

HTBB Connect Groups Guideline

HOLY TRINITY BUKIT BINTANG CHURCH

VERSION 2

28 SEPTEMBER 2023

01 Overview of Connect Groups

We love Connect Groups, they are the heart of HTBB—a place where people can grow in friendship with Jesus (discipleship) and with one another (community). Our motto is that a connect group is a place where “**discipleship happens in the context of community**”.

MARK 12:30-31

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.

Connect Groups exist to provide every member of HTBB Church a safe place to:

1. CONNECT – To build meaningful relationships

We believe God has created us to do life together. We are created for community, and Connect Groups provide a place to connect, share life and grow in faith together.

2. GROW & SERVE – To grow spiritually and to serve others

We believe God has put a potential in every single person to be a difference in this world. Connect Groups are a place for you to grow with others in becoming more like Jesus and be who God has called you to be. That also means to grow in serving one another with your gifts.

02 Models of Connect Groups

There are diverse groups in HTBB with each of their own interests and areas of focus. Some groups are centered around activities or interest, while others are primarily study based. Connect Groups meet anywhere from weekly to monthly, and may have varying forms.

Having that said, we have a basic model that we would encourage to adopt to achieve the purpose of connect groups, in whichever form it may look like for your group! The key is to keep it simple to replicate and adapt to different contexts.

1. UP – in prayer and worship

Prioritizing our friendship with Jesus.

2. IN – in friendship and community

Growing as friends together in authentic community.

3. OUT – beyond our four walls

True love seeks to serve, so we serve each other but also those in our broader communities.

03 Logistics of Connect Groups

A) SETTING

1. Welcome everyone

Make your group feels at home, especially guests visiting for the first time. Allow the first moments of the group to be for welcoming and introduction. And enjoy! Have fun through laughter.

2. Make the space safe

This is important for relationships to thrive where people feel safe to be themselves and to share openly. During prayer time, feel free to break into smaller groups. We also encourage same gender for ministry time. Be responsive when someone is sharing and rally the group around a member in situations where pastoral care/support is needed.

B) TIMING

1. Connect regularly

This can be having touchpoints outside the gathering, either through text, a call or a casual catchup during the week.

2. Semester model

We meet 2 semesters with breaks in between as we want to be intentional in building a Sabbath rhythm into our connect groups. Generally, connect group runs from January–May and July–November.

C) GATHERING

1. Punctuality — Start on time and finish on time

Let people know this is when we begin. Also, let people know when it is okay to leave as some may want to linger longer.

2. Sample running order – Plan ahead but make space for God to move

Feel free to tweak this according to the needs and focus of your group.

Time	Model	Agenda	Notes
30 mins	OUT	Soft start & Food	Could be simple/light meals or just snacks
15 mins	IN/OUT	Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction - Ice-breaker - Ask how people are doing, e.g. thanksgiving
15 mins	UP	Worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use worship leaders if you have, but if not can use Spotify/YouTube
40 mins	UP	Word	<p>Possible methods:</p> <p>1. Lectio Divina Bible Study Method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > What stood out to you? > What is God saying to you? > What is God calling you to do? <p>2. Swiss Method Bible Study Method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Observation > Question > Application <p>3. CG Weekly Video</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Plug and play <p>4. Other Resources</p> <p>Click here: CG Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite everyone to respond - Ask open-ended questions - Go with the flow, but be ready to steer the conversation in the right direction when necessary - Good for core team/leaders to start to set the tone of sharing (short but real)
20 mins	UP/IN	Prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure everyone is being prayed for
30 mins	IN/OUT	Clean up & fellowship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foster an idea of co-ownership, some CGs have a set rota - A time for people to follow-up on discussion or for 1-1 pastoring

04 A Flourishing Connect Group

Here are some characteristics that we desire to see happening in each group. These visible changes (behaviour, actions and transformation) are progression markers to monitor growth over time. Having said that, we know that each connect group can be in different seasons of growth, the below served as guidelines of what you can expect.

Area	Expect to see: (Initial Change)	Like to see: (Intermediate change)	Love to see: (Deeper transformation)
Community (friendship with one another)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everyone enjoys the friendship with one another - New guests feel welcomed and want to come back again - Good engagement in activity or discussion - Everyone is being prayed for when meeting together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People inviting their friends - Every regular is being taken care of (follow-up) - There is a culture of encouraging each other to take the next steps - People start having ownership in the group, e.g. serving, praying, organise group activity - People feel safe to be more open to share their life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An authentic community that is committed to make everyone feel loved, accepted and cared for - Accountable to one another - Seeks to stir up one another to love and good work (e.g. a social action project) - A community actively and practically involved in serving others beyond the walls of CG
Discipleship (friendship with Jesus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People are attending CGs and Sunday services consistently - People are engaged in worship, Bible discussion and prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People start taking new steps forward, e.g. getting baptised, serving in CG or in teams - Involvement in Alpha term and other courses to share the gospel and to equip themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People are committed in personal development and spiritual disciplines - People are constantly taking new steps forward and eventually growing into leaders - People are actively walking with another person and encouraging them in Christian friendship to follow Christ
Leadership Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good facilitation of Bible discussion - Clear communication - Meeting starts and ends on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide an environment that motivates and builds thriving leaders-to-be - Identify potential in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the season of where the CG is in and pastor the flock towards what God is doing

		<p>people and intentionally create platforms for them to grow/serve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Able to gather people together- Learn to discern and move in the spirit, e.g. having ministry time during prayer- Displays inspiring faith in personal life and outside CG	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Help others to flourish to become leaders- Leaders that envision and embrace the vision of the church- Connect group multiplies and blesses other communities, by raises and releasing leaders
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05 Roles in Connect Groups

These guidelines are meant to assist you for serving within Connect Groups.

Roles	Description	Areas of Service
Zone Leaders / CG Pastors	Oversee the running of CGs & pastoral care and discipleship of the members, with a special focus on the leaders. Experienced in ministry, management, leadership, pastoring, and CG matters.	Providing pastoral support and presence for CG leaders, and advising CG leaders and CGs, identifying new CG leaders and core team members.
CG Leaders	Our frontline pastors who pastorally care for their group of members. Growing themselves, their core team members, and their CG members in character, calling, chemistry, charismata, and competency.	Pastoring CG members in discipleship and community, leading and building a CG core team, leading and being a pastoral voice during prayer and Bible studies and discussions.
CG Core Team	The key support leaders who co-own the CG and assists in various ways such as leading the welcome, worship, social activities or admin, etc. Committed to following Jesus, committed to the CG, and committed to lead different areas within the group.	CG administration, attendance tracking, lead and oversee a team e.g. food, welcome, games, worship, Bible discussions, prayer, etc.
Members	May be a believer or non-believer. Shows interest in serving in the CG.	Food, welcome, games, may be rostered to facilitate worship, Bible discussions and prayer with oversight.

06 Role of A Connect Group Leader

The primary role of a Connect Group Leader is to pastor the members in the connect group. It is to help them to progress in their walk with God. Our win is when we can create a small group environment where authentic relationships can be formed so people can find freedom and take next steps in their faith!

PROVERBS 27:23

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

1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13

In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

A Connect Group Leader:

1. Has a personal, growing relationship with Jesus.
2. Is aligned with HTBB's core beliefs. (<https://www.htbb.org/beliefs>)
3. Has a genuine desire to serve and minister to people.
4. Is a person of character and integrity.
5. Desires to connect, lead, motivate and teach other people.
6. Is committed to personal spiritual growth and leadership development.
7. Knows the journey of pastoring others is never by himself or herself, but done together with others in a community.

All Connect Group Leaders are expected:

- To regularly attend our HTBB services.
- To support the vision of HTBB of playing our part in the evangelisation of the nations, the revitalisation of the local church, and the transformation of society.
- To support the outlined culture of HTBB.
- To aim to walk in a life that exemplifies Christ in all possible ways (being an example in speech and action).
- To be accountable to their assigned zone leader.
- To abide the safeguarding policy of HTBB (<https://htbb.org/safeguarding>) and to disclose any previous criminal records (if any).

07 HTBB Culture

Below is a description of the kind of culture that we are aiming to build at HTBB. We hope to see connect groups reflect these values as we serve one another and God.

VALUES			
Audacity	Aim high	Commission of Jesus Matthew 28:19 <i>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.</i>	Ask God to give you a vision that is so big it's impossible without him.
Unity	Enjoy it together	Prayer of Jesus John 17:20-21 <i>Pray... that they may be one... so that the world will believe...</i>	What unites us is infinitely greater than what divides us.
Generosity	Give it away	Love of Jesus Galatians 2:20 <i>The son of God... loved me and gave himself for me.</i>	You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.
Humility	Bow the knee	Attitude of Jesus Philippians 2:5-8 <i>Same attitude of Jesus... humbled himself, made himself nothing... form of a servant. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus.</i>	Humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less.
Tenacity	Never give up	Example of Jesus Hebrews 12:1-3 <i>Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus... who for the joy set before him endured the cross... so you will not grow weary and lose heart.</i>	A river cuts through rock not because of power but perseverance.

08 Connect Group Leader Support

1. Discipleship Team Support

As a Connect Group Leader, you are never alone in creating community. We have a Discipleship Team who are working alongside you to invest in building a flourishing connect group at HTBB.

Support: Pastoral oversight on urgent/serious pastoral issues, e.g. safeguarding, marriage difficulties, etc. The line of pastoral escalation: Zone Leader > Discipleship Team (Alvin) > Associate Vicar (Abel) > Vicar (Miles)

Safeguarding: Do reach out to our Safeguarding team via the Hotline number **+6019-555 6916** or at safeguarding@htbb.org. If you would like to report an incident, please complete this form: <https://forms.office.com/r/bvRgtWpLFd>.

2. Zone Leader Support

You will be provided with an oversight of Zone Leader who will be responsible for supporting and praying for you throughout your journey of leading a connect group.

Support: Immediate pastoral support and prayer support

09 Leadership Development

To support you in creating a connect group environment where people have the opportunity to build healthy relationships and experience spiritual growth, we have the following avenues. We do encourage you to participate to get most out of it!

1. Leaders' Gathering (4x)

This happens quarterly where we will learn practical tips of how to grow in our leadership. Leaders' Gatherings are equipping touchpoints with CG leaders and CG core team leaders on relevant and crucial leadership-related skills/competencies/postures that HTBB leaders cultivate consciously, such as how to recruit and raise team members to leadership, how to lead prayer ministry, how to handle tricky people, etc.

2. Zone Gathering (4x)

This happens quarterly, where CG leaders will meet together with their Zone Leaders for pastoral care. These check in points are also when zone leaders will seek to understand how CG leaders and CGs are progressing and are also platforms for CG leaders to raise issues in the CG to the Zone Leaders.

3. Annual CG Leaders Retreat

This happens once yearly, where CG leaders will meet together for a few days to rest and receive from the CG team and pastoral staff of HTBB. This is a great platform to fellowship and learn from other CG leaders, as well as to catch a vision for CGs for the year.

4. Discipleship Basics, Prayer Course, Prayer Ministry Training etc.

Throughout the year, our church has various courses and training opportunities that are great places to be equipped too.