

**Abundant
Groups**

WELCOME

abundant



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All Scripture is from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.

WHY ABUNDANT GROUPS EXIST

Abundant Groups have one, simple purpose—to bring people together. We believe God created us to live in community with others and only then can we experience the abundant life He intends for us.

We believe life change happens in the context of Relationships.

Meaningful relationships can be hard to find, and Abundant Groups exist to make life-changing relationships relevant and accessible to you.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12

Abundant Groups Model

At Abundant, we believe our church must grow larger and smaller at the same time.

We grow larger to reach as many people as possible with our Vision - **TEACH MY CHILDREN HOW TO ENJOY THE ABUNDANT LIFE MY SON CAME TO GIVE THEM** which is based on John 10:10

Abundant is a church of Small Groups, not a church with Small Groups.

We base our Abundant Group model on the early church as described in the Bible in the book of Acts. In Acts, you can read about the tremendous growth of the first church in Jerusalem, where group meetings in homes helped lay the foundation.

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

ACTS 5:42

Abundant Groups offer people:

1. A Place to connect

Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:22 TLB

We were not made to do life alone. God created us for community, and Abundant Groups provide a place to connect with others, share life, and grow in faith together.

2. A Place to protect

We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

1 JOHN 3:16 NLT

It is through life together that our problems become smaller, and God uses others to bring support and encouragement to our lives. Abundant Groups become a place where others don't just know your name, but care about what is happening in your life and want to support you in your spiritual journey.

3. A Place to grow

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

PROVERBS 27:17

We believe every person is created with God-given potential to make a difference in the world. Abundant Groups are a place you can grow with others to become more like Jesus and reach the potential God has put inside you.

WHAT A ABUNDANT GROUP LOOKS LIKE

Your Life is Your Group

At Abundant, we use a free market approach to Abundant Groups. This means we want people to gather together based on the things they enjoy and are important to them. Essentially, the things you are already doing in your life are the things that can make up your Group!

Free market leaders form their group around their gifts or interests.

From sports groups to lunch groups, mom groups to student groups, hobby groups to creative arts groups, our groups are as varied as we are. All groups fall within one or multiple of twelve hubs:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| • Men | • Financial |
| • Women | • Support |
| • Marriage | • Outreach |
| • Family | • Military |
| • Spanish | • Senior Adults |
| • Young Adult (ages 18-25) | • Everyone Welcomed
(activity based) |

Group Structure

Groups meet throughout the year in three semesters.



Groups meet every other week during each semester. However, you can meet more often if desired.

Groups typically meet in a variety of places like homes, parks, restaurants, coffee shops and office buildings. If the group meets in a home, all the adults living in the home must complete a background check. (At the present time, however, groups meet digitally to comply with state and local health orders.)

New groups start every semester making it easy to build community and enjoy different types of groups.

No matter what your group meets about, each meeting should be made up of three things:

1. Casual Fellowship

Laid back time for group members to talk and get to know each other.

2. Activity or Discussion

This will vary based on what kind of group you're leading. It could be an activity like Frisbee or outreach or a discussion about a book or Sunday's message.

3. Prayer

Ask for prayer requests from group members and pray at the beginning and/or the end of each group meeting.

Abundant Groups are not a place for:

- Business
- Offerings
- Unapproved materials or speakers
- Controversial topics

VISION

In Habakkuk 2:2, the Bible says: “Write the vision down, make it plain, so all whoever reads it can run with it.” It is important for us to constantly have a vision for our lives and our Abundant Groups. How can we know if we have achieved our goals if we have not defined them yet. Take a moment and think about what you would like to accomplish through your Group. What has God put in your heart? What would success in your group look like? After taking some time to think about your group, use the following section to write the vision for your group.

Vision for you as a leader:

Vision for your group:

YOUR ROLE AS AN ABUNDANT GROUP LEADER

God has a part for all of us to play in the church and Abundant Group Leaders come alongside the pastors and staff of Abundant church to help care for people.

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

EPHESIANS 4:11-13 NLT

The primary role of a Abundant Group Leader is to help group members move one step in their walk with God.

Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds;

Proverbs 27:23

People in your group will be at different places in their spiritual lives and each person will have different next steps to take. Here is a guide of some next steps you can help people take:

- Start attending services
- Start reading the Bible regularly
- Start praying regularly
- Be water and Holy Spirit baptized
- Complete Abundant Growth Track
- Join the Serving Family
- Start tithing
- Start attending Wednesday services

- Attend an Abundant conference
- Invite a friend or neighbor to church or a Small Group
- Attend an Abundant Group Leadership Training to become a Abundant Group Leader

How to be a successful Abundant Group Leader:

1. Pray daily for the members of your group.
2. Consider partnering with a co-leader to help share the responsibility of caring for and leading your group.
3. Connect with group members outside of weekly meetings through phone, email, text, social media, or face-to-face. Encourage group members to connect with each other throughout the week as well.
4. Have fun through laughter and by creating an enjoyable environment.
5. Respect people's time by beginning and ending your group on time.
6. Invite group members to attend church services and events with you like Wednesday services, conferences, or outreach opportunities.
7. Rally the group around a member going through a crisis. Use wisdom and be sensitive.
8. Be sure to meet with your coach or mentor on a regular basis.
9. Communicate any questions or issues you might have as soon as possible. You're not alone, let us help you.

Promoting Your Group

You will have the opportunity to promote your group digitally and concurrently with other Group leaders via Zoom Breakout Rooms. You will be designated with your own breakout room to promote your group and sign people up for your group. Also, your group information will be added to our online directory which can be accessed from our church app and abundant.org/groups. Lastly, you can promote your group on social media, emailing, texting or any other creative way you would like to promote.

Confidence as an Abundant Group Leader

If you only do what you feel comfortable doing, you don't need God. God's best is often found outside your comfort zone.

When you serve God and people by leading a Abundant Group, He will equip you and give you the strength and wisdom to lead well.

For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 NLT

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7 NLT

When you feel uncertain about leading a group, use Scripture to overcome the lies of the enemy:

1. When you feel like you don't have the time, remember God has created you for this, and His timing is perfect.

If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.

ECCLESIASTES 11:4 TLB

2. When you feel unqualified, remember God has equipped you.

It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:5-6 NLT

3. When you feel like your past disqualifies you, remember God uses imperfect people.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

When you feel like you don't know how to help someone in your group, remember ESPN:

E: Encourage
S: Share Scripture
P: Pray
N: Next Steps

Leadership Support

As an Abundant Group Leader, you are never alone in creating community. We have pastors, staff, and the Abundant Groups Team who are all working alongside you to invest in great Small Groups at Abundant. You can always email us at groups@abundant.org, or you can ping Pastor Jimmy Salas or Aaron Martinez on Microsoft Teams.

Your Mentor

The Bible calls us “vessels”, the only things a vessel can do is be filled up and poured out. There will be times, when you as the person, need to be re-filled. This is accomplished by spending time in the Word, praying, going to church and seeking the guidance of mentors in your life. We believe in YOU our Group Leader and we want the best for you in your personal life as well. This is why we would like to pair you with a mentor.

Your Mentor’s priority is to pray for you daily and help you achieve the abundant life that Jesus came to give you.

Your Coach

Great teams have great coaches! Our coaches are here to help you become a better Group leader. Coaches will attend a few of your meetings and offer insight and helpful tips on how to have a thriving group.

How to create good group dynamics:

1. Set expectations

A key to helping people feel comfortable in your group is to let them know what to expect. Take time to share how the group will flow from week to week. This can include things like explaining the times you will begin and end the group, how discussion or group activities will happen, and how group members can share prayer requests or best engage in the group.

2. Follow the 70-30 rule

Give the members of your group room to speak up instead of doing all the talking yourself. About 70% of talking should come from members and 30% from the leader.

3. Keep discussion positive

If conversation takes a negative or destructive turn, guide it back to a healthy place. If someone needs to talk about a sensitive or complex issue, you can follow up with them after the group or call your coach to help you respond well.

4. Keep the conversation relevant to everyone

Remember people in your group will be at different places in their spiritual journey. Be thoughtful when you talk about spiritual concepts or church terms that might be unfamiliar to new Christians or new church-goers.

5. Respect boundaries

Men should minister to men and women should minister to women. A couple may minister to a single person. We want to maintain integrity and purity in our Abundant Groups. These boundaries will help protect the leaders and group members from entering into an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation.

Stay Connected

Throughout the semester, respond to the Abundant Groups team about group attendance, potential new Group Leaders, and how members are moving one step.

Starting Your Group

All Abundant Group Leaders complete the following steps before starting to lead:

- Become a member of Abundant
- Complete Abundant Growth Track
- Complete the Abundant Group Leadership Application
- Attend an Abundant Group Leadership Training
- Sign the Abundant Group Leadership Commitment and Leader Guideline.

Important Contact Information

General questions: amartinez@abundant.org

Serious/Critical help: contact Pastor Jimmy Salas jsalas@abundant.org or 915-373-3725

Schedule a counseling with a Abundant Pastor: 915-532-8543

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I recruit people to come to my group?

- Start with people who are already in your sphere of influence (co-workers, friends, and neighbors).
- Find people around you who are new to the church, are new believers, or have shown interest in getting involved.
- Look for people you think you can help realize their potential.
- Ask God to send the right people to your group.

Where can I hold my Abundant Group?

Abundant Groups will be held digitally to comply with state and local health orders. You may use any technology of your choice to host your meetings. Some of the most common technologies used for hosting virtual meetings are: Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facebook Rooms, Google Meets, and WhatsApp. We encourage you to take a few minutes to determine which technology platform will be best suited for you and your group.

Does my group have to meet weekly?

We encourage meeting bi-monthly each semester in order to build genuine relationships.

How do I measure if group members are moving one step?

Ask! Make it part of your discussion whether in a group setting or individually. Also, encourage everyone in your group to complete the **Next Step Survey** at the end of the semester. Here are some great questions to guide your conversation:

- How did you get connected to this Abundant Group?
- What are you most looking forward to in the group?

- Do you attend Abundant?
- What brought you to Abundant?
- Which campus do you attend?
- Have you ever been part of a Abundant Group before?
- What do you feel like God has been doing in your life lately?
- Have you ever been to a ABUNDANT conference?
- What areas of your faith are you hoping to grow in the coming months?
- What are you focused on in your life right now?
- Have you been through the ABUNDANT Growth Track?
- Do you remember what your personality type is or what your spiritual gifts are?
- Have you ever served on the ABUNDANT Serving Family?
- How can I pray for you?

Everyone in your group will be at different places spiritually. The vision of helping them “move one step” is not to get them to do everything at once, it’s to help identify where they currently are spiritually and offer a practical next step to help them grow.

Here are some examples of next steps you can share depending where a group member is spiritually:

- Even though you may not be able to sit together at this present time, invite them to attend a service with you.
- Share your personal story and what God has been teaching you.
- Invite them to an ABUNDANT conference, Wednesday service, or another event.

- Share how the Growth Track can help them discover their purpose and invite them to attend.
- Invite them to consider being water and Holy Spirit baptized. Invite your Group to be there to celebrate anyone getting baptized.
- Share how you find time regularly to pray, worship, and read God's Word and encourage them to make their own plan for time with God.
- If they are ready to receive Christ, offer to pray with them.
- Encourage them to learn more about areas like tithing, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and spiritual warfare.

What should I do if someone asks a question I can't answer?

It's okay to not have all the answers. Thankfully, we can find guidance through prayer, God's Word, and the Holy Spirit. Encourage them to spend time reading the Bible and praying. Also, let them know that you will do your best to get some information and get back with them at your next Group meeting. Do some personal research and call your mentor to get advice.

What should I do if someone in my group shares something with me (or the group) that requires attention beyond what I (or we) can provide?

If you encounter a difficult situation within your Group, please know that you are not alone. If a member is going through a crisis, you can rally the group around them to provide prayer, encouragement, and support. Use wisdom and be sensitive to the situation. If you are unsure of what to do, don't hesitate to ask your coach. **Also, you and/or the group member can call the Abundant Groups Ministry Team directly at 915-373-3725 or jsalas@abundant.org if needed.**

How can I share stories of life change from the Abundant Group semester?

We love hearing about lives that are changed through Abundant Groups. You can share your stories with your Coach or submit them at groups@abundant.org

You can also share your own personal stories through social media and tag #Abundantgroups

HELPFUL SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

At ABUNDANT , we believe ministering through the Word of God is the most powerful way to care for people. As you pray over a Group member, try inserting that member's name in the Scripture to make it more personalized.

As a leader, we encourage you to find and memorize at least three Scriptures, which will equip when you are walking someone through a tough situation as well as give you strength as a leader throughout the semester.

Here is a list of powerful Scriptures that you can apply to any situation:

"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

MARK 12:30-31 NKJV

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 NKJV

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

PROVERBS 3:5-6

My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the LORD. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

ISAIAH 55:8-9 NLT

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

1 JOHN 5:14-15

No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me,” Says the Lord.

ISAIAH 54:17 NKJV

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.

EPHESIANS 6:10-28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

ROMANS 8:28 ESV

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago

EPHESIANS 2:10 NLT

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

JEREMIAH 29:11

You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

MATTHEW 5:14-16

No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 8:39 NLT

Stay away from the love of money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never, never fail you nor forsake you." That is why we can say without any doubt or fear, "The Lord is my Helper, and I am not afraid of anything that mere man can do to me."

HEBREWS 13:5-6 TLB

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

ISAIAH 41:10 NLT

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

JAMES 1:2-4

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

ROMANS 10:17 ESV

One day the apostles said to the Lord, “We need more faith; tell us how to get it.” “If your faith were only the size of a mustard seed,” Jesus answered, “it would be large enough to uproot that mulberry tree over there and send it hurtling into the sea! Your command would bring immediate results!”

LUKE 17:5-6 TLB

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

HEBREWS 11:1

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

JAMES 1:5

Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.

PROVERBS 11:14 ESV

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

ROMANS 8:1-2 NLT

“Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

ISAIAH 1:18

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-14

ABUNDANT LIVING FAITH CENTER CHURCH
SMALL GROUPS POLICY DIRECTIVE

I. PURPOSE

Church small groups provide leaders and attendees the opportunity to demonstrate their love for God and connect through community with one another, grow together spiritually, and serve Abundant Church together. This Small Groups Policy Directive establishes guidelines for ABUNDANT -sanctioned small groups (“Abundant Groups”) to ensure the Abundant Groups are conducted safely and under biblical principles that align with ABUNDANT’s mission and beliefs.

II. SCOPE

This Small Groups Policy Directive applies to all Abundant Groups.

III. POLICIES

A. ABUNDANT GROUPS GENERALLY

Abundant Groups will be hosted and led by a Group Leader, who will report to and be overseen by a Abundant Group Coach. Group Coaches will facilitate and serve as a liaison for communications between Group Leaders or attendees and Abundant Church Leadership.[Group Leaders and Coaches will not] be employees of Abundant.

An Abundant Group may have more than one (1) Group Leader provided each Group Leader is approved by Abundant Leadership. Abundant will conduct background checks on all Group Leaders and Group Coaches. The background checks will be conducted as provided in Abundant policies and procedures and in accordance with state and federal law. Abundant does not maintain or carry liability insurance coverage for any Abundant Group events. Group Leaders and attendees may attend Abundant Groups at their own risk.

B. GROUP LEADERS AND TEAM LEADERS

Abundant Approval of Group Leaders and Coaches:

To be approved by Abundant, Group Leaders and Coaches must

- 1) agree to, undergo, and satisfactorily pass a criminal background check,
- 2) agree to the duties and responsibilities provided herein, and
- 3) abide by and agree to the following Abundant principals:
 1. Putting God first in finances by pursuing the tithe (Genesis 28:20-22, Acts 2:42-47, 2 Corinthians 9:6-9);
 2. Avoiding pornography (Matthew 5:28);
 3. Avoiding alcohol and drug use (Matthew 18:6, Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:19-21);
 4. Using speech to uplift and edify those around him/her (Matthew 15:11, Ephesians 4:29, Titus 2:7-8, Romans 15:5);
 5. Using social media responsibly (Matthew 18:6, Hebrews 13:18);
 6. Practicing a biblical view of sexuality (Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 18);
 7. Committing to sex only within marriage;
 8. Choosing not to cohabit outside of marriage; and,
 9. Avoiding being active in or promoting a homosexual lifestyle.

Duties and Responsibilities of Group Leaders:

Duties and responsibilities of Abundant Group Leaders include the following:

1. Sign this Directive which includes the Abundant Group Leader Guidelines and the Mandatory Reporting Policy, attached as Exhibit A, and return to Abundant Church.
2. Facilitate and keep attendees reasonably informed of meeting times and locations of the Group;
3. Have a clear plan for his/her Group, recruit people to join, and do all he/she can to help people grow and feel more connected to Christ and to each other;
4. Agree to not use his/her Group as a Bible study.
5. Commit to the ongoing support and direction of the Abundant Groups Leadership and Pastors;
6. Not be one that divides but will be one that unites in building the Kingdom of God;
7. Connect with his/her Group Coach on a regular basis to share stories and updates about his/her Group;
8. Recognize the influence and visibility he/she has within their community and know his/her words, choices, and relationship with God will be carefully observed by everyone within his/her sphere of influence.
9. Make wise choices that glorify God;
10. Be equipped and prepared to lead the Group;
11. Live in alignment with the beliefs of Abundant; and,
12. Promptly address questions or issues with his/her Coach.

C. VIOLATIONS

Abundant may immediately suspend any Group upon discovering the Abundant Group is violating this Small Groups Policy Directive.

Abundant will immediately remove any Group Leader or Coach if Abundant reasonably believes the Group Leader or Coach:

- 1) would no longer satisfactorily pass a criminal background check,
- 2) is failing to adhere to his/her duties and responsibilities as set forth herein,
- 3) becomes a danger to themselves or others.

Abundant may remove any Group Leader or Coach from his/her position with or without cause.

IV. CHILDCARE

Abundant does not supply childcare to Abundant Groups. It is solely the responsibility of the Group Leaders and attendees to arrange childcare during any Group meetings.

V. TRANSPORTATION

Abundant does not supply transportation to or from Abundant Groups. Group Leaders and attendees are responsible for all transportation. Abundant disclaims any responsibility for risks, losses, or damages for transportation to, from, or during any Group meetings.

Signature Group Leader or Coach
