



**CIRCLE UP**  
**PART 1**  
**Experiencing Church in Circles, Not Rows**

Before a big game, teams circle up, review the game plan, and hear a few motivational words from the coach. As your new group kicks off, learn some ways to make sure your group experience is a great one.

**ICEBREAKER:** The goals of icebreakers are to begin to get you focused on the study and to share a bit of your story with your group members. Each week you'll respond to a question about you. For today's questions, have each group member tell the group the following: How long have you been coming to Creekside? Where did you live when you were 10 years old? What did you love about where you lived at that stage in your life?

**MEMORY VERSE:** Read the following verses out loud together. Then see if you can quote the verses without looking at the page.

*"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."*  
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 NIV

**VIDEO:** Watch Circle Up Part 1 <https://www.anthology.study/circleup>

**STUDY:** Talk together as a group about the following questions.

- In the video, the group host said that the goal of a group is for everyone to experience authentic community and spiritual growth. What motivated you to connect to this group?
- How does Andy Stanley's story inspire you about being in group?

READ: Acts 2:42

*“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper<sup>u</sup>), and to prayer.” NLT*

- Acts 4:32 is a snapshot of what the early church group was committed to. How might this snapshot help you be an effective group together?

### CIRCLES ARE BETTER THAN ROWS

On Sunday morning we sit in rows. There is tremendous value in that experience, but we need more than rows to grow spiritually. We need to “circle up”. Here are some reasons why.

1. In a group I am both **KNOWN** and **GROWN**.

READ: Hebrews 10:24-25

*“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” NLT*

- These verses tell us a number of things we should do when we’re together in group. What are they?
- Who has been a motivator/encourager in your life? What has that person done to encourage you?

2. We need a circle to **APPLY** what we learned sitting in a row.

READ: James 1:22-25

*“But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. <sup>23</sup>For if you listen to the word and don’t obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup>You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. <sup>25</sup>But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don’t forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.” NLT*

- What challenges have you experienced in applying the Bible to your life? How might group help?

3. Group gives me the regular opportunity to ask **HARD QUESTIONS**.

READ: Luke 2:46-47 – in these verses we read an account of a time Jesus’ parents took him as a 12 year old boy to Jerusalem. As they left the city to return home, they discovered that he was missing. After a three day search they found him in the Temple, the religious gathering place of Jesus’ day.

*“Three days later they finally discovered him in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking questions. <sup>47</sup>All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.” NLT*

- If you could ask God any question about life or faith, what would you want to ask Him?
- What can your group do to encourage hard questions in the coming weeks?

4. If I will simply lean in and participate, group will be a **CATALYST** for my spiritual growth.

READ: 1 Thessalonians 5:10-11

*“Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever. <sup>11</sup>So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.” NLT*

- What might it look like for each of your group members to “lean in” to group over the next few weeks?
- How might you build each other up?

**“You can’t grow spiritually unless you are connected relationally.”** Andy Stanley

### 3 WAYS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF GROUP

1. SHOW UP – make group a priority.
2. JOIN IN – Be active in this group. Speak up. Ask your question. Come prepared.
3. BE REAL – let the people in your group know what’s really going on.

- What do you see as the benefits of doing these three?
- What might be a challenge about doing these three?

**PRAYER:** Take some time now to pray together in group. You can do this in groups of two or three people. Use the following questions as a guide for how to pray for each other. Aim for about 5 minutes for each person to share answers to these questions, then pray for one another. (Note: if you are uncomfortable praying out loud, it is OK to pray silently).

- What are you thankful for this week?
- What challenge are you facing? Is there some way the group can help?
- What do you sense God is inviting you to do from this study?