

## WHY GROUPS EXIST

Groups have one, simple purpose—to bring people together. We believe God created us to live in community with others and only then can we experience the full life He intends for us.

We believe life change happens in the context of relationships.

Meaningful relationships can be hard to find, and Groups exist to make life-changing relationships relevant and accessible to you.

*Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

**ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12**

### All Shores Groups Model

At All Shores, we believe our church must grow larger and smaller at the same time.

We grow larger to reach as many people as possible with the life-giving message of Jesus. We gather in smaller Groups to build community and care for people.

We base our Group model on the early church as described in the Bible in the book of Acts. In Acts, you can read about the tremendous growth of the first church in Jerusalem, where small group meetings in homes helped lay the foundation.

*Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.*

**ACTS 5:42**

Groups offer people:

1. A place to connect

*Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.*

1 CORINTHIANS 9:22 TLB

We were not made to do life alone. God created us for community, and Groups provide a place to connect with others, share life, and grow in faith together.

2. A place to care

*We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.*

1 JOHN 3:16 NLT

It is through life together that our problems become smaller, and God uses others to bring support and encouragement to our lives. Groups become a place where others don't just know your name, but care about what is happening in your life and want to support you in your spiritual journey.

3. A place to grow

*As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.*

PROVERBS 27:17

We believe every person is created with God-given potential to make a difference in the world. Groups are a place you can grow with others to become more like Jesus and reach the potential God has put inside you.

## WHAT A GROUP LOOKS LIKE

### Your Life is Your Group

At All Shores, we use a free market approach to Groups. This means we want people to gather together based on the things they enjoy and are important to them. Essentially, the things you are already doing in your life are the things that can make up your Group!

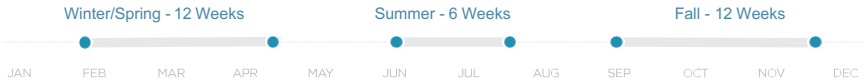
Free market leaders form their group around their gifts or interests.

From sports groups to lunch groups, mom groups to student groups, Bible study groups to creative arts groups, our groups are as varied as we are. All groups fall within one of these Hubs:

- Men
- Women
- Marriage and Family
- Students
- Freedom
- Outreach
- Prayer

## Group Structure

Groups meet throughout the year in three semesters.



Groups meet weekly during each semester.

Groups meet in a variety of places like homes, parks, restaurants, coffee shops and office buildings.

New groups start every semester making it easy to build community and enjoy different types of groups.

No matter what your group meets about, each meeting should be made up of four things:

1. Casual Fellowship

Laid back time for group members to talk and get to know each other.

2. Activity or Discussion

This will vary based on what kind of group you're leading. It could be an activity like Frisbee or outreach or a discussion about a book or Sunday message.

3. Prayer

Ask for prayer requests from group members and pray at the beginning and/or the end of each group meeting.

4. Spiritual Component

This is what differentiates your Group from your neighborhood supper club. Whether it's through activities or discussion, always find a way to include the Word of God. This can be as simple as sharing something God is teaching you with the group or talking about a verse you read that week.

Groups are not a place for:

- Business
- Offerings
- Unapproved materials or speakers
- Controversial topics

## Your Role as a Group Leader

God has a part for all of us to play in the church, and Group Leaders come alongside the pastors and staff of All Shores to help care for people.

*Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.*

EPHESIANS 4:11-13 NLT

The primary role of a Group Leader is to help group members move one step in their walk with God.

*Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds;*

PROVERBS 27:23

People in your group will be at different places in their spiritual lives and each person will have different next steps to take. Here is a guide of some next steps you can help people take:

- Attending Sunday services weekly
- Reading the Bible regularly
- Praying regularly
- Being baptized
- Attending The Journey
- Joining a serve team
- Starting to tithe
- Inviting a friend or neighbor to church or a Group
- Attending Group Leader Training to become a Group Leader

How to be a successful Group Leader:

1. Pray daily for the members of your group.
2. Consider partnering with a co-leader to help share the responsibility of caring for and leading your group.
3. Connect with group members between weekly meetings through phone, email, text, social media, or face-to-face.
4. Create an enjoyable environment, have fun and laugh!
5. Respect people's time by beginning and ending on time.
6. Invite group members to attend church services and church events with you.
7. Rally the group around a member going through a crisis. Use wisdom and be sensitive.

## The Importance of Prayer

Prayer is a foundation of our church, and it is important for your Group.

*If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

2 CHRONICLES 7:14

How to pray for your group:

- Pray for any requests group members share.
- Ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit in your group.
- Pray that God will open people's hearts to hear His truth.
- Pray for authentic community to develop.
- Pray for wisdom and strength to lead your group well.

When you feel like you don't know how to help someone in your group, remember ESPN:

- E:** Encourage
- S:** Share Scripture
- P:** Pray
- N:** Next Steps

## Leadership Support

As a Group Leader, you are never alone in creating community. Our goal is to pair each Group Leader with a **Coach** for help as you need support throughout the semester. Your Coach's number one priority is to pray for *you* daily. Reach out to your Coach if you have a need, prayer request, or concern.

How to create good group dynamics:

- Set expectations.

A key to helping people feel comfortable in your group is to let them know what to expect. Take time to share how the group will flow from week to week. This can include things like explaining the times you will begin and end the group, how discussion or group activities will happen, and how group members can share prayer requests or best engage in the group.

- Follow the 70-30 rule.

Give the members of your group room to speak up instead of doing all the talking yourself. About 70% of talking should come from members and 30% from the leader.

- Keep discussion positive.

If conversation takes a negative or destructive turn, guide it back to a healthy place. If someone needs to talk about a sensitive or complex issue, you can follow up with them after the group or call your coach to help you respond well.

- Keep the conversation relevant to everyone.

Remember people in your group will be at different places in their spiritual journey. Be thoughtful when you talk about spiritual concepts or church terms that might be unfamiliar to new Christians or new churchgoers.

- Use wisdom in setting boundaries.

We believe that men and women can lead equally, not because of their gender, but because of the Holy Spirit inside of them. We affirm that both men and women can lead in any area of the church as well as minister to one another. We ask that both men and women minister to one another in a spirit of wisdom, using discernment, and setting healthy boundaries.



### Stay Connected

Throughout the semester, respond to your Coach and the Groups team about group attendance, potential new Group Leaders, and how members are moving one step.

## HOW TO START YOUR GROUP

1. Ask God for direction about what group to lead and who to invite.
2. Once you decide on a topic or activity for your group, choose a place and time to meet.
3. Register your group at [allshores.org/groups](https://allshores.org/groups) and follow the steps given by a member of the Groups Team
4. Invite people you know or meet to come check out your group.
5. Pray for God to do great things through your group.
6. Check out more of our Group Leader resources at [allshores.org/training](https://allshores.org/training)

## HONOR CODE

As an essential part of the All Shores Leadership family, you have a responsibility to develop and exhibit mature Christian behavior. This should be the heart of your desire to serve in a leadership position here at All Shores.

While serving the Body of Christ as a Group Leader at All Shores, you pledge to demonstrate Biblical standards in all situations. As Christians, the way we present ourselves can influence the way others perceive Christ. Our conduct should exemplify the best qualities of a mature believer and servant-leader

By providing an example in speech and action, we encourage others to grow in Christ and become servant-leaders themselves. This is a way of life measured by the heart and commitment of each leader in the All Shores family. We should regard it as an essential part of our development, not as an imposition or restriction.

## LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

*The same goes for those who want to be servants in the church: serious, not deceitful, not too free with the bottle, not in it for what they can get out of it. They must be reverent before the mystery of the faith, not using their position to try to run things. Let them prove themselves first. If they show they can do it, take them on. No exceptions are to be made for women—same qualifications: serious, dependable, not sharp-tongued, not over fond of wine. Servants in the church are to be committed to their spouses, attentive to their own children, and diligent in looking after their own affairs. Those who do this servant work will come to be highly respected, a real credit to this Jesus-faith.*

1 TIMOTHY 3:8-10 MSG

### Qualifications

- Sincere, worthy of respect, and of a good reputation.
- Have a genuine desire to serve and minister to other people.
- Able to lead, motivate, and teach other people.
- Able to create positive group dynamics, and deal with conflict resolution within the group.

## ABUSE POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I understand that All Shores is a safe place for children and vulnerable adults and that All Shores complies with all Federal and State laws regarding reporting suspected child abuse. As a Group Leader, I understand that suspected abuse is to be reported to the staff member who oversees the area in which I serve. I also understand the 4 types of abuse defined below:

**Physical:** A physical act directed at a child or vulnerable adult that causes injury;

**Sexual:** Contact or interactions between a child and an adult, or another child, when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person. This includes exploitation through photographs, videos, or other communication methods;

**Emotional:** Acts or omissions by the parent or other caregivers that have caused, or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders;

**Neglect:** Failure to provide for the child or vulnerable adult's basic needs. This includes adequate adult supervision, medical attention, housing, food, and clothing. Most cases of physical neglect involve inadequate adult supervision that has caused harm to the child or vulnerable adult, or places them in danger of such harm.

I understand it is not my responsibility to investigate and in no instance will I confront a parent or care giver if abuse is suspected. As a Group Leader, I agree to comply with this policy and report any suspected abuse to the staff person who oversees the area in which I serve.



