



Introduction to Community Group Leadership

Community groups are the primary vehicles through which Mars Hill Church gathers to live life for Jesus in and among the city: knowing culture, loving people, and seeing lives transformed for Jesus through authentic relationships.

Scripture is clear that the ministry of the church is to be carried out by every member of the body, as Jesus uses the elders and senior leaders to equip the members of the church “for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”¹

In order to remain faithful to this God-sized mission, it is essential that new leaders are continually being evaluated, trained, and entrusted with the work of leading new community groups, so that every member of the church body will be equipped for the work of ministry.

¹ See Ephesians 4:11-16



What is a Community Group?

A community group is a gathering of people from the church that get together regularly to share life and support one another. Life is hard; it is not meant to be lived in isolation. Community is a gift of God intended to help us see and experience the good news of Jesus in profound and tangible ways. A community group is the perfect place for you to belong, ask questions, and wrestle with your faith in a community of people who care for you, not because your life is together, but because you are created in the image of God.

It is within community that we exist as true family in a time when the concept of a loving and caring family can seem foreign. It is a place where we encourage and challenge one another in our journey to know Jesus in deeper and more personal ways. In community groups, people talk through life issues, eat together, pray together, laugh together, struggle together, and serve others as we are transformed by the grace of God in our lives.

At the heart of the community groups ministry is the desire to see a community of believers who worship Jesus, love one another, and embody the mission of Mars Hill to make disciples. God has called us to a continuous lifestyle of worship and relationship with Himself, which is cultivated and nurtured within the body of Christ. The Church is a people. It is a gift of God.

At Mars Hill, community groups are the place where discipleship and care takes place. It is where we encourage one another to be worshipers of our Lord. It is where the body becomes the body, loving, caring for, and challenging one another. And, as we worship Jesus, living in community in the midst of our neighborhoods, we engage our neighbors and our culture with the goodness of Jesus, inviting them to join us in worshipping him and being transformed to live for him in community.



What is a Community Group Leader?

The most Biblically appropriate description of the role of a community group leader is that of a shepherd. As a shepherd, a community group leader has three primary responsibilities: to protect the flock, to care for the flock, and to lead the flock. In this way, a community group leader seeks to cultivate a shepherding community that is on mission to see lives transformed by Jesus.

Protecting the Flock

Because community groups are the context for building deep relationships marked by profound honesty, community group leaders are in a unique position to know the intimate details of their group members' lives. As such, a community group leader should be prayerfully discerning in evaluating the words, actions, and motives of group members, seeking to protect them from accepting false teaching about God or themselves, and from worshipping false gods.

Caring for the Flock

Community groups are the primary source of pastoral care at Mars Hill Church. There are several reasons for this. First, it is impossible for the limited number of elders to provide appropriate pastoral care to the thousands of members of the church. Second, Jesus has chosen to use the members of the church body to minister to each other as they share life together in deep community. In this context, a community group leader has a unique opportunity to know the needs, both physical and spiritual, of the group's members, and to seek ways to meet those needs within the community. Of course, some needs require a higher level of care. In order to provide appropriate levels of care to all members, all community group leaders are cared for by a coach and an overseeing pastor.

Leading the Flock

In addition to protecting and caring for the members within the group, it is also the role of the community group leader to lead the group in mission. Primarily, this means looking outside of the community group, rooting the group's life in the culture of its neighborhood, so that people in the neighborhood would have the opportunity to see Jesus worshipped in the shared life of this community, so that they might have the opportunity to meet Jesus and be transformed through relationships with his body.

Personal Attributes Required:

- Mature and growing personal walk with Jesus, and well grounded in scripture
- Member of Mars Hill Church
- Committed to the purpose and reflects the values of Mars Hill Church as outlined in the Member Covenant
- Ability to both challenge and encourage others in their walk with the Lord
- Humble demeanor and teachable spirit; consistent and reliable



- Good verbal skills and possesses the ability to communicate in such a way that is clear and understandable
- Solid reputation (above reproach) inside and outside the church
- Willing to be judged with greater strictness as a leader in the church (James 3:1)
- Genuine love for people with demonstrated relational skills
- Able to communicate with warmth, empathy, and graciousness
- Willing to disclose and discuss any past sins or issues that would disqualify or discredit one's ability to lead (this would include church discipline or criminal charges)

Responsibilities:

- Know each member of the group well enough to articulate a vision for his/her spiritual growth, citing specifics about how the group as a whole or individual members of the group nurture his/her growth
- Seek opportunities for the group to interact with the neighborhood through service projects, social events, etc.
- Provide leadership for weekly community group meetings (avg. 8-15 people) typically in someone's home
- Facilitate questions and discussion (typically around last Sunday's sermon) to deepen our understanding and personal relationship with Jesus (groups are for discussion, not teaching/lecturing)
- Encourage and ensure healthy discussion, a safe and inviting environment, clear communication, and relationships among people in the group
- Delegate and project manage group meeting details to get other group members involved and serving (host location setup/cleanup, food/drink, prayer notes, team communication)
- Grow the size of the group through fielding inquires/meeting new potential members and encouraging members to bring others
- Develop/mentor apprentice group leader(s) Serve as a key communication link between members and Mars Hill pastors/leadership
- Conduct membership interviews for those in my group who are becoming members of Mars Hill (usually done conveniently before/after group meeting time)

Estimated Time Commitment:

This role is a commitment to serve in a ministry leadership role with Mars Hill Church. Our intent is that the time you spend shepherding your group will be a blessing both to you the members of your group, as well as fun and energizing. In addition, Mars Hill will also invest considerable training and personal development time to strengthen your personal spiritual walk and your leadership skills.

- Weekly (Estimated 7-9 hrs/week total)
 - Prep time for weekly meetings (2 hrs/week)
 - Community Group meeting time (3-5 hrs/week)
 - Group coordination (emails/calls/etc.) (30 mins/week)
 - One-on-one time with your Coach (2 hrs every 6 weeks = 30 mins/week)
 - Personal training/development time related to Community Group, usually recommended by your Coach (1 hr/week)
- Regular Leadership Trainings and Meetings



- Monthly Leadership Meeting—The Sync (3 hours/month)
- Special Training (12 hrs total:)
- Annual weekend Leadership Intensive (Retreat)

- Occasional / As Needed
 - Resolving group conflicts (in partnership with the Coach)
 - Personal shepherding of group members, potentially involving time outside of group meetings, as appropriate
 - Fielding new potential community group member inquiries
 - Conducting Mars Hill new member interviews

A Community Group Leader Commits To:

- Perform Role Duties and maintain Personal Attributes as outlined above
- Will properly prioritize my time and manage my priorities to enable me to fulfill the Time Commitment as outline above
- Willing to be accountable and open to Biblical character standards in regards to: sexual purity, healthy relationships, personal relationship and walk with Jesus, financial responsibility, and positive reputation inside and outside of Mars Hill. (We all are sinners and have struggles; so we don't expect perfection. We simply ask that you commit to walking in the light together with us.)
- Agree to participate in an interview regarding my sexual purity
- Gladly submit to the leadership of my Coach and Regional Pastor, and uphold the vision and values of the church
- Inform my Coach and/or Regional Pastor of any major problems or difficulties I or anyone in my group is facing
- Provide relevant references from Mars Hill members and/or from previous leadership/service roles outside of the church
- Consent to run a public records background check (to be authorized by a separate form)



Community Group Leadership Application

We respect your time and have put together this introduction and process to set clear expectations of what it means and how to become a Community Group Leader at Mars Hill. This role is critical to the success and health of our church. Therefore, this role commitment is taken seriously. In return, Mars Hill leaders will invest in your personal development, leadership skills and spiritual growth/maturity.

We are definitely not perfect, but our goal is that everyone who goes through this process will feel honored, learn more about Community Group leadership, learn more about themselves, and find a way to get plugged into service in a meaningful way at Mars Hill.

The goal of this process is to approve you as a Community Group Apprentice. Serving as Apprentice first allows us, and the community around you, to affirm your readiness to shepherd a small flock before planting a group of your own. It also provides an opportunity for you to plant your new group with a healthy core.

Here's the process:

- 1. Complete General Questions and Character Integrity Questions:** Email responses to ballardleadership@marshillchurch.org.
- 2. Interview:** After we receive your answers the General Questions and Character Integrity Questions, you'll be interviewed by a Coach to determine your next steps.
- 3. Complete Background Check Authorization:** If/when it is determined that you are ready to move forward as an apprentice leader, you will be required to fill-out and submit a signed copy of the attached Background Check Authorization form.
- 4. Apprenticeship Plan:** Your interviewer will make an assessment of your readiness for community group leadership and will create an Apprenticeship Plan that will be used to guide your growth as an Apprentice.



General Questions (Please email your responses back to ballardleadership@marshillchurch.org)

1. Are you a member of Mars Hill Church?
2. Are you aware of any points of Mars Hill's doctrine or ministry philosophy that you find difficult to agree with? If so, please describe.
3. Are you already in a Community Group? If so, whose?
4. Are you already serving in another ministry area? If so, where?
5. Has any other Mars Hill ministry leader talked with you about any other significant responsibility at Mars Hill? If so, please describe.
6. Please provide the following basic information about yourself:
 - a. Name
 - b. Email address
 - c. Phone
 - d. Home address
 - e. Address or
 - f. Name of your current Community Group Leader
7. How would you explain to someone how to become a Christian?
8. Describe ways in which you are currently sharing the gospel with a non-Christian.
9. Spiritual Maturity
 - a. What does a healthy relationship with Jesus look like?
 - b. Why does this motivate you?
 - c. What are you doing to intentionally strive toward this?
 - d. Describe a time in your life when a specific sin in your heart was exposed. How did you respond? How did it reflect on your relationship with Jesus? What did you learn?
10. Without naming names, describe a situation where you needed to speak openly with a brother or sister about a difficult matter?
11. What are ways you encourage people around you?
12. Describe a past experience leading a Christian small group. If none, describe an experience leading people.
13. Based on last Sunday's sermon, what are three discussions questions you would ask your group? (Please provide a brief summary of the sermon for context.)
14. Without getting into specifics, are there any sins that you are dealing with now or in the recent past that may disqualify you from leadership at this time?
15. Please provide names and contact information (phone, email) for 1-3 people at Mars Hill who know you well.



Character Integrity Questions

The staff at Mars Hill Church will attempt to preserve the confidentiality of any matters disclosed. However, we will not guarantee confidentiality under the following circumstances:

- When there is evidence of abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, or where disclosure is required by law.
- When the Community Group Pastor or Deacon feels a need to discuss your case for consultation purposes with their supervisor, peers, professionals, or elders/pastors who may be a resource involved in your situation.
- There is contemplation of commission of a crime or harmful act.
- There is a subpoena or other legal process.
- You or your legal representative authorizes disclosure of information.
- Other circumstances where the pastor deems it necessary to disclose the information.

Please respond to the following questions:

1. Do you have any history of using pornography? Please describe: when and for how long. Are you currently using pornography at all?
2. If married:
 - a. Since you were married, have you ever had any sexual contact with anyone other than your spouse (this includes exposure without touch and touch while clothed)?
 - b. Is there any part of your sexual history that your spouse does not know about?
 - c. Do you have any relationships of any kind, whether sexual or non-sexual, same sex or opposite sex, with anyone that your spouse does not know about (regardless of interaction frequency or mutuality)?
3. If single:
 - a. Have you had any sexual contact of any kind with anyone within the past two years (this includes exposure without touch and touch while clothed)?
 - b. If you are presently courting or dating a man or woman, what personal and physical boundaries have you discussed and agreed to?
 - c. Are you in a living arrangement that involves anyone with whom there is the potential of sexual attraction? Please describe.
4. Were you involved in any conflicts in any church before coming to Mars Hill that influenced your decision to leave that church? If so, briefly explain. Please include any relevant contact info for the church leaders involved.



National Background Investigation Consent

Please complete all relevant information and sign and date this form.

I, _____, hereby authorize Mars Hill Church and/or its agents to make an independent investigation of my background, references, character, criminal or police records, and motor vehicle records including those maintained by both public and private organizations and all public records for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my Application and/or obtaining other information which may be material to my qualifications for volunteering now and, if applicable, during the tenure of my leadership with Mars Hill Community Groups Ministry.

I release Mars Hill Church and/or its agents and any person or entity, which provides information pursuant to this authorization, from any and all liabilities, claims or law suits in regards to the information obtained from any and all of the above referenced sources used.

I have given consent for a background check in another ministry at Mars Hill Church within the last five years

YES / NO If YES, which ministry: _____

The following is my true and complete legal name and all information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge (please print clearly):

Full Name (Printed): _____ Goes by: _____

Maiden Name or Other Names Used: _____

Present Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

How Long at Present Address? _____

Former Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

How Long at Former Address? _____

Date of Birth*: _____ Social Security Number: _____

Driver's License Number: _____ State of License: _____

Signature of Candidate / Date



*NOTE: The above information is required for identification purposes only, and is in no manner used as qualifications for leadership. Mars Hill Church abides by all applicable state and federal employment laws.