

BAYSIDE GROUP FAQ'S

What does the Bible say about groups?

The original church looked very different from what we now call "church". There were no church grounds, no church building. In the beginning, church was people!

"Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts" (Acts 2:46).

Groups were an integral part of the early church and vital to its life. Groups were used for a variety of purposes including: provision, communion and worship, evangelism, prayer, and encouragement. (Acts 2:44-45, 2:32-37, 2:45-47, 5:42, 12:12, 16:40)

The reality is that life change takes place most often as the result of a significant relationship with either an individual or a small number of individuals in community with one another. Groups can provide a place for deep and lasting relationships.

What is a Bayside group?

A Bayside group is basically a group of people who want to connect with others who are going in the same direction. A group provides a place to develop relationships with people, to get to know them and be known. It's also a place to learn more about God and about how to deepen your relationship with him. Group members are there to encourage and support you through this spiritual journey and in the day-to-day challenges of life. Some specialized groups deal with specific topics and are more structured. These groups often meet for a set number of weeks, use topical study materials, and have a trained facilitator to guide discussion.

Why should I join a group?

- 1) Feel like you belong. With a church as large as Bayside, it's easy to feel lost in the crowd so-to-speak. When you're in a group, you'll feel like part of the family.
- 2) Experience life change. We believe life change happens best in the context of relationships. You'll grow not just in your knowledge of God and the Bible, but you'll grow in your experience of God as well. As you learn and grow with your group, you'll begin to experience what it means to be an authentic follower of Christ.
- 3) Handle life better. God never intended us to face the pressures and stresses of life alone. With your group, you'll never have to! Also, as you begin to apply what you're learning from your group, you'll be better equipped to face the challenges of everyday life.

What happens in a group?

This varies depending on the purpose of each group. Some groups are sermon based and they meet to discuss in more depth the weekend message. Other groups are topically based. When they meet there is often a book or video that shapes the discussion. Other groups meet because of a common interest. They will have a group activity planned. Don't worry! No one will ask you to do anything that makes you uncomfortable. You won't be asked to pray or read out loud or share anything that you don't want to share. Your level of participation is strictly up to you.

Are all groups the same?

Our groups are as varied as the individuals who attend them! We have all kinds of groups because we have all kinds of people. You'll find groups for married couples, men, and women, and within each of those group types, you'll find a variety of topics and common interests. Every group has its own personality.

What kinds of groups are available?

Bayside has the following basic categories:

- Men's
- Women's
- Married or coed
- Young Professional
- College

These groups offer natural connecting points through which members come together and form real relationships. Within these affinity categories there are specific groups that are based upon age and stage of life.

Where do groups meet?

Most groups meet in homes throughout the area. Some groups meet in local restaurants or offices, and some meet on-campus during the week.

How often do groups meet?

Most groups meet weekly however some groups have arranged to meet bi-weekly or monthly due to common schedules.

How long does a group meeting last?

A typical group will meet for an hour and a half. When you contact a small group leader about their group, they can tell you how long a typical meeting lasts for them.

What types of things do groups do when they meet together?

Healthy groups at Bayside do a variety of activities together! By meeting regularly, they have opportunities to study the Bible, eat meals together, serve others in need, hold each other accountable, pray together, make an impact in the community, be spontaneous and have fun together.



What do I do if I cannot attend a meeting?

Life gets busy and emergencies come up in all of our lives. You may not always be able to attend but we encourage you to come as often as possible. Be sure to let your group leader know you won't be attending that week so they can plan accordingly.

Do groups provide childcare?

Each group handles childcare in different ways. Some small groups offer childcare; some groups may hire a babysitter and ask members to help cover the cost; other groups do not provide childcare and leave it to group members to make arrangements on their own. Childcare is provided for our on-site groups but must be pre-registered. Groups offering childcare will indicate this in their group description. You can also contact the small group leader to see how their group handles childcare and get more specifics.

How can I find a group?

For a listing of available groups, check our website at blueoaks.baysideonline.com/groups/. Then you can decide what kind of group you'd like to visit. Once you've found a group that looks good, just click on the link to email the small group leader. The small group leader will tell you more about the group and can answer any of the questions you may have. They'll also give you directions and let you know when they're meeting next. Then, all you need to do is visit the group.

What if I want to try a different group?

It's always a good idea to give a group a couple of visits before making up your mind. It may take a few meetings with the group to begin to feel like you've found the right place. Of course, we want you to find a group that's a good fit for you, so don't be afraid to try another group if the group you're visiting doesn't seem to be a great match. We all understand that a lot of factors such as schedules, personalities, study topics, etc, go into finding a group that fits.

Will I be expected to stay in the group I join "forever"?

No. You have the freedom to join other groups as your needs change, your schedule changes, or if you would like to study something another group has chosen.

Do you have to be a Bayside member to be in a group?

No. Groups are open for anyone to attend.

Our groups are never *closed* but they do get *full*.

Living rooms run out of chairs, but the kingdom of God is available for everyone! We'll do our

best to find a spot for you; if we run out of space in one of our groups, we'll help you find another group to join!