



# SMALL GROUPS

## PASTORAL HEART FOR SMALL GROUPS



Dear Small Group Leader Applicant,

Thank you so much for prayerfully considering leading one of our small groups this coming semester. As you may have heard us say before, small groups are at the very core of who we are as a church because we believe in the strength and support of community. We believe that we are better together and to us, there is no clearer way to see that lived out than in our small groups. Community is God's heart and it is our heart as well.

### RICK WARREN

**"Small groups are not a ministry of the church, small groups are not a program of the church, small groups are not an outreach of the church, small groups are not an event of the church, small groups are the church!"**

Small groups not only capture the heart of community, but it also provides a powerful way for people to grow spiritually, to grow relationally, and to grow in your ability to minister to others. We believe that everyone is called to minister God's love and heart to others and to use what God has given you to build up and strengthen His Church. In that context, small groups become a great way to help you grow in your ability to live like Jesus and love like Jesus.

As you read through this Small Group Leaders Manual, we pray that you would hear God's heart for people through it all. We love people and believe that God has placed a very special call, passion, and gifting on every one of them. We pray that it starts with you! We are standing with you and cheerleading you on in your journey with God!

Many blessings,

**Cameron & Sandra Jeffs**

Lead Pastors, Impact Church





# SMALL GROUPS

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# INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the New Testament Church, Christians have met together in small groups or “house to house” ministry. As a matter of fact, there is a rich history of small group ministry throughout the last two thousand years of church history. The pattern throughout the New Testament Church was that they saw great value in coming together for church services as one big family reunion, and also saw great value in the process of discipleship that happened best in small groups [see verses below]. Small groups were the life of every church and we believe should still be the life of every church today.

## ACTS 20:20 [NKJV]

“...I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house.”

## ACTS 2:46-47 [NKJV]

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and break bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

## ACTS 5:42 [NKJV]

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”

This pattern carried on during the Reformation, through the missionary strategy of the Anabaptists, and through the pupils of John Calvin who had thriving small groups called “Christian communities”. Small groups were further developed through the Puritans’ “conventicles” whose primary goal was to develop holiness in small group discipleship environments. John Wesley also had great success through their small group ministry called “little churches”.

The small group ministry blueprint has continued right up to the present day as the Quakers, Methodists, Moravians, Lutherans, Reformed Churches, Charismatics, and others sought to be true to the pattern laid down by the early church, which was the motivation shared by all these groups.

Today’s small group churches are much more organized than their more primitive predecessors. However, today’s small group systems and ministries still carry the same heart and vision as the early Church and believe the same basic idea: **“smaller is better”!**

## SMALLER IS BETTER:

How often do you hear that? In a church, its easy to put on a smile, say the right things, and when the last song has finished, bolt out the door and return to your normal, everyday life. But following Jesus is so much more than smiles and small talk. The Gospel has the power to change the world, and that change is accomplished through the lives of individual people, living like Jesus and loving like Jesus one day at a time.

Jesus often spoke about the value of friendship and community and lived out that value by having a small group of 12 men. We all need community. This is why small groups are so important. A small group is a group of approximately **5-12 people** who are committed to grow spiritually together, to share each other's burdens and joys, to pray for one another and to have fun together! No matter what type of group it is, at the core of each group is a desire to connect, to grow spiritually, and to encourage one another in your walk with God.

## CREATED FOR COMMUNITY:

Within our God-given DNA is a yearning for genuine, life-giving community. In other words, we were created for community! A great illustration of this is LEGO. No matter the size, shape, age or colour of LEGO, every piece is designed to connect. What a powerful vision of a multi-generational, multi-cultural church! You were created for connection!

Another key principle we have learned is that proximity does not bring life-giving relationships; only connection does that! Think about this idea in relation to church today. You can come to church and be near people and not connect. The reason we do that is because it takes way more effort to connect than just be around people. But God designed you to connect with others. You were designed for community! LEGO interlocks, bonds, builds, and connects! This is what God designed small groups to be. A place of connection and life-giving relationships.



Furthermore, the New Testament Church understood that one LEGO brick can never make a set. In other words, we need each other and we need to be connected to each other in order to help each other fulfill God's purpose for their life. You matter to God and you matter to us! This is why small groups are so important to us. Connection is what people were designed for by God! Look for other godly LEGO bricks and build together! Be utterly amazed at what God can build together in the context of Christian community!

## SMALL GROUPS ACTIVATE PEOPLE FOR MINISTRY:

We believe that everyone has a unique gifting, passion, abilities, and call from God. We also believe that everyone is called to minister to others. God's design for His Church is that church leaders would equip every believer for service and ministry [Ephesians 4:11-16]. In this way we grow to become a mature follower of Jesus.

# THE HEART OF A SMALL GROUP LEADER

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HEART:

The Smithsonian Institute is a world-renowned museum in Washington DC. Inside, there is a very large and famous diamond. Because of its incredible value, the security guarding it is extraordinary! It sits on a pressure sensitive pad, which triggers an alarm at the slightest change in weight. It is encased in thick glass. Guards are posted near it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and it is surrounded by laser beams.

## PROVERBS 4:23 [NIV]

*“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”*

Humanity will go to all this effort and expense to guard one rock, yet many will do little to guard their hearts, though they are of so much more value. The words in the above verse, *“above all else, guard your heart”* are there for a reason. Out of our hearts flow the issues of life. If our heart is good, our life and ministry will be good. If it is bad, our life and ministry will be tainted.

## THE HEART OF A GODLY LEADER:

### 1. A SERVANT’S HEART: HUMILITY

The heart of a servant does not seek a position [Mark 10:35-45], to be in the limelight [Matthew 6:1], or to build a name for oneself [Philippians 1:15; 2:3-9]. A servant leader seeks to serve others and lay their life down for others [John 10:11, 15, 18]. A servant leader is one who gets excited about making someone else a success.

### 2. A SHEPHERD’S HEART: SACRIFICIAL LOVE

The heart of sacrificial love belongs to a person who has dedicated themselves to God for His service [Romans 12:1-2]. This person is willing to pay the price of leading, gladly and cheerfully. That price could be the sacrifice of your time, energy, resources, or personal preferences for the benefit of others. As a result of this, someone with a heart of love does not see people as problems or as stepping stones [Philippians 4:1] but as a child of God entrusted to their care. A leader with a heart of sacrificial love will give even when nothing is given in return because their reward is Jesus and doing His will.

### 3. A SPIRITUAL PARENTS HEART: FAITHFULNESS.

One of the most important requirements in God’s eyes to successful ministry is the principle of faithfulness [1 Timothy 1:12]. In Luke 16, Jesus talked about the importance of being faithful in what is small or insignificant [Luke 6:10], being faithful in natural things [Luke 16:11], and being faithful in what belongs to another [Luke 16:12]. The development of this heart of faithfulness will be seen in the way we minister and are loyal to others.

#### 4. A SPIRITUAL ROLE MODEL'S HEART: CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER.

Paul's challenge to the Ephesian church was to "imitate God in everything you do" [Ephesians 5:1]. As small group leaders, we are to set an example of what a true disciple of Christ should look like. As Paul's letter to his spiritual son Timothy declares, we should be an example "in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity" [1 Timothy 4:12]. A spiritual role model emanates Christ-like character and is a great example for others to follow.

### LEADERSHIP PREPARATION: 3 KEY HEART ISSUES

As your Pastors, we want to make sure we have done what we can to prepare the hearts of our leaders for a great ministry. We have found that there are 3 key areas that go a long way in making a leader God can use. They are:

-  Love
-  Vision
-  Passion

The condition of your heart is the most important thing to consider in small group ministry. Skills can be acquired and obstacles can be overcome, but ministry that flows from an unhealthy spring cannot bring life. Now that we have identified these three areas, let's talk about how they relate to Small Group ministry and why they are so important to us.

#### WHY LOVE?

People who love God inspire others to do the same. All of us have met those whose lives compelled us to grow in our devotion to Christ, to serve Him more fervently, and to love others as He has loved us. The way you love God may look different from the way someone else does, but you must love Him if you are to be useful to Him. It is self-evident that a genuine devotion to Christ is the greatest thing we can possibly possess. Let's look at three ways love will influence your leadership to impact your group:

1. Love produces holiness. Without a passionate love for God, holiness is impossible. The more we love God, the more we will hate sin. If we do nothing else but raise the level of holiness in those around us, we will have done much for the kingdom of God. But how can we do this if we are not holy ourselves? If we want to have this kind of impact on our group members, we must learn to make God our supreme and primary affection.
2. Love brings fulfillment. If God is love, if we have been made in His image, if His greatest command is love, and if love is the greatest of virtues, then the purpose of every person is to love. And there is no fulfillment outside of one's purpose. You were created for this! There is no greater joy than loving God by loving His people and sharing life with them.
3. Love qualifies motivation. There are only two kinds of leaders: those who lead because they love God and His church, and those who lead for some other reason. If love for God is not our primary motivation, then by default it means we are serving people for the wrong reasons. When you are serving people for the wrong reasons, you leave the door wide open



for disillusionment and frustration, because you are doing it for yourself or for those you are ministering to, but not for God.

Remember, we can learn everything there is to know about ministry, and flow in all of our gifts, but without love, we are only a clanging cymbal [1 Corinthians 13:1].

### **WHY VISION?**

You might remember from your childhood the tale of Alice in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll. In the story, Alice finds herself in an unknown place, and she turns to the Cheshire Cat, asking him:

*“Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?” “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat. “I don’t much care where,” said Alice. “Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat.*

This simple children’s story provides a valuable lesson. When we have no clear picture of where we are going, then how we get there is unimportant. We must learn to harness the power of our God-given dreams. Small group leaders must be able to infect others with a vision that is bigger than themselves.

1. Vision brings perspective. Have you ever heard a leader complain about their ministry as though it is a burden? Chances are, they have lost sight of their vision. When some people look at small groups, they see an inspiring team that can change the world, one life at a time. Sadly, when some others look at them, all they see are meetings and work. When two people look at the same thing, it is amazing how they can each see something different! When our vision is clear about what God has called us to do, the work of the ministry is not a chore, because it gains significance [John 4:34].
2. Vision establishes unity. Small group leaders need to remember that they are not alone. They are joined together with others of like mind and vision to be a powerful expression of the body of Christ to the world. When believers receive a mandate from God and rally around a common vision, they form a formidable, united force to be reckoned with, because God is in their midst [Nehemiah 6:3].
3. Vision sets boundaries. If you are a laid-back person who wants to keep your options open in life, don’t ever ask God to give you a vision for your ministry. But don’t expect to go anywhere, either! Once you move toward a fixed destination, the laws of physics determine that you also must move further from other places you could have chosen. Having a vision for small groups sets clear boundaries, but it will also take you somewhere. Once you are leading, it will demand things from you to get you where you said you wanted to go. Keeping the vision before you will guard you from doing your own thing, keep you and your group on track, and ensure it is healthy and consistent with the vision of your leadership.

Remember, people lay their lives down when they see a vision so gripping, they couldn’t escape from it if they tried. Without vision, we will have no unity, and we will go nowhere.

## WHY PASSION?

Imagine a Small Group leader who does everything right, except that they have no passion for what they do. How will they influence anyone? What kind of leaders will they reproduce and what kind of groups will those people have? We would rather have 2 passionate leaders than 20 of another kind, no matter how gifted and anointed they might be. Passion is contagious!

1. Passion determines influence. Passion gets people's attention by making them think differently about what we are passionate about. When Jesus turned the tables over in the temple, it was hard to ignore! It made everyone ask how someone could feel so strongly about the house of God when everyone else seemed so indifferent. We know the disciples were very taken with this event [John 2:17] and chances are that no one who was there that day ever thought the same way about the house of God again because of Jesus' passion for it.
2. Passion inspires perseverance. Every time someone experiences opposition from the enemy, they are forced to make a value judgment to determine their response: "Is this really worth it?" Make no mistake: Satan will try to stop you from making progress. There will be times when the last thing you want to do is lead another group meeting. The degree to which you keep your heart fired up for the small group vision is the degree to which you will persevere. Only passionate leaders can shout "YES! It is worth it all!"
3. Passion stimulates initiative. When we are not passionate about what we are doing, we will expend little effort to see it thrive, even putting the onus on someone else to make it work. When we are passionate, we change from passive bystanders into active leaders who are not willing to make the health of our group solely dependent on the initiative of others.

Despite the tremendous importance of these three things, discussing them will not produce them in your life. For that to happen, you must pursue them! When you do, amazing things will happen in your life and in the life of your Small Group.

# SMALL GROUP LOGISTICS

## SMALL GROUP VISION:

Our Small Groups provide an important family function within the overall church life. It provides people—new or established—a bridge to build stronger relationships outside of our Sunday morning services. It encourages a deeper walk with God and His Word and allows the Impact family to share life together, to serve one another, and to care for each other in a smaller “family-like” setting. The goal of our Small Groups is to:

### 1. CONNECT.

It is easy to feel alone in a crowd. Our Small Groups are an open door into the life of our church family and our hope is that you would experience genuine connection. In this way, connection leads to relationship and the benefits that come from that.

### 2. GROW.

Our desire is that you would grow, flourish and become all that God has called you to be. We believe that the best way to learn how to live like Jesus and love like Jesus is in small groups of people who are equally as invested in their own growth.

### 3. SERVE.

Our desire is that you and your group would realize what God has gifted you to do and use those gifts or passions to serve one another in love. In this way we will all be built up, strengthened and encouraged in our walk with God [Ephesians 4:11-16].

### 4. CARE.

One of the most beautiful takeaways from the New Testament Church is how they cared for one another in spiritual ways such as prayer or in practical ways such as meeting someone's needs or being a listening ear. Our Small Groups are designed for each person to be cared for and to care for others in an authentic way.

## SMALL GROUP NUTS & BOLTS:

### 1. SOME KEY THINGS TO KNOW.

Here are some other things to know about regarding Impact Small Groups:

- ≡ Our Small Groups will be approximately 5-12 people
- ≡ Our Small Groups will last between 1-2 hours per group
- ≡ Our Small Groups are for those who are a part of Impact Church [they are not for people of another church]
- ≡ Our Small Groups will not meet on a holiday or conflict with any church event

## 2. SEMESTERED SYSTEM.

At Impact Church our small groups run in three different semesters throughout the year:

- ≡ Fall Semester [September – December]
- ≡ Winter Semester [January – April]
- ≡ Spring/Summer Semester [May – July]

We love what a semester system allows us to do. First of all, it keeps our small group leaders fresh and energized. It also makes it much easier for new leaders to give leading a small group a try. Plus, it allows for much more variety in the types of groups that are run.

## 3. DIVERSITY OF SMALL GROUPS.

Impact Church small groups will vary on when, where, and how often they meet:

- ≡ They can meet weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly
- ≡ They can meet in person or online
- ≡ They can meet any day of the week and any time of the day

Furthermore, there will be a diversity of the types of small groups. Our small groups will depend on the vision of the prospective leader. Some input regarding the vision will be provided from the Pastoral Team or designate in order to:

- ≡ Make sure we do not have duplicate groups
- ≡ Make sure it is aligned theologically
- ≡ Make sure it is aligned with our vision, mission, and values
- ≡ Make sure it is not taking away from an existing church ministry

The Small Groups can vary significantly in their focus such as:

- ≡ Curriculum or Bible Study [i.e. DVD Bible study]
- ≡ Activity [hiking, guitar club, golf, scrapbooking, art]
- ≡ Social [connection over food or coffee]
- ≡ Discipleship Group [based on sermon, devotional study, book of the Bible]
- ≡ Prayer
- ≡ Outreach

No matter the group, **every one of them will maintain a spiritual component** whether it is a devotional that is shared, whether you pray for one another, share a testimony, or process through a key passage in the Bible. Our desire is that each and every small group encourages you in your walk with God and inspires you each and every week to live like Jesus and love like Jesus!

## CORE THOUGHTS FOR IMPACT SMALL GROUPS:

### 1. FREEDOM VS ACCOUNTABILITY.

If you have a small group system that has high freedom and low accountability you will produce chaos. If you have high accountability and low freedom you will have control. In both situations, you are producing unhealthy leaders and unhealthy groups. As a result, at Impact Church we believe in high freedom with high accountability. We do this for the sake of **SAFETY**.

### 2. SMALL GROUP COACH.

Our desire is that you would be a successful Small Group leader and have an incredibly fruitful group. With that in mind, we will provide a Small Group Coach for every leader. We do this for the sake of **SUPPORT**. Our Small Group coaches are trained to CARE for you in the following ways:

#### **C = CONNECT**

We believe the best coaching happens best in the context of relational connection. As a result, your Small Group Coach will connect with you regularly. This may be a combination of connecting over text, email, video chat, phone call or in person.

#### **A = ACCOUNTABILITY**

We believe that a healthy group is the result of a healthy leader. As a result, your Small Group Coach will come alongside you to help you process your faith journey, your family journey, and your leadership journey.

#### **R = RESOURCE**

Your Small Group Coach is available to you to help resource you and strengthen your leadership. This could be to help answer any theological question you may have or to give you insight into how to deal with a situation in your group.

#### **E = ENCOURAGE**

One of the most crucial components of the role of a Small Group Coach is encouragement. Their goal is to inspire you to go deeper in your walk with God and to energize you to walk out the vision you have for your small group.

### 3. MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY VS CHURCH COMMITMENT.

Our desire is to provide ministry opportunities for you to grow. However, we also want to make sure that your motivation is in the right place. We want every Small Group leader to have a heart for God's House [your local church] and God's family. We do this for the sake of **SUCCESS**. We believe in you and believe that when you are spiritually healthy, your group will be spiritual healthy, and the whole church will be blessed because of that.



# SMALL GROUP LEADER PROCESS

## SMALL GROUP LEADER REQUIREMENTS:

### 1. **SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF LAUNCH [OR EQUIP 101].**

We made LAUNCH the FIRST STEP on our GROWTH TRACK for three main reasons:

- ≡ It connects people on a deeper level and helps to get to know you
- ≡ It unifies the church around the core DNA and theology of Impact Church
- ≡ It acts as a LAUNCH pad for your walk with God and future ministry

### 2. **ACTIVELY INVOLVED ON A SERVE TEAM.**

Jesus declared in Matthew 23:11 that *“he who is greatest among you shall be your servant”*. There is no greater evidence that God is at work in your heart than a desire to serve others and model of servant leadership to others. This is why we have made it a requirement for Small Group leaders.

*NOTE – We will take into consideration unique personal situations that could hinder serving [i.e medical]*

### 3. **ENGAGEMENT EVALUATION [OF PERSONAL, SPIRITUAL & CHURCH LIFE].**

To determine leadership readiness, we will look at the following 5 areas of “engagement”:

#### **GROUNDING**

Do you have a healthy doctrinal life? Do you walk in sound teaching and beliefs that are aligned to the Bible? Are you Gospel-centered? A major reason we make LAUNCH a requirement for Small Group leadership is to help you with this particular process.

#### **GROWING**

Do you have a healthy devotional life? Do you have an active prayer life? Do you regularly read the Bible? Do you live a life of worship to God? We believe that a growing leader is a healthy leader and healthy leaders produce healthy groups.

#### **GATHERING**

Do you spend quality time with your family? Do you actively invest in your family’s spiritual life? Do you regularly come to church and prioritize God’s House? Do you come to church on time? Are you actively involved in church life? Do you regularly connect with our church family before and after services? Those who are, will understand and better represent the values of the church to others.

#### **GIVING**

Do you regularly give back to the church through serving, giving, and owning the vision of the church? This is important because it shows us that you are invested here.

## **GOOD STANDING**

Do you have a good reputation at home with your family? Do you have a good reputation with your co-workers or fellow students? Do you have a healthy relational life at the church? Do you relate well to others, walk in forgiveness, and do your best to walk in unity with others in healthy way?

### **4. WILLING TO ATTEND ANY SMALL GROUP LEADER TRAINING.**

This will not only involve the reading of this manual, but also a training session to help you prepare for the start of your small group. This will also include regular connections with your Small Group Coach.

## **SMALL GROUP LEADER APPLICATION PROCESS:**

### **1. READ THE SMALL GROUP LEADERS MANUAL.**

This is important for us because it reveals our heart behind our Small Group process and ministry at the church.

### **2. COMPLETE AND HAND IN SMALL GROUP LEADER APPLICATION FORM.**

This form allows us to know a little bit more about your spiritual journey and your heart for your group. This application form includes a sign off on our statements of faith, our church DNA, and our team values. This application form is to be handed in to one of the Pastoral Team members or designate.

### **3. INTERVIEW WITH A MEMBER OF THE PASTORAL TEAM.**

This is to get clarity on the vision for the group, clarify the logistics for the group and to receive approval for the group.

### **4. ATTEND SMALL GROUP LEADERS TRAINING.**

This training is designed to help you have a successful small group experience, to work out any kinks before your group starts, and to prepare you for any situation that could arise. This will also be where you find out who your Small Group Coach will be for the semester.

## **INTERESTED IN LEADING A SMALL GROUP:**

We need lots of small groups to accommodate our growing church, which means we need more Small Group Leaders. If you think you'd be interested in leading a Small Group at Impact Church, please read this entire manual, make sure you meet all the necessary requirements for small group leadership at Impact Church, then fill out an application form and submit it to one of the Pastors. A member of the Pastoral Team will follow up with you and arrange a time to connect for an interview.

We are so excited that you are prayerfully considering leading a group! We are cheerleading you on in this amazing journey!





# SMALL GROUPS

## APPENDIX A: IMPACT CHURCH DNA



### IMPACT CHURCH VISION:

**TO BUILD A THRIVING CHURCH WHERE JESUS IMPACTS PEOPLE TO TRANSFORM THEIR WORLD!**

We believe that vision is the tomorrow that we are intentionally and strategically working on today! We believe that when the unconditional love, amazing grace, and powerful truths of Jesus impact our lives, we can become a thriving, irresistible church that can reach our world for Christ. Jesus is at the centre of all we do!

### IMPACT CHURCH MISSION:

**TO LIVE LIKE JESUS & LOVE LIKE JESUS! [#LIVELOVE]**

This is our mission and the absolute centre of our focus as a church! At Impact Church, to live like Jesus means that we live our lives in a way that pleases God and honours His ways and His Word. It also means that we live our lives on mission to do His will. At Impact Church, to love like Jesus means we are passionate about bringing Jesus' love to those around us.

### IMPACT CHURCH VALUES:

**JESUS is our message**

**GOD'S WORD is our foundation**

**FAITH is our lifestyle**

**COMMUNITY is our heart**

**SERVING is our honour**

**GENEROSITY is our privilege**

**GOD'S PRESENCE is our pursuit**

**HOLY SPIRIT is our empowerment**

**COMPASSION is our motivation**

At Impact Church, values are the non-negotiable, unchanging beliefs that answer the question of why we do what we do. Values are the principles that we are committed to and help explain our culture. Values are what we consider fundamental. These 9 values represent our commitment to God's will and vision for our community of faith. They also represent our philosophy of ministry and frame every decision that we make.



# SMALL GROUPS

## APPENDIX B: IMPACT CHURCH TEAM VALUES



### COMMUNICATION:

We will value people by communicating clearly, caring genuinely and listening attentively. We recognize that what we say and how we say it are vitally important to creating a healthy environment which increases our capacity.

### HONOUR:

We will honour our leaders, those who are working alongside us, and those who are working on our behalf. We will respect one another and be teachable in our attitudes, actions, and speech in order to honour Christ and protect the unity of the church.

### RELATIONSHIPS:

We will engage people with our whole heart to show them that they matter. We will model authentic community by celebrating each other, praying for each other, encouraging one another and connecting in meaningful ways.

### INTEGRITY:

We will do everything with honesty, integrity, and character as evidence of a life devoted to God. We will live a consistently godly life in private and in public in order to be an example to others.

### SERVE:

We will give our very best in everything that we do, knowing that we are doing it for God. We will follow Christ's example by living like Him and caring for others with a servant's heart. We recognize that a servant is the greatest in God's kingdom.

### TRAIN:

We intentionally train and equip people in order to see them fulfill God's purpose for their life. We value the journey with people because we see the seed of greatness God has placed within each person. We celebrate their successes, coach them through challenges, and empower them to live like Jesus and love like Jesus.



# SMALL GROUPS

## APPENDIX C: IMPACT CHURCH STATEMENTS OF FAITH



### WHAT WE BELIEVE:

**ABOUT THE BIBLE** – We believe that God divinely inspired human authors to write the sixty-six books of the Bible, which is the inspired, infallible and authoritative Word of God. We look to the Bible for the revelation of the character of God and the final authority on all matters of faith and conduct.

*Biblical References – 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21*

**ABOUT GOD** – We believe there is one Divine Being who has existed eternally. He exists and reveals Himself to man in three distinct, equally divine persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe that He is totally loving and completely holy.

*Biblical References – Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14*

**ABOUT JESUS** – We believe that Jesus is the eternal divine Son of God who is fully God and fully man. Jesus, the Saviour of mankind, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, lived a sinless life on Earth, performed undeniable miracles, was crucified for our sins, was buried and raised from the dead. Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father in Heaven and will return again to receive His Church.

*Biblical References – Isaiah 7:14, 9:6; Matthew 24; Mark 16:19; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:18, 14:2-3; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 14; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 9:28*

**ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT** – We believe that the Holy Spirit is God's gift to mankind to help us live a life fully devoted to God. We believe in the Spirit-filled life, a life of separation from the world and characterized by godly fruit and Christ-like character. We believe in the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and in the baptism of the Holy Spirit as an experience subsequent to salvation with the primary evidence of speaking in tongues. We believe that the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is to empower believers to reach out to people in the power of God.

*Biblical References – Luke 11:13; John 14:26, 16:7-15; Acts 1:8, 2:1-4, 8:14-17, 9:17, 10:44-46, 19:1-6; 1 Corinthians 12 & 14; Galatians 3:14, 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:18*

**ABOUT MANKIND** – We believe in the creation, test and fall of mankind as recorded in the book of Genesis. We believe that mankind was created to have relationship with God but that sin separated each of us from Him and His purpose for our lives. We believe that everyone is born with a sin nature that affects their motivation, affections, decisions, and actions. We believe that mankind is incapable of attaining divine righteousness by their own effort.

*Biblical References – Romans 3:10-18, 23, 5:12, 18, 6:23; James 4:17; 1 John 5:17*

**ABOUT SALVATION** – We believe that Jesus as both God and man is the only One who can reconcile us to God. We believe that salvation is by grace, through repentance and faith in the perfect work of the Cross of Jesus in which we receive the forgiveness of sins.

*Biblical References – John 3:16-17; Romans 5:11; Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 9:12, 22*

**ABOUT THE CHURCH** – We believe that the local church is the place where believers gather together to encourage one another, learn from the Bible, minister to one another and represent Jesus to a broken world. The local church provides identity to its members and is God's design for everything that we need for spiritual maturity which includes direction, relationship, protection, teaching and accountability.

*Biblical References – 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Psalm 92:13-14; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:4-8; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Timothy 3:15*

**ABOUT ETERNITY** – We believe that our eternal destination of either heaven or hell is determined by our response to Jesus Christ.

*Biblical References – Mark 9:43-48; John 3:16, 5:24; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Revelation 20:10-15*

**ABOUT OUR ENEMY** – We believe in the reality and personality of Satan and that he is a created being, not equal with God in any way but defeated and awaiting his eternal judgment together with his angels.

*Biblical References – Matthew 25:41; Luke 4:1-13; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 20:10-15*

## WHAT WE PRACTICE:

**WATER BAPTISM** – We believe in the necessity of water baptism by immersion as an outward sign and testimony that an individual has made the commitment to follow Christ. We believe water baptism is for people who are old enough to come to that decision based upon their own personal faith.

*Biblical References - Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38-41; 19:1-6; Romans 6:3-4*

**COMMUNION** – We believe in the necessity of regularly receiving communion as a way of celebrating and remembering what Jesus did for us on the cross.

*Biblical References – Acts 2:42, 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32*

**BABY/CHILD DEDICATIONS** – We believe that children are a gift from God. We believe that baby dedications are an excellent way to celebrate God’s precious gifts and for parents to make a public commitment to train, lead and spiritually nurture their child in the ways of God.

*Biblical References – 1 Samuel 1:27-28; Psalm 127:3; Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16*

**NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH GOVERNMENT & LEADERSHIP** – We believe that the Biblical form of church government is a plural eldership with a senior leader, who qualifies on the basis of their spiritual life, character, domestic life, and leadership ability. A plurality of eldership provides proper checks and balances and emphasizes the concept of team ministry as an effective and balanced approach to leadership and vision in the church.

*Biblical References – Acts 15:6-9; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 4:14, 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 14:23, 20:28*

**TITHING & GIVING** – We believe in tithing (the first 10% of our income) and giving offerings as God’s financial plan to carry on His ministry through His Church. The tithe is what we **return** to God while our offering is something that we **give** to God.

*Biblical References – 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Matthew 23:23; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; Acts 2:44-45, 4:34-35; Malachi 3:8-12; Luke 6:38; Proverbs 3:9-10; Genesis 14:17-20*

## **STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, SEXUALITY & HUMAN LIFE:**

**CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE** – We believe in the sanctity of marriage as established by God through the Bible. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman who are spiritually aligned, in a binding commitment recognized morally by God, enacted verbally and validated legally.

*Biblical References – Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:6-9; Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4*

**GENDER** – Since marriage is exclusive to the union between one man and one woman, our God-given gender matters. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female, and that these two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. We believe that the rejection of one’s biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

*Biblical References – Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 5:2; Matthew 19:4-5; Mark 10:6*

**SEXUALITY** – As a church, we believe that sex is a gift from God. It is a gift, however, to be enjoyed only within the boundaries that God provides. The Bible teaches that these boundaries are within the context of Christian marriage, between a husband and a wife. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

*Biblical References – 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4*

**SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE** – We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically and mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect and value all human life.

*Biblical References – Genesis 1:26-27; Exodus 20:13; Psalm 49:7-8; Psalm 139; Jeremiah 1:5*