

# COMMUNITY CARE GROUP GUIDE

FEBRUARY 25, 2018

**Welcome** to the time set aside for Communities and Community Care Groups! This is the fourth of 9 Sunday opportunities to meet this winter and spring leading to the final date on May 6. Communities and Community Care Groups are, of course, encouraged not only to meet on the designated dates but to be creative and use any opportunity to fulfill the four purposes of Communities: fellowship, pastoral care, discipleship and mission. These 4 purposes were explored in an exercise now completed by all the Communities. The results and subsequent questions are intended to provide fodder for further Community discussions.

(The final Community is meeting today – Community 4.)

\*\*\*There are **two options** for discussion presented in this material, preceded by some creative “connecting” questions for people to get comfortable with one another. Of course you are also welcome to go back to any material from previous weeks. The material is on the church website under the “Communities” tab. Suggestions for Communities/Community Care Group projects or involvement can be found on previous CCG guides (January 28 and February 11).

**Option 1** includes the results of and feedback for the Community Exercise, now sent to Communities 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13 and 14. The pastoral elder and deacon of the Communities mentioned have material in their possession.

**Option 2** includes questions about the current sermon series on the Gospel of Mark. Questions cover both the message from February 18 and from today, February 25.

**Leaders** are asked to go through these materials ahead of time and use them to prepare a discussion for the meeting times. Feel free to pick from all the available options.

*(Note: At the moment it is not possible to have the latest sermons online)*

## **Beginning Your Time Together**

Spend some time with one or two of the “connecting exercises” (good for all ages). Here are some suggestions:

- Talk about your week. What did you do and what did you experience?
- Did you notice anything about the area of the city you live that was unusual? What sorts of conversations have you had with your neighbours recently?
- What book have you read lately and why would you or would you not recommend it?
- What movie did you see lately and what do you remember?
- What are the youth or children watching?
- Any sci-fi lovers in the group? Ask them what is it about sci-fi that captures their attention?

**Prayer:** Whichever of the options you choose to discuss as a community, ask God to bless your conversation and grow you as a Community through it.

**Option 1** - If your Community leaders have received feedback on and questions about the Community exercise, you may wish to work through them (one section at a time) over the next number of Community gatherings. Please spend some time talking about the exercise and the questions it raised.

**Prayer:** As you think about your Community, take the opportunity to spend some time in prayer for your Community – the CCRC members and also your neighbours. Pray that the Lord would bind you together as a small “congregation” and provide leadership. Pray that the Lord would open doors of service in the broader community around you. Include people of all ages in your prayer time. Such prayer can be done early in your gathering or at the end of your time together. You will need to plan some time if a number of members of the group are going to be involved in prayer. Waiting until the very end of the meeting often cuts prayer time short because it encroaches upon eating time or departure time.

## **Option 2 - Reflections on the Gospel of Mark**

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 9: 30-37; Mark 10:35-45 – (Feb. 18 sermon - led by Pastor Carel)

1. In the first part of the Gospel of Mark he answers the question, “who is Jesus?” Leaf through the first 8 or 9 chapters of the book and list the answers given so far.
2. How does Mark’s answer to “who is Jesus?” help you to answer the question, “If someone were to ask you what the ‘good news’ is that we are called upon to ‘believe’, what would you say?”
3. In chapter 8 and 9 Mark makes the shift from answering the question “who is Jesus?” to answering a second question “what did Jesus come to do?” How does Jesus, himself, answer that question? See Mark 9: 30-32; 10: 32-34.
4. What evidence can you give from the two passages mentioned above, or other passages from the book of Mark that the disciples really did not get who Jesus was? Do you understand who Jesus is? Why or why not?
5. **Reflect:** Pastor Carel said: “We think about winning and setting records and honour and prestige and power and influence and social standing and authority and riches and hierarchy and fame and all those sorts of things, and we spend a lot of energy on achieving such things. We hear a lot about self-sufficiency and feeling good about ourselves and achieving anything we put our mind to and so forth, and we begin to believe it and live out of that way of looking at the world and life.” List some examples that confirm this statement.
6. Neil Plantinga, former president of Calvin Seminary, talks about the fact that the Kingdom of Heaven is an “upside-down kingdom.” What do you suppose that means?
7. Jesus teaches that the way to the Kingdom of God is through death – his death and our dying to ourselves. What does it mean to “die to yourself”? Be specific. How would you explain dying to yourself to the younger members of your group?
8. **Reflect:** One writer (Chris Mueller) provides some examples of the difference between pride and humility – here are a few for us to ponder:  
*The **proud** heart focuses on the failures of others*  
*The **humble** heart is overwhelmed with their own spiritual need*

*The **proud** heart is critical and fault finding*  
*The **humble** heart is compassionate and forgiving*

*The **proud** heart is independent and self-sufficient*  
*The **humble** heart is dependent and recognizes their need of others*

The **proud** heart wants to prove they're right  
The **humble** heart is willing to yield the right to be right

The **proud** heart desires to be served and to receive  
The **humble** heart desires to serve and to give

The **proud** heart desires to be a success  
The **humble** heart is motivated to be faithful and make others a success

The **proud** heart thinks how lucky others are to have me serve them  
The **humble** heart thinks how incredible God is to use me at all

The **proud** heart is quick to blame others  
The **humble** heart accepts responsibility, and sees where they could be wrong

The **proud** heart has a hard time saying, "I was wrong"  
The **humble** heart is quick to admit their failure and seek forgiveness

9. What obstacles do you face as you seek to be a faithful servant of Christ? How do you deal with the obstacles?

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 10: 17 – 34 (February 25 sermon – Pastor Amanda preaching)

1. If you have children from grade 4, 5, or 6 in your group ask them what they talked about in their sermon discussion this week. What sorts of topics and questions were raised?
2. What are some of the tensions created by the story of the rich man?
3. How does Jesus react to the man who asked the question as to what he had to do to receive eternal life?
4. The disciples saw their following of Jesus in the light of what advantage it would be to them. It seems the rich man had the same thought. How common is the thought that I will follow Jesus because there is something in it for me. How does Jesus reframe that question?
5. What was Jesus' answer to the rich man's question?
6. Reflect: *Often* spiritual relationships between believers can be *stronger than blood ties*. By following Jesus, we become members of a family that is stronger and longer lasting than temporal family *ties*. The bond is eternal. ... (Mark 3:33-35) (from "10 Things I Wish Jesus Never Said" by Victor Kuligin)
7. Pastor Amanda asked a very uncomfortable question this morning. She spoke about Jesus looking hard at the man and asking him to put aside his idol and follow him. Now we are drawn into the story – What is Jesus asking of you? How would you answer that? Are you willing to share your answer with your group?
8. What is your stumbling block to faith?
9. What does it mean to truly follow Jesus?
10. What does this section of the Gospel of Mark tell us about Jesus?

**Prayer:** For your closing prayer time, it's always a good idea to go around the circle and let everyone who is willing share what is on their hearts. Be sure to include children as well. Let everyone who wants to pray have a chance to pray. If you want, you may close your time together by singing a song or reciting the Lord's Prayer together.