

BUILDING LONG LASTING CONNECTIONS

Connect Group is not just about attendance on a Friday night, but about connection and relationship. Especially since we aren't able to meet physically during this period, here are some simple things we can do as leaders to build lasting connections with both our existing members, and new people who may be joining us.

1. CONNECT AND MAKE A CALL

Taking time to connect with someone during the week makes a huge difference. Rather than texting, you are strongly encouraged to make a call where possible because there is power in an in-depth conversational call!

Texting alone does not convey the emotions and tone of voice as much as a call would. Calls communicate genuine care and concern, especially for a newcomer. They also remind irregular members of the community that they can be part of. Short of talking with someone face-to-face, a phone or video call is the best way to get a personal response. Sometimes, what really helps is to set aside 15 to 30 minutes in your day to power through your calls in a focused manner!

2. PAY GREAT AND REAL ATTENTION

As CG Leaders, we need to remember that it may not be the easiest for our members to open up to share something personal or about an issue that they're facing. Recognize the privilege we have of sharing in their lives. Take note of what your members have shared, write them down so you don't forget, and take time to follow up with them. This lets them know that you pay attention to what they have shared, but they also realize that what they shared is valued.

If your member shares about an upcoming job interview, ask more questions to understand more about it! (e.g. which day, what role, their thoughts on it, etc.) Ultimately, paying attention and asking related questions gives you a better understanding of what your members are going through. This also gives you an opportunity to reconnect with them at a later time to check in on them - be it through a prayer, or offering any sort of help.

3. ALWAYS CELEBRATE SIGNIFICANT OCCASIONS

Everyone appreciates being celebrated. Significant occasions (i.e. graduations, starting a new job, birthdays, etc.) mark milestones in life. Be sure to take extra notice of those who are new or may not necessarily be regular at Connect Group. You never know what a video greeting from the entire CG or even a personal message could do!

It does not have to be an extravagant celebration and you do not have to splurge on it. These are some things that you can do together as a Connect Group:

- i. Have a dessert/small cake or meal sent to the person from the CG
- ii. Play a short game of "How Well Do You Know XXX" - there are a ton of questions online that you can get ideas from
- iii. Send over a short video tribute including some greetings and blessings from the CG

4. GIVE ENCOURAGEMENT

As CG Leaders, let us not hold back in giving encouragement to our members. It could be something small such as them going for their first exercise in X years, or them reconnecting with an old friend in hopes to share about Jesus - whether big or small, their breakthroughs are worth celebrating.

One question we can ask ourselves is, “When was the last time I encouraged (insert members’ name)?”. If you can’t remember the last time you did so, take some time this week to personally share a word of encouragement with them.