



CELEBRATION COMMUNITY GUIDE

for January 16, 2022

Part of the mission of our church is to awaken people to Christ and His message and equip them to practice their faith in real life. One way we do this at Celebration is through Communities.

Church is more than a one-hour gathering on a Sunday morning. Church is also a community gathering around a table, doing life together the other six days of the week.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Celebration Communities are an opportunity for our church family to live in a deep web of relationships. We eat together, pray for one another, and practice the way of Jesus in Brantford and the surrounding areas.

As you read through this week's guide, remain centered around these purposes:

Love God

Learn the ways of Jesus

Live with purpose

The following guide is meant to help direct your time together. These are best practices and *not* a rigid set of instructions to follow.

GUIDED COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Gather as a group in a comfortable setting. Your Celebration Community leader will lead a brief time of prayer at the beginning, asking the Holy Spirit to lead and guide your time together. Take time to be silent before you begin. It's important to declutter our minds so that we may focus on one another and God's presence. Pray the ancient prayer: 'Come, Holy Spirit'.

Work through this week's guided questions:

(1) What brought me joy this week?

(2) Where did I notice God's presence?

(3) Was there anything God revealed to me?

(4) How often do I simply sit down with my spouse or close friends to talk with them one-on-one? Do I intentionally set aside time?

(4) When I run into obstacles, roadblocks or conflicts in my marriage or relationships with others, what's my default reaction?

(5) Do I have an intentional strategy for resolving differences in my marriage or relationships with others?

(6) Have I ever had a conflict in my marriage or a relationship that eventually led to deeper intimacy and understanding?

PRACTICE THE WAY

Effective listening involves patience. It is when we allow our partner or closest companions to finish what they want to say. Putting aside our own agenda and seeking to see the world through our partner's eyes is important. We practice effective listening when we make the effort to understand others when they think or feel differently than us. Ask yourself: Am I practicing this?

We encourage you to intentionally set aside one morning or night this week to spend with your spouse one-on-one. If you have children, schedule this around a time when you'll be alone and without distractions. If you're not married, choose a close companion or family member to do this with.

Consider doing one of the following together:

- Make a meal together (something challenging you haven't tried before)
- Go for an extended walk together
- Have coffee in the morning one-on-one
- Spend time redecorating a room with each other
- Reminisce by looking through old photobooks
- Take a scenic drive together, without turning on the radio or Spotify
- Etc.

Spend this time free of digital distractions. Intentionally turn off your phones, remove your computers from the room, and stay away from any screen that may distract you. Instead, choose an activity together, taking time both talking and listening to the other person. Avoid giving quick advice, interrupting them while talking, or disengaging from the conversation. Practice being present.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend time together in conversation with God.

Ask yourself before praying:

(1) What has God revealed me to me this week?

(2) What is God's intention for my relationships?

(3) What would it take for my marriage and my relationships to flourish?

(4) What do I need Jesus to teach me to become a person who is quick to listen?

Your leader will begin praying for individuals in the group. Take turns praying for each member. If everyone in your group is comfortable with laying hands on each other, feel free to do so.

If this is your first time in a Celebration Community, and you don't feel comfortable sharing something or praying out loud, feel free to be silent. Your Community is an opportunity and space where you can grow. You're welcome and safe here.

THE WEEK AHEAD

As you live out the rest of your week, consider what has been shared during your time together.

Ask yourself:

Who has God placed in my life to pray for and encourage?

What has God spoken to me about?

How will I be obedient to what He has spoken?

What can I ask my Community to keep me accountable for next time we meet?

If you missed it, we are encouraging all Communities to craft a rule of life at the beginning of 2022. A rule of life is both a schedule and set of practices that help us create space for a deep, loving enjoyment of God's presence and others. Take time this week to review the booklet we've created for you under "Resources" at happychurch.ca. There is an easy to print template available for you to begin considering what your rule of life will look like.

