

Community Group Sunday

Toby DeHay / General Adult

1 Thessalonians 1:6–10

Community Group Sunday 2026

1 Thessalonians 1:6–10 ESV

⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. ⁹ For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

› **Reminder: Who we are and What we do**

Worship, Love, Disciple

We exist to worship God, love one another, and make disciples of Jesus.

Mission's Sunday Last Week

- Highlighted our commitment to fulfilling our call to making Jesus known to those in our context, in North America, and the world
- Shared some of what we already do and some of where we believe the Lord is leading us.

Highlight Community Groups

- As we highlight C Groups this week, I want to begin by reading our Vision statement found on the website:

We are a Christ-centered church, anchored in the Word of God, walking in the fullness of the Spirit, and delighting in God's presence. We give our lives and all that we have to boldly proclaim the gospel and make disciples in our neighborhoods and among the nations to the glory of God.

- One of the main ways we do this is through our Community Groups.
- **Primarily**, I want to encourage Bridgeway C Group members to keep striving toward this vision I just read.
- **Secondarily**, I want to invite those who are not involved in a C Group to not only find a deeper community, but to work toward fulfilling Bridgeway's vision in the context of a smaller group.

Honor Group Leaders

- I want to take a minute to honor those who lead and co-lead our groups.
- If you lead, or co-lead a group, we want to thank the Lord for you, your leadership, and commitment to serve Him and His body. Will you stand?

Invite New Leaders

Invite Conversation

- Around the room after the service. You'll notice that some of these groups have the designation of open or closed. Open groups are the ones you can see immediately on our website, have space in their home and parking in driveway or street. And simply put, our closed groups are the ones that are out of room in their home or do not have enough parking. I've asked the

closed groups to chat with too, because I believe these leaders are some of our C Group ambassadors and can help point you in the right direction.

- Connect with me or any of the elders

Encouragement Through Scripture

Last week during my portion of Mission's Week, I spoke from [1 Thess. 1](#) and highlighted the thankfulness Paul had for Thessalonian church.

- He prayed for them
- He mentioned their work of faith, labor of love, and steadfastness of hope in Christ
- Paul mentioned what my friend Charles calls the Gospel Essentials in verse 5
 - THE SOWER AND SEED (our gospel)
 - THE SOIL (came to you)
 - THE SPIRIT

Today, I want to continue encouraging you from 1 Thess., particularly in the context of growing and ministering in a smaller group context.

1 Thessalonians 1:6 ESV

⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

Principle One: The church and disciples are growing and obedient

- **They became imitators of us and the Lord.**

This doesn't happen in a vacuum. We need each other.

An hour and a half on Sunday can't do it. We need deep, abiding community where we grow, make disciples, and make Him known.

- **They received the Word in much affliction and joy of the Holy Spirit.**

You may or may not have had opposition and persecution when you came to Christ.

Speaking in generalities, I know that when Satan already has you, he doesn't need to try too hard to keep you.

Our sin nature is pretty good at that.

The evil one often attacks when gospel headway is being made, growth in Jesus is happening, and when glory is given to the Father.

1 Thessalonians 1:7 ESV

⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

- **They were an example to all believers in Macedonia and Achaia.**

We are hardly an example when we aren't following Jesus, listening to the Spirit, and working toward making disciples.

Bridgeway, our body is better when we are consistently growing in the Spirit together.

I didn't tell her I was going to highlight her, but I want to honor Bekah Crockett. She is an amazing example of this principle.

- She is active in her C Group as one of the co-leaders
- She is not only an amazing disciple, but actively strives to make reproducing disciples
- And she gives all the glory to God in all she does.

- Bekah is an amazing example of a disciple who is growing and obedient.

Principle Two: They were a multiplying church

1 Thessalonians 1:8 ESV

⁸ For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.

In order to do this they had to be a gospel teaching church.

Sure we want people gathered in a C Group, but more than that, we want our Groups to be gospel teaching groups!

Everything we say or do is centered around the gospel.

They were a partner for missions.

We see in v. 8 their love for Jesus had an impact on Macedonia and Achaia. C Groups, what impact are you making on your neighborhood and the nations?

- Do you know your neighbors by name?
- Do you pray for the nations?
- Are you learning to share the gospel together?

They prepared members to go.

“your faith in God has gone forth everywhere!”

Our groups are the perfect place to train future leaders to not only co-lead or lead new groups, but to be encouraged to partner with other churches to reach the nations like we heard from Eddy, Devonte, and Jacob last week.

I didn't tell these folks either, but I want to honor Dean and Leah Ross. They are a multiplying couple. Dean serves as one of our elders and Leah is now one of our deacons.

Our family joined the Ross Community Group in 2023 and were sent out with the Moseley's in 2024 to start a group.

In 2025, Kerri White was sent from the Ross group to start a group with Bekah and the Pattersons.

They are also working to prepare and send the Weigand family to start a group in the Village soon.

The example of the Ross's not only multiplied two new groups, but is seeing fruit on into the third generation as both of these groups multiply very soon.

In conclusion, healthy churches are growing and obedient, and they seek to be disciples who are on mission to make disciples.

Let me pray and we have 3 couples that I want to ask a few questions to give you some encouragement.

Thank the Lord

- for His faithfulness
- for our group leaders and members
- for opportunities to grow as a disciple
- for opportunities to make disciples here and abroad

Eric and Ashley Smith — Intentional Community/Pursuing Others
Main theme: *Community doesn't happen accidentally. We intentionally go after people who may be hesitant, overlooked, or waiting to be invited.*

1. **Your group has a unique opportunity to care for families with special needs. What have you learned about being intentional in creating a community where people truly feel like they belong?**
2. **Some people aren't going to walk into a group and introduce themselves. How have you learned to notice and pursue people who may be waiting for someone else to make the first move?**
3. **What are some of the barriers that can keep families from engaging in community, and what have you found helps overcome those barriers?**

Brad and Grace Neece — Healthy Groups That Multiply

Main theme: *Healthy groups don't multiply because they are unhealthy; they multiply because they are healthy enough to reproduce.*

1. **For someone who thinks, "Our group is really healthy—I don't want to change it," what would you say?**
2. **What does a healthy group do differently when it understands that the goal isn't simply to have a great group, but to make disciples who can make disciples?**
3. **Why is multiplication necessary if we actually want to see more people become disciples and experience biblical community?**

Jerry and Karen Helton — Intentional Disciple Makers

Main theme: *Disciple-making doesn't happen accidentally. We have to intentionally invest in people so that they can eventually invest in others.*

- 1. You both intentionally invest in making disciples. What does that actually look like in your week-to-week life?**
- 2. How do you identify people you might intentionally invest in rather than simply hoping discipleship happens naturally?**
- 3. What are you hoping happens in someone you're discipling? What does success look like?**