

# City Groups FAQ

***At the intersection of our deep gladness, our city's deep hunger, and our collective need for one another***

The Journey's *vision* is to see our city awakened to and transformed by the love of Jesus. The Journey's *mission* includes boldly engaging our culture with God's truth. While the church, as a local institution, must plan and program toward this part of the vision/mission, it is equally important that individuals in the church see themselves as critical participants in this collective mission. City Groups are a mechanism through which Journey attenders can begin to explore their gifts, passions, and identify fellow co-laborers in the pursuit of renewal in and restoration for St. Louis.

As proverbial "salt," the church body is sent to play a critical part in God's wider plan for redemption and restoration of society as a whole. In this City Group model, participants have fellowship, accountability, support, and focus as they are on mission, for the good of the city, to the glory of God, together.

## **What is a City Group?**

A City Group is an outward-facing gathering of Christians that share a missional focus, preferably in a geographic location, or with a particular people group. City Groups participate with God in His redemptive work in St. Louis by engaging culture with God's truth alongside others who share their passion. By entering into spaces and relationships that seem more difficult and unusual, and bringing what they have, they, like the community they serve, can and should be shaped, sharpened, and sanctified.

## **Why does the Journey need City Groups?**

Historically, The Journey's groups have been more successful at being inward-facing than outward-facing. Community Groups were designed to have an outreach component, but when time is short, outreach has been the first to go. Rather than make Community Groups a "catch all," we want to create a more intentional space for outward-facing ministry and those who want to commit to it and lead in it.

We also need more intentional spaces and opportunities to learn about the city in which God has placed us. *Loving* our city starts with *learning* our city.

## **What do we mean by “City”?**

It is important to ask ourselves, as individuals, what we imagine when we hear “the city,” because of the real and imagined, positive and negative, social, economic, racial, and cultural implications that often accompany this term. For this purpose, when we say “city,” the emphasis is 1) outward-facing and 2) a particular place. By committing oneself to a particular “place” outside of our home and church walls, we have an opportunity to learn about and contribute to the flourishing of our broader St. Louis metro area.

## **How is a City Group formed?**

A City Group should form out of an individual’s passion for seeing restoration brought to a specific context or people group in the St. Louis metro area, and their desire to invite others to join them in responding to the Lord’s leading. They will need to submit their group’s mission and plan for approval (online application), participate in an orientation, and then be contacted periodically to process progress and missional alignment.

## **Who may participate in a City Group?**

City Groups should be designed with Journey attenders in mind, but should not be exclusive to them. City Groups should also be an opportunity for Christians, across locations and churches, to work together, for the good of St. Louis.

## **Who may lead a City Group?**

Journey members

## **What is the leaders role?**

If the City Group leader is **creating** a new initiative, they are responsible for identifying the group’s mission and focus, identifying group rhythms and responsibilities, regularly communicating with the group, and encouraging the group to:

- Educate themselves about the context/people they are serving
- Pray for one another and for the people they are serving
- Learn from the people they are serving
- Build relationships with the people they are serving/alongside

If the City Groups leader is **cultivating** by serving with another initiative (like a non-profit), there will likely be another primary contact like a volunteer coordinator. Instead, the leader will be responsible for:

- Identifying additional resources to help members learn about their context
- Coordinate monthly gathering to process, learn, and pray

## **Must the leader be an expert?**

Absolutely not. The leader only needs to have a sincere passion for the work and/or the context and a willingness to actively pursue learning as they serve.

### How often must the group gather?

City Group participants should serve at least 2x per month. Since relationships are a primary impetus, and they are only built with time, regular rhythms of service/connection are important. City Groups should gather to learn or process at least 1x per month.

### How do City Groups “fit” within our groups model?

	Connect Groups	Community Groups	City Groups
<b>Primary Purpose</b>	Fellowship, grow and enjoy God’s grace with other Journey members and attenders with whom you share a specific age, interest, or life stage.	Deepen in gospel community, participate in small group discipleship, and embody love for and with other Journey members and attenders.	<b>Participate with God in His redemptive work in St. Louis by engaging culture with God’s truth alongside others who share your passion.</b>
<b>Primary Missional Alignment</b>	Enjoy Grace	Embody Love	<b>Engage Culture</b>
<b>Primary Audience</b>	Visitors, new attenders, people looking to identify others with whom to connect	Regular attenders, members	<b>Regular attenders, members</b>
<b>Primary Activities</b>	Fellowship, discuss, share, and encourage	Fellowship, build relationships, be accountable, sermon discuss and pray	<b>Community connection, build relationships, identify and respond to needs, learn from one another and “the other”, learn about their context</b>

### **Other things to consider:**

- **City groups** can either create or cultivate. While creating a new initiative based on an observed need is a possibility, **we encourage cultivation as an entry point**. Because of the many groups and organizations serving our city, impact can be multiplied when we are willing to join others.
- **City groups** must consider both intent and impact as they serve. If the intended mission of the group is found to be detrimental or amiss, group members must be willing to reassess and recalibrate, even if they believe their intentions to be right.
- **City groups** should aim to commit to one context rather than moving from place to place in order for relationships to develop and learning to take place.

### **A City Group is NOT...**

...professional care. While City Group members may often provide care in the way that they serve, there is no expectation that they are professionals or experts in meeting those needs. However, ongoing learning will aid in more meaningful relationships and more impactful serving.

...exclusively justice and mercy or exclusively gospel proclamation (evangelism). Sincere love and contextual accuracy should also propel group members to see and respond to both spiritual and physical needs as they are observed and by the Holy Spirit's leading.

### **For questions contact:**

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