

Dear Connect Group Leader

Thank you for becoming a Connect Group Leader. We are very grateful that you have offered to serve in this way.

We strongly believe that successful Connect Groups are an essential part of pastoral care and growth in Renewal and that your role is a vital one.

In order to help you, we have created this "Connect Group Leader's Manual". It outlines the principles of Connect, gives practical details on how to run a group, and lists the resources available to you. We hope you find it helpful.

In addition the Area Leader, who serves on behalf of the Pastoral Care Team in the area where your group meets, is there to assist you and we are always on hand for help and support.

Every blessing as you serve the vision of the church in this way.

Welcome to the Team!

Justyn

# Renewal

## Connect Manual

## Connect groups

**Because relationships matter.**

It's not about the event, it's about the relationships.

Growing closer to Jesus. And each other.

*Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly.*

**Ephesians 4:15-16a**

## Why connect?

We exist to lift up the name of Jesus. Our vision is to go from one to many. In order to grow bigger, we have to go smaller. Connect groups are a great way for people to be needed and known, to truly become part of the family and take their place here at Renewal.

Connect helps us to fulfil the vision of Renewal and lift up the name in the following ways (and more!):

- Connect is a great way for people to meet Christians and be introduced to church.
- By inviting friends to a meal or going out for the day together, you can reach out to people outside the church family. And Alpha is a great course to invite them to - a safe place to ask those important questions.
- It's also a great way to pray for people to come to know Jesus.
  
- Connect is the main way that we can support one another at Renewal. To build great relationships and support each other through difficult times.
- We can share what is happening in our lives, be accountable, pray together and offer encouragement too.
- It's not just about the connect meeting itself - but praying for each other during the week, sending encouraging messages and maybe arranging a meal rota when someone is sick.
- There is also a range of pastoral care available for times where you need some extra support.
  
- Connect can help us grow in our walk with Jesus. We can discuss church teaching and how to apply it to our lives.
- Challenging each other and sharing together will help us to build on our walks with Jesus.

## **What is a connect group?**

- A small group of up to around 12 people
- Meets regularly (weekly, fortnightly, monthly etc).
- Sometimes at the home of the leader - or the home of someone in the group.
- Some groups meet at Renewal, others use a local coffee shop or restaurant.

There is usually something common between people in a connect group that brings them together.

- Geography - living nearby
- Gender - mens and ladies groups
- Generational - youth, young families
- Generic - sports, craft

As well as connect meetings, we encourage all connect groups to build relationship. This could be going out or having a meal together but also means keeping in touch throughout the week to encourage each other or for prayer requests.

## **An example connect group meeting**

- Warm welcome as people arrive
- Leader guides the conversation
- Sharing and getting to know each other 'How was your week?' 'How are you doing?'
- Discussion of the last church sermon and how it can be applied
- Prayer time - for each other, to apply the teaching and any other prayer requests from the group
- Meeting finishes on time and everyone knows when and where the next meeting is.

## **What does a successful connect group look like?**

Here are some examples of things that have been done well in connect groups that you may find useful

- 'Doing life together' - sharing with each other what is going on in your lives, and supporting each other.
- Emailing encouragement during the week when someone is going through a challenging time at work.
- Having a group chat so you can keep in touch between connect meetings and share prayer requests (WhatsApp is one way of doing this).
- Providing meals when someone moves house or is sick.

## **What does a connect group leader need to do?**

- A partner that shares the vision and values of Renewal.
- Helps make sure the group runs effectively.
- Provides an environment where people can grow in maturity in their relationship with Jesus.
- Organise group meetings - make sure everyone knows when and where the next session is.
- Guide the meeting, help conversation go in the right direction.
- Help to find new members and encourage the connect group to grow.
- Identify people in the group that could lead a connect group if the group expands.
- Provide feedback to the church so we know how many people are in connect groups (This is done using the Church suite system).

At the end of this document is a more detailed roles and responsibilities page which explains more about the role of a connect leader.

## **How do I find people to join my connect group?**

There may only be a few of you to start with, so please feel free to invite others.

- Partners of the church, regular attenders and those thinking about partnership are all welcome.
- We don't encourage Christians that attend a different church to be in a Renewal connect group as there needs to be one core vision that brings people together.
- Members in your group may know other people in the church that want to join.
- In discussion with your area leader, we can send an email invite to the other people from Renewal who live in your area.

When new people join your group, make sure that you welcome them and be aware that it may take time to get to know everyone in the group. Don't expect them to share everything from the first meeting and allow time to build friendships with the rest of the group.

## **What support is available to connect leaders?**

### **Area Leaders**

Your area leader will visit you regularly and get to know you and your group.

### **Regional Leaders**

Each regional leader supports a number of area leaders and regularly meets with the Team Pastor.

The role of area and regional leaders is explained later in this document.

### **Training**

Induction training is provided to all connect group leaders, your area leader will organise this for you. We will let you know of other training opportunities available through Equip that may be helpful to you.

### **Pastoral Care meetings**

Your area and regional leaders will organise meetings with the connect leaders in your area. This is a great opportunity to find out what's going on across the whole of pastoral care and to seek God for continued guidance and development.

### **Whole Church gatherings**

Whole church gathering such as partners night, and The Big Weekend meetings are held regularly throughout the year. Connect group leaders are invited to hear how God is leading the church and any key messages that need to be shared to connect groups.

**Please check your email address is up to date on ChurchSuite - it's the main way we get in touch with you.**

## **Encouraging new connect leaders**

The aim of connect is to grow as the church grows. This means there will be times that a group is so big that it may need to form two groups.

Connect is also seasonal - joining a connect group either as a leader or a member is not for life. Circumstances change and there may be times when the group may change for different reasons.

Although this can feel difficult, it's a great sign that the church is growing and gives others the opportunity to lead a group.

- Start to be aware of people in your group who are capable of becoming leaders themselves.
- Give them the opportunity to take an active role in the group.

If you would like someone in your group to become a connect group leader, ask them to fill in a ministry application form from the info point. They will be interviewed and given support and training as they start a new group.

## **How are connect groups managed**

The church database 'ChurchSuite' contains all information about connect groups, leaders and contact details.

'ChurchSuite' is the way that individuals can share their contact details with the church, and how connect group leaders manage their connect group details.

When you attend Induction training you will be shown how to use ChurchSuite. Your area leader can help you too.

## **What should I use 'ChurchSuite' for?**

- Find out contact details for your group
- Set a meeting or change a meeting date/time
- Send emails to the group
- Log attendance for each session

## **Why do we need to do a register?**

Connect is a vital part of Renewal and it is how people build relationships together. It's really important that we know who is part of a connect group - so we can also see who isn't. If anyone is needing wider pastoral support, for example if they are ill, we can find out their contact details and work with their connect leader to provide support.

## Useful contacts and support

### General connect questions

Your Area Leader is your initial point of contact for all connect queries. We've included a space here for their information.

Area Leader

Contact telephone/mobile

Email

### Connect support

For questions on using 'ChurchSuite' and connect admin email:

[connect@renewalcc.com](mailto:connect@renewalcc.com)

0121 711 7300

### Pastoral Hub

All the policies, procedures and information on the available pastoral support is available on the Pastoral Hub. You can access it here:

<https://renewalcc.com/hub/pastoralcare/>

### Emergency pastoral phone

The pastoral support directory gives you details of all the different types of support members of your connect can access.

If a member of your connect group needs emergency pastoral support out of hours - ring the church office - 0121 711 7300 - out of hours the answerphone will give you a number to ring the emergency pastoral phone.

Leave a message and the pastor/chaplain on duty will come back to you asap

# Connect group leader

## Heart

Connect Group Leaders have a heart for the people in their group. They love to make everyone in the group feel relaxed, comfortable and valued. They desire to help and encourage people to take the next step in their journey of faith.

## Skills

- Creating relaxed environments
- Hospitality
- Facilitation
- Communication and Listening
- Encouraging
- Knowing own boundaries and able to direct people to appropriate levels of support
- Basic IT skills – can use InFellowship effectively or have a co-leader who can.

## Responsibilities

### Team/Group

- Ensure every member is able to make a contribution to the group, giving particular attention to those who are under or over sharing
- Encourage group members to pray for each other, provide listening ears and practical help to each other
- Rally group members to support those going through difficulties with practical help and prayer
- Celebrate life events and achievements.

## Task

- Organise the dates/times of meetings and let group members know details
- Ensure a relaxed and welcoming environment
- Guide and facilitate the meetings
- Encourage get-togethers in addition to regular group meetings
- Complete 'Attendance' data on InFellowship after each meeting and respond to 'Prospects' within a few days
- Encourage people to sign up via [www.renewalcc.com/me](http://www.renewalcc.com/me) to the church database with their personal details
- Remind people of announcements given out by the church and also direct people to the information on the church website e.g. Equip.

## **Individual**

- Pray for individuals in group
- Identify those with leadership potential and discuss with your Area Leader e.g. develop a co-leader for the group who could subsequently lead a group themselves
- Signpost members to relevant pastoral support
- Encourage members to take next steps in their faith journey, e.g. baptism, partnership, giving, serving, spiritual disciplines, attendance on Equip
- Feedback to your Area Leader on progress in your role.

# Area Leader

## Heart

Area Leaders have a heart for the people from Renewal in the area they serve. They have a pastoral concern for the partners or attendees of Renewal within that area and want to help them know that they belong. They desire to encourage and develop the Connect Group Leaders whose groups meet within their area and to identify new leaders.

## Skills

- Hospitality
- Communication and Listening
- Coaching
- Leadership development
- Encouraging
- Knowing own boundaries and able to direct people to appropriate levels of support
- Basic IT skills – can use InFellowship effectively.

## Duties

### Team

- Encourage communication and networking between Connect Group Leaders in your area
- Share good practice and ideas amongst Connect Group Leaders in your area.

### Task

- Ensure all partners or attendees of Renewal within your area are being cared for pastorally through Connect or by other means
- Visit all Connect Groups within your 'Span of Care' once a quarter and provide encouragement and feedback to the leader
- Launch new Connect Groups where there is a demand from enquiries, or by helping existing groups to multiply when they become full
- Support Connect Group Leaders in providing pastoral care to their members and ensure that 'Prospects' are being followed up by them
- Follow up any new enquiries from people within your area coming via the church office for e.g. baptism, partnership, Connect Groups
- Encourage people to sign up via [renewalcc.com/me](http://renewalcc.com/me) to the church database with their personal details
- Remind people of announcements given out by the church and also direct people to the information on the church website e.g. Equip.

## **Individual**

- Pray for the partners or attendees of Renewal within your area
- Pray for your Connect Group Leaders
- Identify Connect Group Leaders with leadership potential to become Area Leaders
- Provide feedback and coaching to Connect Group Leaders to enable them to develop their leadership skills
- Assist new members to the church in your area by integrating them into church activities and into a Connect Group
- Feedback to your Regional Leader on progress in your role.

# Regional Leaders

## Heart

Regional Leaders have a heart for the vision of Renewal to be fulfilled within their region and for pastoral care across the church. They desire to encourage, develop, mentor and support the Area Leaders within their region and to identify new leaders.

## Skills

- Hospitality
- Communication and Listening Skills
- Coaching
- Leadership Development
- Planning Strategy
- Encouraging
- Knowing own boundaries and able to direct people to appropriate levels of support
- Basic IT skills – can use InFellowship effectively.

## Responsibilities

### Team

- Facilitate good relationships between Area Leaders and share good practice and ideas
- Ensure team of Area Leaders work together to support each other.

### Task

- Support Head of Pastoral Care at Renewal
- Assist Area Leaders with planning, launching and multiplying their Connect Groups
- Ensure Area Leaders are familiar with the Connect Groups in their 'Span of Care' and that 'Prospects' are being followed up
- Remind people of announcements given out by the church and also direct people to the information on the church website e.g. Equip.

### Individual

- Pray for your Area Leaders
- Identify those with leadership potential who could be Regional Leaders
- Provide regular feedback and coaching for Area Leaders
- Feedback to Team Pastor on progress in you role

## Scriptural basis for Connect - 'One another' verses (NKJV)

A selection from NT extracted from [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

Connect Groups provide the context or environment within which these scriptures can be lived out and practically applied.

John 13:35

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 15:12

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Romans 12:10

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another;

Romans 14:13

Therefore let us not judge one another anymore,

Romans 15:7

Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

Romans 15:14

Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

Romans 16:16

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

Galatians 5:13

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Galatians 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Ephesians 4:32

And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 5:21

submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Colossians 3:9

Do not lie to one another,

Colossians 3:13

bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore comfort each other and edify one another,

Hebrews 3:13

but exhort one another daily,

Hebrews 10:24

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,

Hebrews 10:25

not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another,

James 4:11

Do not speak evil of one another, brethren.

James 5:9

Do not grumble against one another,

James 5:16

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

1 Peter 1:22

love one another fervently with a pure heart,

1 Peter 3:8

be of one mind, having compassion for one another;

1 Peter 4:9

Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.

1 Peter 5:5

be submissive to one another,

1 Peter 5:14

Greet one another with a kiss of love.

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another,

1 John 3:11

For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,

1 John 4:11

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

