**CDPC Care Group Leaders’ Guide**

In CDPC, we believe that the Care Groups (CGs) are an integral part of our community. As such, the CG structures and programs need to be constantly reviewed and updated to ensure that we leverage the CG platform to effectively encourage and care for church members. This simple guide is an attempt to provide a framework that is loose enough for each CG to function in its unique context.

**What is a Care Group?**

A Care Group (CG) is a basic Christian community of church members who are within the same ‘season’ or life experience and who commit to do life together by meeting regularly, studying God’s word, praying for one another, and growing in fellowship.

Besides ministry towards one another, the Care Group should also be a missional platform to pray for and reach non-Christians through suitable and strategic programs, activities, or events outside the regular meeting setting.

The CG is not the platform to conduct an in-depth study of the bible or any other doctrinal issues, rather, a place for mutual edification through the sharing of lives, and a communal reflection of God’s word. The CG, then, is a microcosm of CDPC’s Sunday service without replacing it.

**Why Care Group and Not Cell Group?**

The Cell Groups are usually small groups that are found in Cell Churches where the Cell Group leaders effectively function as pastors and the life of the church is very much centred around these groups. The Care Group, on the other hand, are small groups for church members to care for and serve one another, and to pray for one another. The focus then, is on the term, ‘caring’.

**How is the Care Group carried out?**

There are no hard and fast rules as to how the CG program should be carried out. The church encourages CGs to meet at least once a month, and consistently at a place most convenient for the members, using study materials recommended by the church. Each CG, then, has room for flexibility, and to contextualise its own program and approach.

Here is an example of a CG program that focuses on a few areas:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Duration | Activity | P.I.C |
| 8-8.15pm | Icebreaker-A simple game/ activity for members to ‘warm up’.-A great way to break the ice, especially if there are newcomers. | P.I.C for Icebreaker |
| 8.15-8.30pm | Worship-One or two simple/familiar songs. | Worship leader and a guitarist |
| 8.30-9pm | Word-Facilitation of the sermon questions-Facilitating any other questions from the floor | Word Facilitator |
| 9-9.30pm | Sharing and Prayer-CG members can share about their week- Members pray for each other | CG members |
| 9.30-10.30pm | Supper-CG members can take turns buying supper or simply go out for a ‘mamak’ session | CG members |

**Why should we encourage Church Members to commit to a Care Group?**

The Care Group ensures that CDPC members are involved in the life of the church by sharing their gifts and life with one another as they serve each other. Members will also be provided pastoral care by the CG leaders within their capacity as lay leaders, as well as holding one another accountable. Such intimate care cannot be provided by the elders during the Sunday service or consistently throughout the week, but the Care Group provides such a platform. Also, the Care Group provides a ‘safe space’ for members to discuss, share, and ask questions.

**What is expected of the Care Group leader?**

The Care Group leaders and assistants are to be CDPC members who have committed themselves to serving the church by planning CG programs, providing pastoral care for the members, facilitating the studies, identifying, and discipling potential leaders/facilitators, as well as facilitating other activities for the Care Group.

A Care Group leader is not expected to serve in their role beyond a two or three-year tenure/timeline so that they are not overstretched, and to ensure that new leaders are constantly being trained. However, there is flexibility in how long a leader would want to serve.

**Care Group Lifespan and Multiplication.**

The church encourages members to commit to a Care Group for as long as they would want to, to ensure that a deep community is built around the Care Groups. That being said, however, there is a real danger for Care Groups to become dormant or cliquish. As such, one positive solution to this would be for each Care Group to continually invite new church members and visitors to their meetings so that their Care Group continues to grow both in number and maturity, leading up towards a CG multiplication.

**The Process for Care Group Multiplication**

Once a Care Group reaches a regular attendance of 15-20 pax, the Care Group leaders should consider Care Group multiplication. This process which will be assisted by the church leadership would involve first appointing two or more leaders with complimenting gifts for each Care Group, and secondly, inviting or allocating members to the new Care Group according to their spiritual gifts. Upon multiplication, the new Care Group will be introduced during the Sunday service so that the rest of the church is aware, and regular worshippers will have the option to visit the new Care Group.

**How will the Care Group Leaders be supported by the church?**

The Care Group leaders meet the pastoral team once every two months to pray, update one another, and receive training that would equip them in their role to serve more effectively. On top of that, the pastors would visit the Care Groups occasionally to encourage the leaders and their members.

**Can the Care Group Leaders share their responsibility of pastoral care and facilitating the Word with Care Group members?**

The Care Group leaders are not just permitted to share their responsibility but are also encouraged to empower Care Group members to care for one another, and appoint gifted members to facilitate bible studies. That being said, however, before empowering Care Group members to serve, it is important for Care Group leaders to identify potential and gifted members so that they can be guided and moulded to serve the group through pastoral care and facilitation.

The church also highly recommends men who are gifted in facilitating sermon discussions or bible studies to consider stepping up to this avenue to take the biblical mandate of male headship within the context of teaching in the church seriously.