



SMALL GROUPS

At St. Paul's, small groups have a central role in the life of the church and offer close relationships, support, learning and encouragement that is difficult to find in a Sunday service alone. Our small groups are the main focus for a whole range of church activities, including worship and prayer, love and care, outreach, social action and practical support. Key to each group is the discovering, building up and use of the gifts of every member. Sunday services are the opportunity for small groups to come together in worship and to learn and grow together.

Small Group Vision

Small Groups at St. Paul's take to heart the commission from Jesus to: 'go make disciples' and share the church's vision to be:

Passionate about loving God - called to worship

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.' (Mark 12:30)

Committed to loving one another - called to community

'As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you love one another.' (John 13:34-35)

Convinced of the urgency of loving all in God's world - called to mission

'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded.' (Matthew 28:19-20).

Small Group Values

At the heart of St. Paul's small groups are 7 key values:

- **Jesus** is central to our meeting together
- **Sacrificial love** as shown by Jesus is our challenge
- **Honesty** in our relationships with God and one another is essential to growth
- **Building relationships** with those inside and outside the group is key to small group life
- **Every group member** has a valuable part to play
- **Growing in faith and fruitfulness** is the potential for each member
- **Making disciples and spreading of the gospel** is at the heart of our life together

**For further details contact:
Church Office on 01306 743378**

Small Group Meetings

So what actually happens at a small group meeting? All St. Paul's small groups are different but each has a common structure. A small group meeting is usually based around **4 W's**:

WELCOME – WORSHIP – WORD – WITNESS

- **Welcome** – This often includes refreshments and chat as people arrive and perhaps an 'icebreaker' activity to help the group get to know one another and introduce the evenings meeting.
- **Worship** – Not necessarily singing! C.D's can be played, poems read, candles lit or it could just be a time of quiet. The idea of this 'W' is to celebrate what God has done and is doing.
- **Word** – Aims to use the Bible as an action manual rather than just a study book; connecting Biblical teaching to everyday life and helping one another to put it into practice. This 'W' is based on the previous Sunday's sermon and challenges us to engage with what God is saying to our Church week by week.
- **Witness** – The final 'W' focuses especially on the commandment to love our neighbours and to make disciples. Members may talk and pray for friends and family and those in need. Social events such as parties and picnics may be planned and people invited, as well as to wider Church events such as 'curry nights', carol services, church walks concerts etc.

Small Groups Explained

When do they meet? – Currently most groups meet on various evenings during the week, usually between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. There are also daytime groups, men's groups, an 18-30 group and groups for mums with babies.

What are the meetings like? The meetings are informal, held in people's homes with a very relaxed atmosphere helped along nicely by comfy chairs and free flowing tea and coffee!

What are the groups like? Every small group has approximately 8-10 members; couples and single people, those who have been coming to St. Paul's for years and many newer faces, the young and the not-so-young(!)

Everyone at St Paul's is encouraged to join a small group to discover and use their own particular gifts to get involved in the life and growth of our church.

Small Group Membership

How do I join?

Simple! Just fill in the form in the Welcome Pack and contact Laura Parker on 887553 or the Church Office on 743378.