

I Rhythms I

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

1 Thessalonians 2:8

You cannot become a family in a classroom. You will not become family with other believers by simply studying the Bible with them. It would be difficult to grow deep family relationships if you only saw each other for a few hours every week. It takes time and effort to practice the reality of the new family relationships we have been given in Christ. The way you walk in family with the people in your Community Group is the same way you become close with anyone else - you choose to spend time with them.

Rhythms are intentional ways to share life with your group in a given week or month. It is planning to do things together with regularity and gospel intentionality. Rhythms are the practical ways we are going to be involved in one another's lives. We encourage both intentional rhythms (planned and established) and impromptu rhythms (unplanned or spontaneous). We want each Group to have 5 types of Rhythms that they practice each month.

Group Meeting Time - Groups should find a time each week to get together, share a meal, study the Bible, and care for one another. This is where we (Catch up on Life, Discuss the Scripture, Engage the Heart, and Review the Mission)

Sunday Gatherings - It should be normal for your group to see each other every Sunday. Between your group meeting time and Sunday Gatherings you should already be seeing the people in your group twice a week. Sunday Gatherings are low hanging fruit - make sure you connect with your group and consider using the opportunity to grab a meal before or after or serve together as a group.

Family Rhythm - Find some time during the month to do something fun together. Bowling, board game night, go to a park, etc. Really anything will work it simply needs to be for the express purpose of enjoying one another. This does need to be a separate night from your group meeting time. (If you only ever do your normal GMT but just a "fun night" it doesn't communicate to people "We actually are family" the same way that other time together does.)

Mission Rhythm - Once a month do something that is expressly aimed at people who do not know Jesus. This can be some time of service project, some intentional evangelism, or a pool party that everyone invites friends to. Pray before you do this for those God desires to see come to know him and make sure to debrief afterwards in order to grow together in sharing you faith and joining Jesus on mission.

LIT (Disciple Makers) - As a group leader you have several other individuals that you are

intentionally practicing your faith alongside. These are either Leaders in Training or several members who have agreed to be “Disciple Makers” for your group¹. Once a month make sure you get with them to coach, encourage, debrief, and plan for your future rhythms as a group. This is the most important rhythm for your group as we seek to make disciples and multiply healthy groups. (For specifics in this meeting refer to the LIT Crib Sheet)

For example, here is how a Community Group might plan their month:

- The Group Leader and the LIT get together on the first week of each month 1 hour before their Group Meeting Time to pray, coach, and plan the upcoming rhythms.
- On Sundays, the group attends the Gathering, sits together, and then goes to lunch afterward with the friends they have invited.
- This month on alternating Tuesday nights, the men watch the kids at someone’s house while the ladies go out for happy hour, then vice versa.
- On Thursday nights, they have their group meeting time.
- On the last Saturday of this month they are going to host a tv show viewing party to meet each other’s unbelieving coworkers, neighbors, and friends.

These would be examples of intentional rhythms, the ways that a group plans to intentionally cross paths on a given week. Then, a group might have impromptu rhythms, where somebody in the group may GroupMe, “Hey, I’m headed to a movie on Saturday night with some coworkers...who wants to join?” If everyone in the group is thinking about how to include the other group members in their life, then your opportunities for community are endless.

Helpful Tip: As your group tries to implement relational rhythms, don’t be discouraged if it seems to be harder than you hoped. It takes time to build relationships and figure out what works to help you be around each other regularly. Consistency breeds participation, so be encouraged and keep at it.

Rhythm	Explanation
Gatherings	Attend the Gathering together, serve in Kid City or Host Team as a group, sit in the same part of the auditorium, grab coffee beforehand or lunch afterward
Group Meeting Time	Make intentional rhythms a priority in your schedule. Group meeting times allow you to catch up on life, discuss the sermon/scripture, personally connect with each other, and plan your opportunities for mission.
Serve Together	Find an area or organization in the city that your group can serve on a regular basis.
Mandatory Mandates	At your group meeting time, break up into gender-based groups of two to three people and agree to meet up before the next week.
Third Place	This can be anything from a local coffee shop to a downtown music venue. It gives your group a place to be anytime they have free time and can expect to run into another group member.
It only takes two	Do you and someone in your group play golf on Saturdays? Do it together, and the two of you have started a rhythm that you can invite others into.
Meals	You eat 21 meals in a week (or more, for some of us). Choose to eat them with other group members when possible.
Rally behind the inviter	Is there somebody in your group that is extroverted and has lots of friends? Figure out how they are building relationships and join in what they are doing.
Hobbies	Tennis, Flag-Football, Cornhole, Saturday morning tea, Dog walking group, CrossFit, Fishing Club... invite people to participate with you in your hobbies.
Community Events	From benefit concerts to minor league baseball games, engage with the city and invite others along.
Holidays	Christmas, Thanksgiving, Halloween, New Year's, 4th of July, Easter. College Football Season... you get the point.
Chores and Errands	Go grocery shopping together. Take your pets to the vet at the same time. Help each other do yard work to make it more enjoyable. After all, you are trying to become family.
Personal Celebrations	Birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, promotions, cancer-free celebrations, baby showers... celebrate together!
Fun makes family	Plan a board game night. Go bowling after your group meeting time once a month. Check out Waffle House after midnight. This is how you make memories.