

## WHY JOIN A HOME GROUP?

### What is a home group?

There are many small groups that meet throughout the week as part of the ministry of Hamilton Road Baptist Church. A large crowd can be intimidating and it is crucial to have a group of people whom you can get to know and who, in turn, can get to know you. Most people have a desire to belong but not all feel that they really do.

At Hamilton Road Baptist Church, we are convinced that one of the best ways to experience a sense of community is by participation in a small home group.

Our small groups provide the opportunity for you to:-

#### 1. Understand the Bible better.

As a preacher, I can often anticipate the questions that people are wanting to ask. It is as if I see flashing signs on a forehead saying "But what about..?" or "I don't understand ..!"

Preaching and teaching is one form of communication you listen while the speaker speaks. This is a good way of imparting information or inspiring us but is not effective for personal application. In a small group setting you can ask your questions, participate in discussion on the

text and listen as others share their insights.

The Bible must be applied to our particular situations and that happens best in small groups. Quite frequently, you will find that the study material being used in our home groups is related to a Sunday preaching series.

#### 2. Start to feel that you really belong.

The majority of people say that the chief benefit of their particular group is the close relationships and friendships that develop. There is an opportunity to share requests for prayer and help each other practically. People quickly discover that their own needs and problems are not unique. We all need each other.

Over fifty times in the New Testament the phrase "one another" is used to describe our relationship with other Christians. We are instructed to love one another, encourage one another, pray for one another, accept one another, bear one another's problems and build up one another. The only way we can really obey these commands is to be part of a small group. We really do need each other. God never intended anyone to live alone as a Christian. If you are committed to a small group, loneliness should not be a problem.

### **3. Find prayer becoming more meaningful.**

Many people are hesitant to pray in front of others, especially in a large Church. In a small group you will learn to participate in prayer by having a conversation together with God. No one is pressurised to pray but as you become comfortable, you will be able to pray sentence prayers and join in. There are many promises in the Bible related to group prayer. In praying together with a few others, we are drawn together and find answers to the needs in our lives.

### **4. Find yourself better able to handle stress and pressure.**

Home groups provide excellent support in times of crisis, change and stress. You will have a sense of stability and security, knowing there are people who really care for you and are committed to supporting you.

When someone loses a job, or a family member has an extended illness, or a mother needs a baby-sitter, these are practical needs which may be met through your home group. Your group will co-ordinate the sharing of hot meals to be brought in when someone is in need. Many people in our Church can testify they would not have made it through a difficult time if it had not been for the support of their group.

### **5. Develop leadership skills you never knew you had.**

The Bible teaches that every Christian is given certain talents or "gifts" to benefit others in the family of God. If we are only spectators on a Sunday, these gifts will never be discovered. As you share and participate in a relaxed home group setting you will discover your confidence and self-esteem rising. This will help you at work, at Church and in every other relationship.

### **6. Deepen your understanding of worship.**

Some Christians mistakenly believe that worship only takes place on a Sunday in a large group with a sermon, hymns and an offering plate! Sometimes a deep sense of worship occurs as people pray, give thanks and sing together.

### **7. Follow the pattern that was evident among the first Christians.**

The book of Acts makes it clear that God intended His people to grow and support one another. We will never be able to employ enough Pastors to meet all the individual needs in our Church family. God never intended it to be that way. Our Elders have an important role to play in providing resources for our small groups. The work of the ministry is carried on by all of the people.

*For further reading: Acts 2:42, 44, 46-47; Acts 5: 42; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15.*