



Leader's Guide '25



MILE CITY CHURCH

2025 EDITION

THE OFFICIAL MILE CITY
CITY GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

HOSTING
SHEPHERDING

DISCUSSIONS
LOGISTICS

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What is a City Group?

At Mile City, we say it all the time: **Don't do life alone**. City Groups are how we live that out. They're not just another program—they're the heartbeat of our church.

City Groups are smaller communities, usually 12–15 people, meeting in homes all across the Mile City area on different nights of the week. These groups are designed to help people build **real relationships with each other while growing in their relationship with God**.

City Groups are the best place to:

- **Ask real questions** about faith.
- Take **next steps** toward God.
- **Find people** to walk with through the highs and lows of life.

And here's where you come in: as a **City Group Leader**, you're not just hosting a meeting—you're creating an environment where **life-change happens**. You're helping people experience what it means to move toward God and move toward people in a real and practical way.

Thank You for Leading!

We're so grateful for you. By saying "yes" to this role, you're stepping into something bigger than yourself. You're helping build community, disciple people, and live out the mission of Jesus.

You're not alone in this! You'll have the support of your Coordinator, your staff, and the resources in this handbook to help you win as a leader.

Let's do this together—and let's make sure no one in the Mile City moves through life alone.



PLYMOUTH LOCATION PASTOR, MILE CITY CHURCH

Prayer in City Groups

When it comes to praying together in your groups, we would like you to not just pray over your group but to lead your group through prayer times with an open Bible. Scripture-fed, Spirit-led, worship-based prayer times. **Stop asking for prayer requests while talking, instead ask for prayer requests while praying.**

Based on the text that was discussed in the group time, we would like you to find a couple of prayer prompts within the text to lead your group through prayer. If you are doing sermon-based questions, we will provide some prayer prompts for you each week. These prompts will be based on *the four R's* but again be Spirit-led and don't feel that you have to be tied just to the four R's.

REVERENCE - Identify and celebrate God's praiseworthy attributes.

RESPONSE - Surrender to Him and His ways.

REQUEST - Ask the Spirit to guide your prayer over concerns, resources, and relationships.

READINESS - Encouragement and strength for spiritual battle.

Example Prayer

Let's look at Psalm 8 for some Scripture-fed, Spirit-led prayer!

Reverence - Identify and celebrate God's praiseworthy attributes

- His name is majestic, glorious in heaven and earth - vv. 1-9
- His strength is displayed in and through the weak/vulnerable - v. 2
- He overpowers His enemies - v. 2

Prayer Prompts

- I praise Your Majesty because Your name is ...
- Thank you that You display Your strength in and through us even when ...
- I praise You that Your power is greater than ...

Response - Surrender to Him and His ways

- I acknowledge Your power and sovereignty in ... I surrender my disordered heart/life.
- You set the worlds in place, so I trust You to bring order and stability to ...
- Thank You that You are mindful of me and care for me when ...

Request - Ask the Spirit to guide your prayers over concerns, resources, and relationships

- I pray that the majesty of Your name will be evident in my life today as I ...
- I ask for Your strength this week as I encounter the enemy of ...
- I pray for ... (names), bring order and meaning to their lives as they struggle with ...

Readiness - Encouragement and strength for spiritual battle

- Lord, fix my mind on Your majestic name and authority as I battle with ...

SECTION ONE

Key Roles in City Groups

Helping you invite others to live out their gifts in your group.



About City Groups Roles

In the past, we've encouraged leaders to fill roles like **Apprentice, Serve Lead, Care Lead, and Fun Lead** from within their group. Some groups thrived with this approach, while others struggled to get people to commit.

Now, instead of focusing on titles, we want to focus on participation and ownership. The goal is to give your group members opportunities to **step in, use their gifts, and share the load of leadership**.

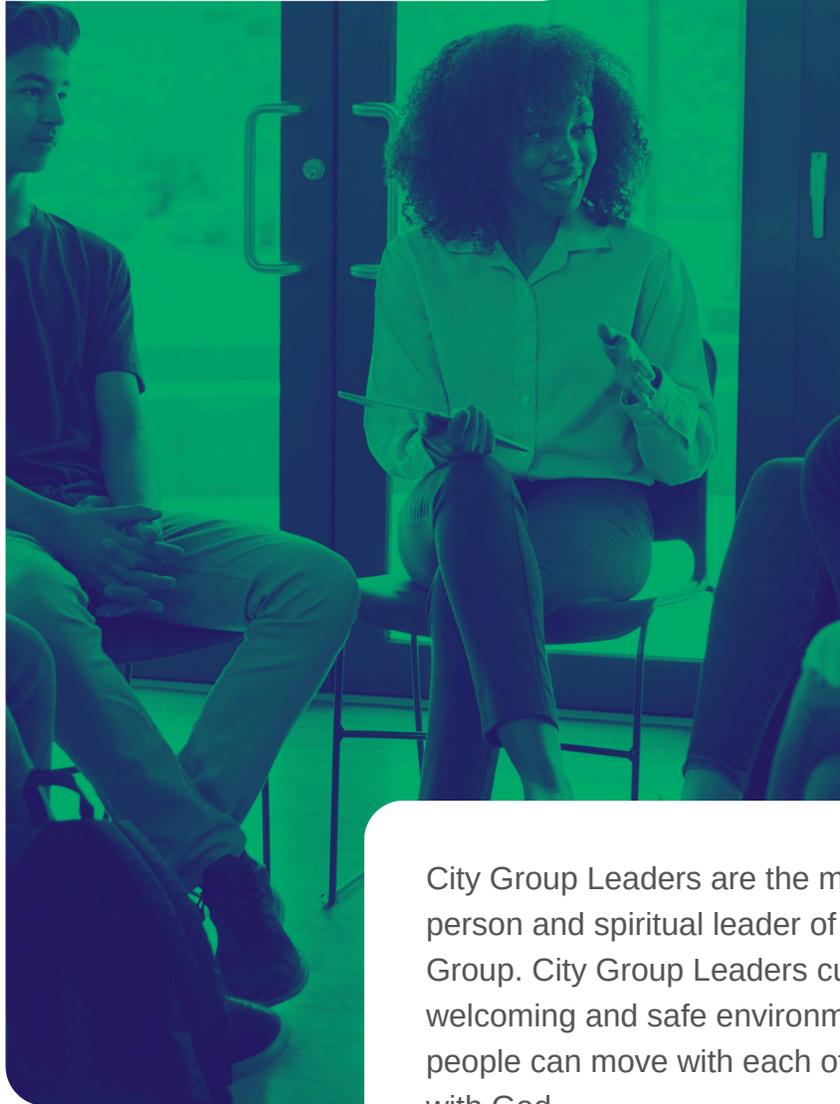
Here's what that looks like:

- **Need help with care?** Ask someone to connect with the Mile City Care Coordinator when a need comes up.
- **Thinking about future leaders?** Start small. Invite someone to lead an icebreaker, share a story, or facilitate a question during discussion. This gives them a taste of leadership without the pressure of a title like "Apprentice."

As you will see in Section One, we've outlined different areas where you can invite others to own pieces of the group. This isn't just about making your job easier—it's about helping people **live out their spiritual gifts** and discover what God has wired them to do.

When leadership is shared, your group becomes stronger, more connected, and better equipped to multiply in the future.

Leader



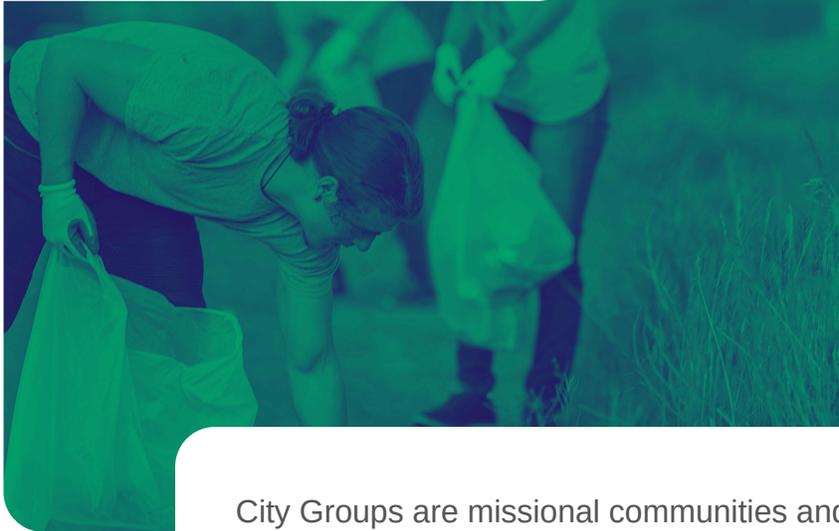
City Group Leaders are the main point person and spiritual leader of the City Group. City Group Leaders cultivate a welcoming and safe environment where people can move with each other and with God.

Apprentice



Apprentices are City Group leaders in training. Many don't feel like they are ready or comfortable being called an apprentice, so as a leader, look for ways to involve others in leading the fun, prayer, or question time!

Serve

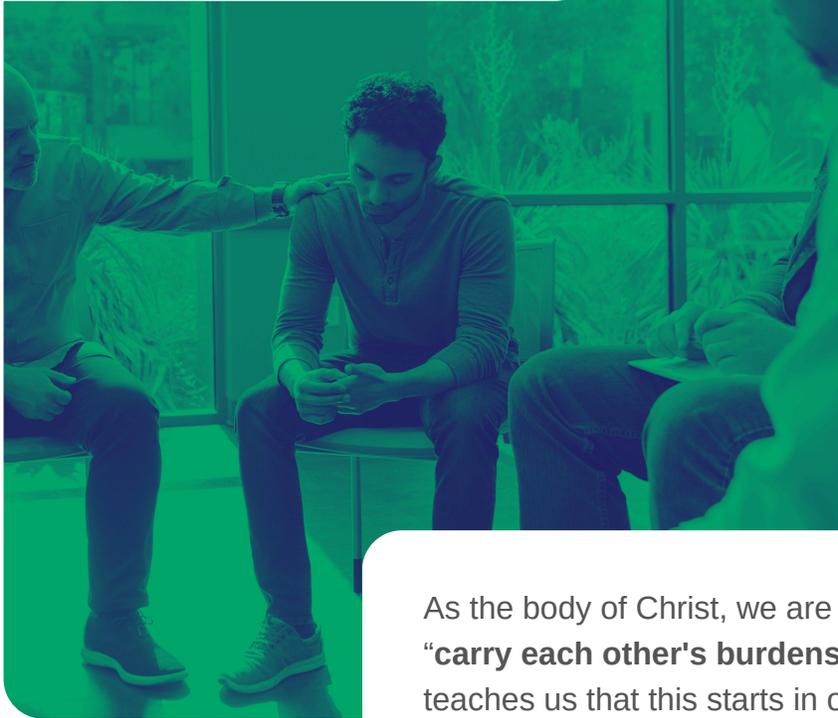


City Groups are missional communities and every City Group is responsible for planning and executing one serve opportunity outside of the City Group each Mile. Others can act as the point person for those events. The church has several wonderful seasonal partnerships with which your group might serve. Outside opportunities are also welcome, feel free to discuss with your location pastor.

Service to others means being unselfish, it means doing something for someone else without expecting any reward or gain. God is far more interested in why you serve others than in how well you serve them. He's always looking at your heart, serving willingly and eagerly out of love for Jesus and gratitude for all he's done for you. You are most like Jesus when you're serving others. After washing his disciples' feet, Jesus said, ***"I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you."***

-John 13:14-15

Care



As the body of Christ, we are called to “**carry each other's burdens**”. Scripture teaches us that this starts in our Church community. In our context, that is the City Groups.

This does NOT mean we take on ALL of someone's responsibilities. Some things are beyond the group's scope and can be shared with a staff member for further guidance. It does however mean we are to love each other as we want to be loved. Several members can help by keeping the group informed and organizing care. We also want to reach out to our Mile City Care Lead when a staff member should be made aware of any care needs.

Fun



City Groups are relational communities and every City Group should aim to have at least one fun gathering outside of the group per Mile. Members can help by planning and organizing this event.

SECTION TWO

Leader Expectations

What we are looking for in our City Group Leaders



Leader Expectations



- **Model** the seven in your own life.
- **Create** weekly City Group gatherings that foster authentic community and spiritual growth, through meaningful discussion, encouragement, having fun, and prayer with your group members.
- **Identify** and develop potential new leaders in your group.
- **Contact** new people who sign up for your group within 24 hours and welcome them.
- **Communicate** important group updates and information with your members in an effective and timely fashion. Communication is key... if you don't tell them, they don't know.
- **Read** (really read) weekly City Group Leader emails.
- **Track** attendance weekly in Planning Center.
- **Attend** City Group leader training and gatherings.



Discipling your group



At Mile City, one of our core values is **don't do life alone**. Life is better when it's lived in community, and that's why City Groups matter so much. They're not just another program—they're one of the best ways we can help people move toward God and move toward people.

City Groups exist for discipleship. In other words, they help us follow Jesus together. As a leader, you might not have the time or capacity to give everyone in your group one-on-one discipleship all the time, and that's okay. The good news is that your job isn't to do it all—it's to create an environment where discipleship happens naturally and intentionally.

Here's how to make that happen:

Keep the Four Essentials Front and Center

We use four essentials that aren't just ideas—they're tools that will help your group grow deeper in their relationship with God and with each other.

(1) Jesus and His Word at the Center

Our groups don't revolve around opinions, good advice, or feelings. They revolve around Jesus and the truth of His Word. Whether it's in your discussion time or in a one-on-one conversation, point people back to Scripture and how it applies to real life.

(2) Real Conversations

Discipleship happens when we go deeper than the surface. Create a safe, authentic space where people can be honest about their struggles, doubts, and victories. Encourage heart-level conversations in your groups.

(3) Building Community

City Groups aren't just meetings—they're relationships. Discipleship happens in the everyday moments: watching the game together, grabbing coffee, showing up for each other in the highs and lows. Invite your group into your life and be intentional about stepping into theirs.

Discipling your group



(4) Live on Mission

It's easy for groups to turn inward, but Jesus calls us outward. Push your group to think beyond themselves—to love their neighbors, serve their city, and live on mission. When we do that, we avoid cliques and keep our focus on what matters most: helping people take steps toward God.

Model It and Multiply It

- As the leader, you set the tone. When you model what it looks like to follow Jesus, your group will notice. But remember, **discipleship isn't just on you**. Every member has a part to play in helping each other grow. Encourage peer-to-peer discipleship so your group becomes a team—not just an audience.

Stay Connected to Your City Group Coordinator

- You're not in this alone. Your Coordinator is here to help you win as a leader and **grow as a follower of Jesus**. They're not just for emergencies or big problems—they're a resource for leadership development and spiritual growth. Stay in touch with your Coordinator regularly. Ask questions. Share wins and challenges. Don't lead in isolation.

When you keep these things in mind, your group will be more than a weekly meeting—it will be a movement of people helping each other move toward God and move toward people. That's what City Groups are all about.

Essential One: Jesus and His Word are center



Why do we study the Word of God?

1. The Word of God is **true**. (Psalm 119:14,42, James 1:17, Titus 1:2).
2. The Word of God is **sufficient** to do the work of God in the people of God (2 Peter 1:3- 11, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12-13).
3. The Word of God is **necessary** (Deut. 8:3, Romans 10:14-17).
4. The Word of God is **authoritative** (2 Peter 1:21, Heb. 1:1-2, Acts 1:16, Matt. 28:19).
5. The Word of God is about **Jesus** (Luke 24:25-27, I Peter 1:10-11, John 5:45-46).

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:16



Leading A Discussion



Start with an icebreaker.

It is named this for good reason. These provided questions help break the ice and get everything warmed up. It primes the group for better conversation. We always have to remember that we won't have all seasoned believers in our groups. This could be someone's first step even before going to church.

Understand the material you are leading.

Take time to look over the questions to understand where you are trying to go (move your group towards one big idea from the message or the specific study). Questions will be sent to your email no later than the Saturday before the message on Sunday.

Let the Spirit lead.

If the conversation is going well don't rush it just to get through all of the questions. Same concept if you're not doing weekly questions and doing a study instead. Quality over quantity is a great aim for your group.

What if someone talks too much or derails conversation constantly?

- Ask questions to specific people using their name(s).
- If a person continues to dominate the conversation, schedule a time to talk to them alone and complement their eagerness to answer but also ask them to only answer 1 question to leave room for others to answer.
- You're the leader, you have to keep the conversation on task. It's ok to be assertive and bold with grace :)

What about uncomfortable silence?

Silence is golden. Remember, you as the leader have already read the questions ahead of time. This is the group's first time and they need time to process it. Eventually, the silence will be broken. Sometimes if we break the silence too quickly as leaders, we might miss out on great conversations!

Essential Two: Real Conversations



Biblical community will not happen unless people know God and are known by others. City Groups should be a place where Christians are able to be safely known and encouraged toward faith and obedience. That's why leaders should ask real-life questions that serve to draw out a person's inner thoughts.

Real Conversations



Real Conversations are not:

- **Natural** for people.
- Probing only for **secret sin struggles**: We are not sin hunters!
- Simply asking **heart-level questions** (without following up with helpful support or accountability.)
- Only done in regular **City Group gatherings**.

Real Conversation are:

- **Knowing and remembering** the basic facts about someone's life and family.
- Cultivating a **culture** of knowing in your City Group.
- **Modeling** what it looks like to be transparent.
- Being wise with **when and how** you press into the details of someone's life.
- Seeking to **bear the burdens** of those in your City Group.
- **Praying** for the Lord to open people's hearts and open doors for opportunities.

Heart Level Questions

- How are you doing in the midst of that?
- How have you been responding to that situation?
- What are you feeling most passionate about right now?
- Can you share more about what that struggle has actually looked like this week?
- How are you feeling about that?

It is often through asking the second or third question in a row that we can start getting at the heart level with others and what they are believing, struggling with, or feeling deeply.

Levels of Care



Level 1

ISSUES // “Everyday” struggles (i.e. shame & guilt, fear, anger, sorrow, job loss, financial need).

WHO // An **every-believer** ministry; godly friend, mentor, disciple.

SETTING // Informal; meet as needed.

PROCESS // Care comes primarily through existing relationships. Informal invitations made by friends who notice issues in a friend’s life.

Level 2

ISSUES // Habitual struggles (i.e. individual habitual sins, marriage issues, parenting/family issues, conflict, medical illness).

WHO // **City Group leaders**, family leader, mature close believer; staff, coordinator consulted.

SETTING // Informal; initiate some intentional regular meetings for a short period of time (4-8 weeks).

PROCESS // Care comes informally; meet as needed for a short period of time.

Level 3

ISSUES // Debilitating/destructive struggles (i.e. drunkenness, sexual immorality, debilitating depression and anxiety, etc.)

WHO // **Coordinators**, elders, and pastoral staff.

SETTING // Formal counseling.

PROCESS // Prefer to have a godly friend, mentor or City Group leader participate in the counseling process.

Level 4

ISSUES // Adultery, divorce, sexual abuse, domestic violence, suicide threat, criminal offense, church discipline cases. Tragic life-dominating sins that often come through accusation or confession.

WHO // **Elders, and the pastoral staff**, other necessary individuals.

SETTING // Formal crisis counseling; some cases may merit referrals to outside counselors.

PROCESS // In addition to level three, other referrals and recommendations may be made.

Essential Three: Building Community



Your City Group Is More Than a Meeting!

At Mile City, we say it all the time: Don't do life alone. City Groups are one of the best ways we live that out. But here's the deal—your City Group isn't just an event on the calendar. It's a community of people **helping each other move toward God** and move toward people.

Unfortunately, it's easy for people (and leaders!) to slip into an event mentality without even realizing it.

Building Community

Your City Group is not just a weekly event. It's a community of people.

CITY GROUP EVENT MENTALITY

"The Small Group is an event that happens weekly."

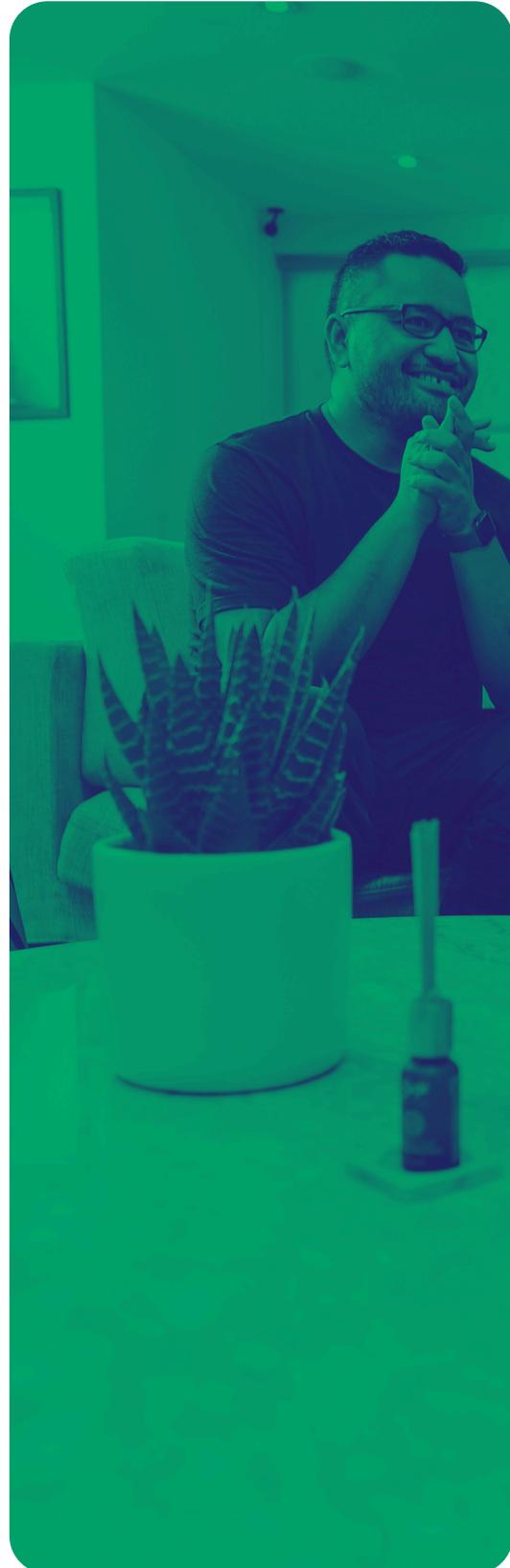
When members have an "event mentality" they focus more on what they're receiving

CITY GROUP COMMUNITY MENTALITY

"The Small Group is a community that gathers regularly outside Sunday morning worship services."

When members have a "community mentality" they focus on the other members, and this encourages discipleship relationships both inside and outside of the gatherings.

Encourage yourself and those in your group to have a "community mentality"!



Essential Four: Live on Mission



Just like individual Christians are called to multiply (through evangelism and discipleship), City Groups should also have a view for how to multiply God's work in their lives.

This happens in two ways:

- Multiplication as a group
- Evangelism & neighboring

Here's the reality: even if everyone at Mile City wanted to jump into a City Group today, they couldn't—because there aren't enough groups yet. The only way more community gets created is when new groups multiply.

Life moves in chapters, and most City Groups are meant for a season, not a lifetime. That's why it's important for leaders to regularly pause and ask: How's the group doing? How am I doing as a leader? Is God calling us to shift or even multiply?

Multiplication isn't just about numbers—it's about giving people opportunities to step up, use their spiritual gifts, and lead. When we multiply, we make space for more people to experience life-giving community and take their next step toward God.

Live on Mission



How to multiply your group:

It's never too early to talk with your group members about the possibility of them leading a City Group in the future.

As you encourage them to use their gifts in the group, there are 2 methods for multiplying your City Group.

- **Sending:** involves sending a group member to launch another group without any of your current group
- **Splitting:** involves sending a group member to launch another group with a batch of your current group members joining that new group

Evangelism and Neighboring

While the City Group gathering exists primarily for believers, City Groups should still look to multiply the gospel through evangelism: individually and as a group. There are a number of different ways that City Groups can support each other in evangelism:

- Equip and train group members to evangelize to reach their "one".
- Regularly ask about and encourage group members to be engaged in evangelism and keeping one another accountable.
- Pray for non-believers in your City Group gathering (in your prayer times)
- Plan events to participate in evangelism as a City Group.

Over the course of the year, your City Group may want to consider taking an "80-20 approach" to the school year. This allows the majority of the year to be focused on building strong relationships within the City Group while utilizing the summer to foster relationships with neighbors and non-Christians.

The school year is **20% outward and 80% inward** while summer is **80% outward and 20% inward**.

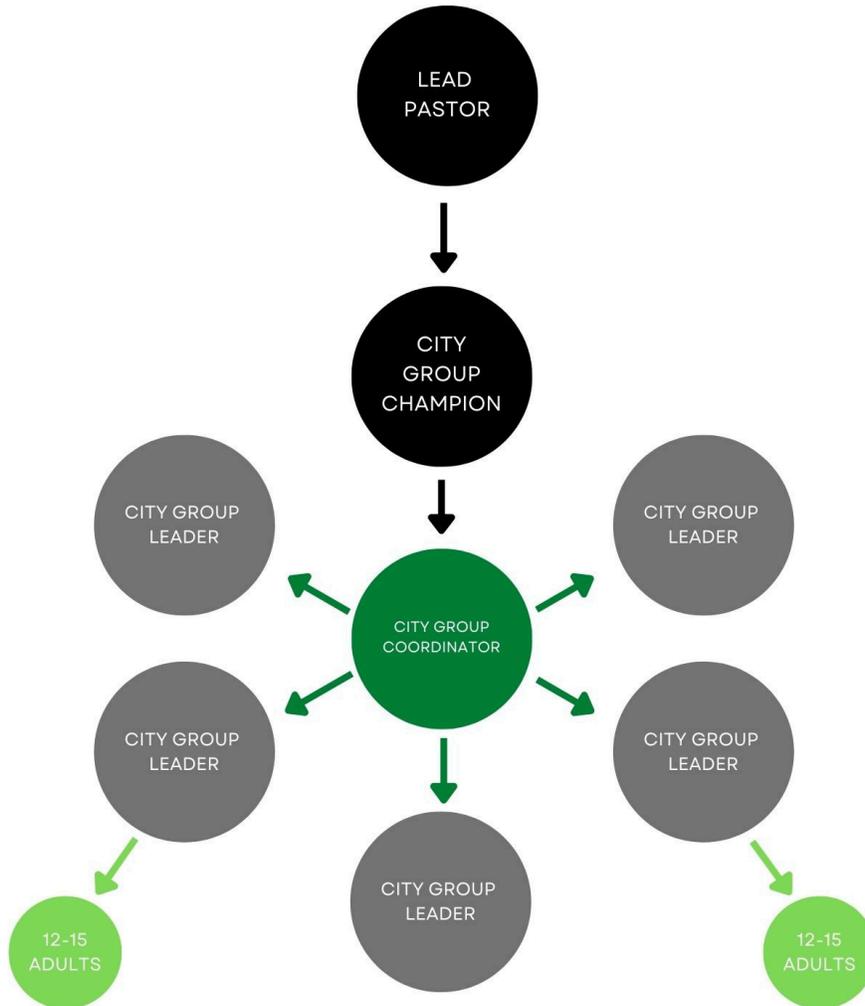
SECTION THREE

Structure & Logistics

City Group Structure & Breakdown of Seasonal 'Miles'



City Group Structure



We have a Lead Pastor, a City Group Champion, a system of Coaches, our City Group Leaders, and then our City Groups. Each person in our leadership structure will minister two levels down. We ask for them to know the details in the lives of those one level down and to loosely know the details two levels down.

We ask that significant life events be communicated to the City Group Coordinator and City Group Champion so that we can celebrate, support, and pray with you.

Important Dates

GROUP SUNDAY

September 14th

FALL MILE BEGINS

Week of September 21st

SERVE WEEK

Week of October 19th

FALL MILE ENDS

Week of December 7th

GROUP SUNDAY

January 4th

WINTER MILE BEGINS

Week of January 11th

SERVE WEEK

Week of February 22

WINTER MILE ENDS

Week of March 22nd

GROUP SUNDAY

April 12th

SPRING MILE BEGINS

Week of April 19th

SPRING MILE ENDS

Week of June 14th

SUMMER MILE BEGINS

Week of July 5th

SUMMER MILE ENDS

Week of August 16th



MILE CITY CHURCH

