



Moulton Parish Church Home Groups

Our vision at MPC is for everyone in the church family to 'encounter the love of God' and to share this within the Parish and the communities in which members live and work.

We seek to fulfil this vision through our weekly meetings on Sundays and in the week, meeting in small groups mid-week and through a range of community building activities and evangelistic events.

The Part of Home Groups in this Vision

A home group primarily helps us to grow in our love and knowledge of God, together. It is where we can spend special time with God and one another looking into God's Word, listening to what he has to say to us and applying it to our daily lives. It is where we can talk to God together in prayer.

Ephesians 4 tells us that God has provided the church with people with 'Word-gifts' for the purpose of *'building up the body of Christ until all reach unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.'* Home Groups are therefore places where members of the church should be 'built up' and encouraged in their faith. Home Groups are also places where 'ministry' takes place.

Home groups are places of 'membership.' They are places where we meet with one another for fellowship and can practice and experience what it means to be part of the family of God in a deeper way.

Recent statistics show that just 1 in 10 people in the UK attend church. Only half of these are in church on any given Sunday. A recent survey revealed that 70% of the UK population have no intention of ever attending a church service. This means that however good our church is on a Sunday we will not reach these people just by putting on good church services. We therefore have to find new ways of connecting with people who don't come to church. And this means that all church members have to be involved, as they provide the primary contact between the church and non-church attenders. Home Groups can help with this in two ways:

1. By helping to strengthen the faith of members and to equip them in reaching out to non-Christian friends and family;
2. By providing opportunities for members to invite their friends, colleagues and family to come in contact with Christians and learn about the faith.

It is in this area of 'mission' that we would particularly like to see MPC Home Groups develop. Some ideas for how Home Groups can adapt to incorporate mission into their DNA are given at the end of this paper.

In summary, Home Groups are not merely Bible Study groups, they function to fulfil part of the Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28 to *make disciples* of Christ who will follow and serve him all their lives as they journey towards heaven. Home Groups are therefore an integral part of what we need to do in order to get to where we aim to get to i.e. to see the whole community encounter the love of God.

We believe that our Home Groups operate best when we operate within a set of shared values and boundaries. A copy of these is attached.

MOULTON PARISH CHURCH

HOME GROUPS

What Home Groups do...

- Meet weekly or fortnightly in term time to encourage one another to grow as disciples of Christ. These times together have studying the Bible and applying it to our lives at their heart. At these times we also pray together. If the group wish, a time of musical worship may also take place.
- Meet together socially and for fellowship.
- From time to time groups will endeavour to arrange a social to which friends from outside the group can be invited.
- Occasionally receive training/instruction from the clergy of aspects of the faith e.g. evangelism
- Occasionally meet to discuss a current topic from a Christian perspective. A member of the clergy can be invited to lead these discussions.
- Occasionally meet to discuss an aspect of the Christian faith that group members would like to understand a little better. A member of the clergy can be invited to lead these discussions.

What we hope Home Groups will achieve

- Help members to grow as disciples of Christ, strengthening their faith and building their confidence to be good witnesses for God.
- Help to build the feeling of the church being a family of God.
- Draw new people into the fellowship of the church – non-Christians and people returning to church after a break.
- Minister to those in need of spiritual refreshment/healing.

Members of Home groups share the following values...

- Studying the Bible and applying it to our lives today.
- A willingness to 'sit under' the Bible's teaching as the authoritative Word of God. [If difficulty is experienced in reaching agreement on the interpretation of a section of the Bible, members will continue that discussion on another occasion outside of Home Group.
- Respect for the confidentiality of other members of the group.
- Committing to attend the group regularly and to let the group leader know if it is not possible to be present.
- Praying for one another, the church and non-Christians we know.
- 'Looking out' for other members of the group on other church occasions and when in need.

In all but exceptional circumstances members of Home Groups are Christian believers, baptised or working towards becoming baptised. Non-Christians will be encouraged to take part in the Alpha course or Christianity Explored before joining a group. In the event that a member of a group is not a Christian believer they agree to respect the beliefs of the members of the group.

'Reaching out' with Your Home Group

Why not try...

- Holding a lunch/supper/drinks party to which members endeavour to invite a non-Christian friend.
- Give your group a particular 'focus.' Find something that all (or most) members of the group enjoy doing e.g. crafting, walking, cycling, running, watching football, watching films, pub quizzes. Arrange a time to do this activity together. Next time invite some friends.
- Do you know anyone in need? Could you arrange a day to help someone that the group knows who is in need of help. Could you do some DIY or gardening? Could you arrange a meal rota for a new mum or someone who's partner is in hospital?
- Hold a film or craft night and invite your friends. If you're feeling brave, have a discussion about the film at the end or on another occasion.
- Ask our Mission Partner representatives if there is anything that could be done practically to support this work: making things etc.
- 'Adopt' one of the church's community activities. Pray for the leaders and the people who come along on a regular basis. Offer some practical support for the group i.e. offer to help with the set up as a group one week?