



## Adult Sunday School – Purpose and Goals

1. To build loving, supporting, Christian community by investing in relationships with God and each other.

**Acts 2:42-47** *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

2. To disciple each other, encouraging our fellow group members to grow in their personal relationships with Christ, gain a deeper love for and knowledge of scripture.

**Hebrews 10:24-25** *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

**Matthew 28:19-20** *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*

3. To help keep our growing church “small” by providing opportunities for us to pray together, share life together, and bear one another’s burdens.

**Galatians 6:2** *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

4. To give members a context in which they can serve the Body of Christ in a variety of ways (e.g. CARE projects, community outreach, etc.)

**Matthew 25:40** *'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'*

### Notes

- Eternal’s Adult Sunday School is meant to provide an opportunity for Christian community and discipleship in addition to our Small Groups or for those who are unable to be a part of a weekday Small Group.
- Adult Sunday School classes will be discussion based but may, at times, involve more direct teaching than a typical Eternal Small Group.
- Sunday School classes will most likely be larger in size than the typical Eternal Small Group.

# The Functioning Small Group<sup>1</sup>

## Four Components central to a healthy small group:

- 1) Bible Study
- 2) Fellowship, Accountability and Care
- 3) Prayer
- 4) Missional Focus

**Bible Study-** receive the Word as God-breathed and authoritative; choose a bible study that spurs each individual in your group to deepen his/her understanding and beliefs.

- The Bible is essential for life transformation; serious, focused study is crucial.
- Include and ask for personal, specific application and prayerful responses to the Scripture you are studying

**Fellowship, Accountability, and Care-** by sharing lessons learned about God and how He is at work; devote time to hearing the genuine state of each other's heart.

- At the core of genuine fellowship is sharing with others what God has shown you.
- Accountability is not merely targeting one another's sins; it is even more tracking down evidences of grace in one another.
- Pursue ministry for those inside your group, striving to meet their physical, emotional and spiritual needs<sup>2</sup>.

**Prayer-** far from a minor add-on, prayer is an essential part of small group meetings. Reserve adequate time each week to lift up one another and the world.

**Missional Focus-** to multiply joy, encourage your small group to be others oriented in nature.

- Spend time praying for the "empty chair" and strive for a welcoming environment.
- Pray that the Lord expands Eternal's Small Group Ministry through **Invitation, Multiplication, New Leaders and Improved Quality**.<sup>3</sup>
- Pursue ministry towards those outside your group (C.A.R.E. supported ministries like The Crisis Pregnancy Center or Gary's Circle Neighborhood, the elderly, those with disabilities, the homeless, etc.)
- A great prayer request: "Lord, reveal to us how you want to use us to minister to your church and our community this week/semester/year.

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<sup>1</sup>Materials from this section have been adapted from David Livingston, *Bethlehem Baptist Church Shepherd's Training*.

<sup>2</sup> For additional information see *Resources for Struggling Group Members*, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> For additional information see *Multiplying Groups and Leaders: Small Groups with a Missions Focus*, pp. 16-20.