

A Guide

On



Care-Group Ministry

In Glory Presbyterian Church

English Service

2004

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1. What is a Care Group?

- A Care Group is simply a small group of Christians meeting together apart from the main functions of the church for the principal purpose of caring for one another in the body of Christ.
- But the caring of one another is built upon the foundation of prayers, the earnest study of the Word, and through serving and evangelising together.
- Any member who is not in any of the care groups will still be included in our overall care program. A care coordinator will keep in touch with that member. It is hoped that everyone in church will be cared for under this Care Group structure.

2. Why do We Need Care Groups?

How many members are **PRAYING** for you regularly?

How many members can be **AAVAILABLE** in times of need or celebration? How many members can you turn to with ease and confidence?

How many can you **CONTACT** monthly?

How many know you well enough to see you as an **EXAMPLE**, not as a perfect Christian, but as one who loves the Lord, and His people?

(Questions taken from Melvin J. Steinbron, "The Lay Driven Church")

If we ask ourselves or **P A C E** ourselves with these questions, and our answers are more negative than positive, then it is an urgent indication that you will need to be in a care group for your needs to be met.

As a church grows in size, it becomes more and more difficult for its worshippers to maintain close relationships with one another and to be cared for. By dividing ourselves into small groups, we stand a better chance of being personally cared for.

Here are some Bible teachings that point to Care Groups as the best approach for caring for members of the church.

A. The "One Another" Principle

Rom 12:10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

Gal 5:15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

Gal 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Eph 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Eph 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

1Th 5:11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Heb 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

There are more than 50 such "one another" verses in the New Testament. These verses strongly point to the need to practise a greater dynamic of relationship comprising not just one-to-one exchanges, but a multiple of relationships in a close-knit situation. In order to do that, the church will have to be very proactive to provide the opportunity for members to exhibit this "one another" lifestyle. Care Groups are known to be the best platform for members to learn this "one another" behaviour.

B. The Body Life Principle

1 Cor 12:12-15 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.

The body operates on the basis of "parts": the parts referred to give clear indication that the body organises itself and functions according to each individual grouping or part. For example, the arm consists of fingers, palm, wrist, upper and lower arm basically. Each part is important for the proper functioning of the whole arm. No part can exclude themselves (note v.15) from the body...everyone is included. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.

The lessons are twofold here. Firstly, the best approach for caring for each member is to recognise the different parts operating in the church, or to view the church as a grouping system. Secondly, we have to care for each and every one; and no one should be excluded.

C. Jethro's Principle

Exodus 18:13-26 The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge,

while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?"

Jethro, upon noticing Moses' predicament about meeting the people's needs, advised Moses, "*But select capable men from all the people--men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.*"

It is clear that just as Moses needed to take the lead and to organize the people into groupings, so the church must take the lead...***it is a divine responsibility to care for the sheep by searching for the best organizational approach.*** Thus far, churches all over the world have discovered that the cell-group or care-group system is one of the excellent ways forward.

It is clear that the result will be positive for the life of the church as a whole if believers can willingly participate in the full organizational system of care groups.

D. Jesus' Method

Not many of us realise, but Jesus himself had a grouping system to care for people.

- *So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. Mark 6:40,41*
- *But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. Luke 9:14,15*

- Jesus also sometimes taught in small group: sometimes he would pull the 12 disciples aside just to teach them.

The point is that a grouping system provides the best approach for caring for our people. Jesus initiated the system, and the disciples only had to implement it. We only need to apply the logical mathematical division to organise the caring needs of our members.

E. The Early Church Model

As seen in Acts 2:36-42:

AC 2:36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

AC 2:37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

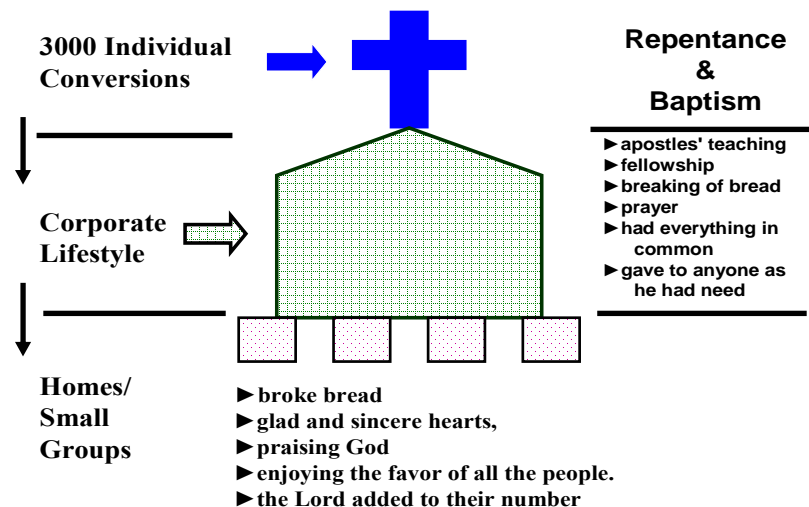
AC 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

AC 2:40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

AC 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising

God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Growth of Believers: Conversion to Community Life



Observe that the fundamental force that drove the dynamic church life of the early NT times is the genuine repentance of the people when they were pierced in their hearts after having been convinced of their sins. Repentance is not just turning from an individual life of sins to an individual new life in Christ, but it is turning from an individual life of sins to a **community life** in Christ! True conversion flows into corporate worship and thence into the activities of small home groups.

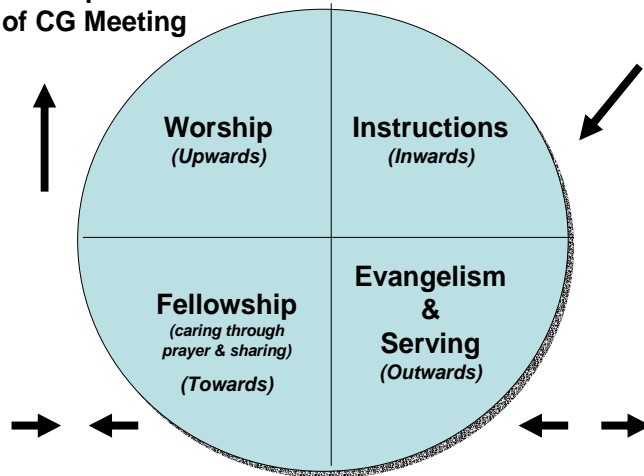
Those who are church members, having expressed their true repentance through baptism, are expected to follow through

their demonstration of real faith by being involved from the corporate level down to the level of care groups.

3. What does a Care Group do?

Care Groups (ideally 10 persons in size) meet regularly to have 4 key activities:

4 Components of CG Meeting



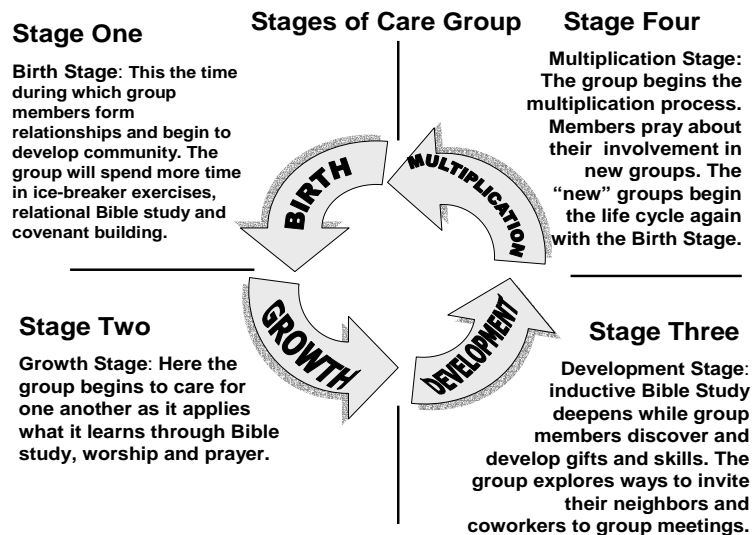
Worship: A care group can begin its gathering with songs of praise and worship to God. This should take not more than 15 minutes. Group members may rotate members to lead so as to give each a chance to serve and to learn to take responsibility for the group.

Instruction: This is the main component of a care group meeting. The group should determine its own Bible Study needs and will get its own materials for Bible discussion. Occasionally, care groups should conduct discussion on a common theme chosen by the church. Instruction of the Word should take a minimum of three quarters of an hour to no more than one and a half hours.

Fellowship: This is an important part of the gathering as it gives members an opportunity to share their own needs and to pray for one another. The group may also pray for the church's needs. This component should take about minimum of about 20 minutes to half an hour. Groups may divide into smaller units, e.g. ladies and men praying separately, to allow for variations of praying together. Those not conversant with group praying should be grouped with those who are.

Evangelism & Serving: The outcome of a progressive group that has developed a good relationship amongst its members through the three components above is the desire to venture out boldly together into doing projects that fulfil the goal of evangelism and serving. The group could go on mission trips together, usher at an event or join Boys' Brigade or Girls' Brigade. The first three components represent the meeting of the inner needs of the group, while the last one represents its maturity through the giving of time, effort and/or finance, to help external parties. Eventually the group must seek to add more people into its own group for growth.

4. How does a Care Group Progress?



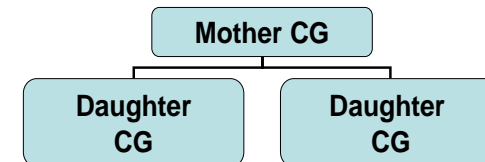
Taken from Serendipity Curriculum

Care Groups are expected to go through the 4 stages of life together as a group. When it reaches the 4th stage and especially when it reaches a size of 20, it is desirable that it multiplies into 2 groups. It must also be noted that the word, “multiply”, is used instead of the word, “split”, as “split” has negative connotations.

5. In What Ways can Care Groups Multiply?

Care Group can choose from any of the 3 basic models of multiplication.

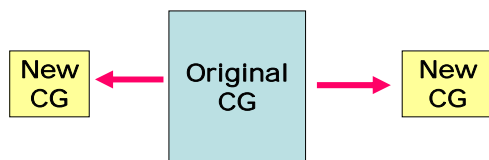
Mother-Daughter Model



Note:

- Can be 2 or 3 CGs (including Mother CG)
- Mother CG will supervise Daughter CG/s
- All CGs may meet at same location but separate BS grps, but sharing together in worship and/or serving

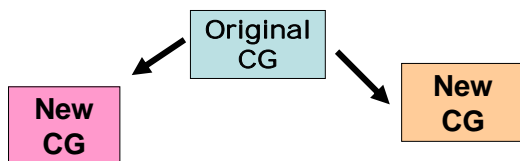
Sister-Sister Model



Note:

- 2 new CGs with separate identities
- Occasional combined activities
- Maintain relationships
- Need 2 able coordinators
- CG must have certain level of maturity

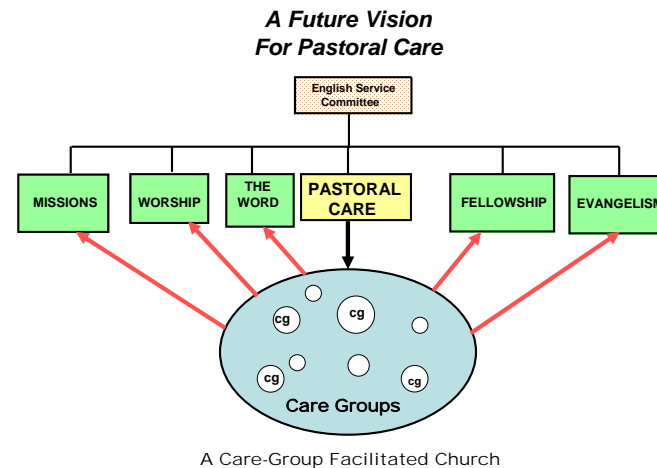
Paul-Barnabas Model



Note:

- 2 new CGs with totally different identities
- No link or relationship with one another
- Need 2 able coordinators
- CG must be mature

6. How do Care Groups Relate to Other Ministries of the Church?



Care Groups will become teams of members who will become the manpower resource for each department of ministry in the church. A care group, as mentioned in the 4th component previously, can go on mission trips together, or serve as an ushering team for Sunday Worship.

7. Who are Those Who Lead Care Groups?

Those who lead care groups are called **care-group coordinators**. Here are some basic conditions for becoming a care-group coordinator:

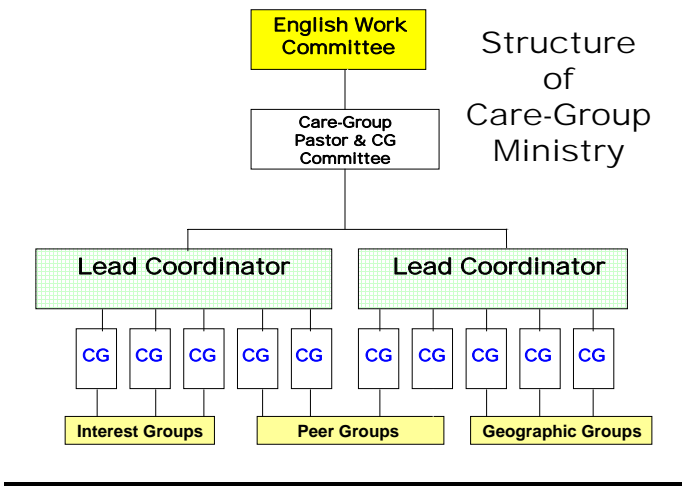
- Coordinators must be baptized members of the church.
- Coordinators will coordinate meetings and caring activities of the group.

- c. Coordinators must be willing to be trained and meet regularly with the care-group committee for feedback.
- d. Coordinators should have the basic desire to care for people.

Other Specific Role of Care Coordinators

- To pray and mobilise prayer support among own care group members for members who need intercession
- To advise members who have critical needs on the appropriate measure to take, or to make referral to church leaders on crucial matters
- To encourage members in their spiritual disciplines

8. What is the Envisioned Leadership Structure of Care Groups?



The structure above is derived from Jethro’s advice to Moses.

The role of Lead Coordinators may be taken by Elders or Deacons or any key persons qualified by the Care-Group Committee. The present need is to concentrate on establishing care groups with volunteers to lead each care group. The roles of the Lead Coordinators are to monitor, supervise, advise, visit and even help to teach no more than 5 care groups.

Care groups can be formed from people who share common interests (Interest Groups), or from people who are peers (Peer Groups), or from people who stay in the same location (Geographic Groups).

9. What if a Person Cannot Join the Regular Care Group Meetings?

As stated earlier, any member who does not wish to be in a care group will still come under our care and a care coordinator will be in touch with the member. Care coordinators will keep in touch with such persons through regular telephone calls, e-mails, etc, enquire about their prayer needs and inform them about and invite them to care-group gatherings. Care coordinators can also assign the caring of absent or irregular members to other regular members in the care group. All members of the church will, therefore, be cared for.

10. How Often & Where do these CG’s Meet?

Groups can meet weekly or fortnightly. The more often a group meets, the stronger it becomes. Meetings should take place in home settings so as to put everyone at ease and set the atmosphere for warm relationships to take place.

11. Can I Choose my Care Group?

Yes, you can.

We shall do our best to place you in a Care Group which you will be comfortable in. You could join a Care Group for a trial period and decide whether the group is suitable for you. As in all relationships, it takes time to become comfortable with one another in your Care Group. Be realistic and give yourself time to adjust to one another before you leave for another group.

12. Who Oversees the Care Group Ministry?

The Church Care-Group Committee, headed by a Care-Group Pastor or Church Leader, oversees the direction of the Care-Group ministry and is accountable to the English Service Committee of the Church.

Role of Care-Group Committee

- To chart the vision of the care-group ministry
- To oversee the formation of new care groups
- To monitor the progress and growth of each group
- To channel members into care groups
- To assist in providing Bible study materials
- To encourage care groups to exercise team ministry to support other ministry needs of the church
- To call coordinators' meetings for feedback and training