



## Creating a Cornerstone Group Covenant

Everyone in your group will come with different expectations based on their past experiences. A Cornerstone Group covenant sets and clarifies realistic expectations and provides a clear purpose and vision for your group. It identifies specific roles, values, and boundaries and can minimize misunderstandings. It also allows the group and the leader to hold members accountable to clearly stated expectations. At the end of this document is a sample Cornerstone Group covenant which you can use to aid the creation of a covenant unique to your group.

### Establishing Your Group Covenant

In some groups, a pre-written covenant is introduced at the first meeting. In other groups, a covenant is developed in collaboration with the other group members. Below is a process somewhere in the middle and may be helpful for most groups.

- **Step 1:** Composition. Draft a covenant with your co-leader leaving blanks/space where you want the group's specific input. Ideally, this is done before your very first meeting.
- **Step 2:** Conversation. At the group meeting, give a copy of the draft to each group member. Discuss each point to make sure clarity and relevance are achieved.
- **Step 3:** Consensus. Work towards an agreement. Be flexible on non-essentials, yet firm on essentials. Essentials may include participation, confidentiality, support, group mission, and St. Mark's requirements.
- **Step 4:** Commitment. Having members sign the covenant is not recommended—this will be creepy to newcomers. However, buy-in and agreement to abide by the covenant is not optional. A commitment will allow you and the group to hold each other accountable should someone violate the group standards.
- **Ongoing Review.** Regularly review the covenant with your group. This will allow the group to sustain healthy standards and help the group self-evaluate. Ask “Where are we doing well?” “What needs improvement?” “Where does our covenant need to change?”
- **Open Chair:** Newcomers should be made aware of the group covenant. Be sure to distribute the covenant to new participants before or immediately following their first visit.

## Topics to Consider for Your Covenant:

### Logistics

- Leadership
- Start and end time
- Frequency of meeting
- Longevity of the group
- Hosting and location
- Childcare
- Absences and attendance

### Values

- Cornerstone Group Essentials (from CG Basics)
- Confidentiality
- Respect for others
- Good listening habits
- Other personal and group expectations

### Purposes

- Group openness
- Group multiplication goals
- Study expectations
- Shared participation and roles

# Our Cornerstone Group Covenant (Sample)

*“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”  
Hebrews 10:25*

## LOGISTICS

- CG Leader: Betty (betty@bty.com)
- Co-Leader: Bill (bill@bill.com)
- Every Wednesday at 123 Main Street (John and Jane’s home) from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm
- We will strive to start and end on time, but better late than never.
- If you can’t make a group meeting please let the leader or host know.
- Feel free to hang-out after the meeting, but please scram by 9:30 pm so Jane and John can get to sleep!

## VALUES

As a St. Marks Cornerstone Group we will pursue the eight CG Essentials:

### Historic Teaching

- Bible-focused
- Transformational

### Christ’s Mission

- Inviting others
- Serving People and sharing the Gospel

### Christian Community

- Meaningful friendships
- Shared ownership
- Grace-oriented
- Praying

### Other Values of Our Group:

- Confidentiality: What is shared in the group stays in the group.
- We will build relationships with each other beyond the group meeting.
- Each of us will listen well and will avoid dominating the discussion.
- We will avoid fixing people, snap judgments, and easy answers.

## PURPOSES

- We will be open to new members and invite those who might be interested.
- If our group grows beyond fourteen people, we will multiply into two groups.
- We will meet for twelve months and then evaluate our direction.
- We will perform a service project in the community at least twice a year.

(NOTE: It does not have to be this long. Include only what is helpful)