationship with other group members. This takes time, but it's worth it. | *Acts 2:42-27, Colossians 3:12-17*
- **ENCOURAGE:** One of the primary roles your group will play is in encouraging one another forward in your individual walks with Christ. This includes supporting one another through the messiness and trials of life.
  - *Hebrews 10: 23-25*
- **EQUIP:** Regularly encountering God's Word through the sermon, group discussion, and personal study will, over time, equip each group member to be a more fully engaged follower of Jesus. As this information permeates the heart, the Holy Spirit will provide application and personal growth.
  - *2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 14:25-26*
- **EMPOWER:** As your group meets, you will see some people naturally begin to exhibit spiritual gifts including leadership, shepherding, and hospitality. Be on the lookout for these developments. Empower these individuals to step into larger roles within the group, to consider leading or hosting their own group, or to serve where led. | *Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 3:10-14*
- **EXPAND:** As each member of your group begins to invest in their "8 to 15," it's natural for your group to add new members and to connect others into groups ministry. | *John 13:34-35*