

# SMALL GROUP COVID UPDATE



INTENTIONALLY LOVING ONE ANOTHER WELL

In all our discussions about regathering, the challenges we are facing could be summarised by recognising the tension between 2 very highly held values:

**1. we want all to feel welcome**

*and*

**2. we want to protect the vulnerable.**

Because of the pandemic it is quite challenging to hold these two values together... The reality is that, in the ensuing months, it is likely that some in our congregation will contract COVID and it may happen within our gatherings (on a Sunday and / or in SGs). We don't want to create fear, but we also want to be real. Some groups have already decided to stay online for the remainder of the year which is fine, but we recognise that even these groups may want to revisit this before the year ends.

GRLC will be following the government's guidelines (as we have done all the way through this pandemic), which means that from Monday 8th November you can have as many fully vaccinated people in your home as you wish. *Having said that, it's also not as simple as this*-so we are asking our Small Groups to work together around what is best for everyone in their group, making sure that no one feels excluded or isolated.

We want all groups to treat regathering as a process of discussion and we are asking each group to use the group regathering questions (over the page) as a guide. These questions are designed to help groups and individuals think through various aspects and implications of regathering. *Your group doesn't have to have this sorted out this week, this month, or even this year!* As Scott and Ben have communicated, let the focus of this process be loving one another well.

To do this well, **we are encouraging Leaders to communicate with each individual in the group** (*this may be as simple as starting the conversation via text*)



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message)so that each person can have space to think and speak without fear of pressure or judgement. If there is apprehension with some in a particular group, then the Equip Team will encourage the group to continue to meet online and to revisit the option of meeting face to face at each ensuing marker (80%, 90%, etc).

Questions to consider:

- *Do your group members have children and are concerned for their health?*
- *How do group members feel about themselves and others being vaccinated vs unvaccinated?*
- *How many people are allowed in a home vs outdoors, compared to your number of group members?*
- *Does your usual group Host feel comfortable having people in their home yet?*
- *Do group members have other health concerns they're worried about if there are still COVID cases in the community? Including health concerns of others in their family / the people they live with (e.g. children, spouses, parents, grandparents, housemates etc)*
- *Will staying online / meeting in-person isolate anyone in the group for any of these reasons?*
- *Are you and your group across the latest information provided by the [NSW Government](#)?*

Small Groups regathering face-to-face is quite different from the church regathering as a whole because most groups meet in people's homes, and we can't mandate (or even encourage, necessarily) that all groups 'regather' at 70, 80, or even at 95%. With 30+ groups meeting in various locations (predominately in private homes) there are too many variables, including peer pressure, compared to the church regathering at a building. *We want to be clear that there is no pressure from the church for any individual to open their home to their Small Group if they don't feel comfortable to do so.*

As we've mentioned, we encourage you to discuss your thoughts with your Leader, who will be seeking guidance and support from their Coach if needed.



# SMALL GROUP GATHERING GUIDELINES



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***If your group has decided you can and want to meet in-person, please consider the following:***

## **1. Vaccinations**

- You are fully vaccinated if you have had 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccination or you have a [medical exemption](#).
- You are not fully vaccinated if you have had only one dose or no doses of a COVID-19 vaccination.

## **2. Gathering in Homes**

- If all members of the household (who are aged 16 years or over) are fully vaccinated, there is no limit to the number of fully vaccinated visitors to your home.
- People under 12 are not counted as visitors.
- You must wear a fitted face mask when you are in an indoor area of common property in a residential building (including a shared foyer or lobby of an apartment block; in lifts, stairwells and corridors).
- NSW Health strongly recommends wearing face masks at all times if you are unable to [physically distance](#) (i.e. 1.5m) from people you do not live with - otherwise you do not need to wear a face mask in someone's home.

## **3. Hygiene and Cleaning**

- Ask everyone to practice good hand hygiene by washing their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, or clean and sanitise them with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Ensure the bathroom has hand soap and a clean towel - and hand sanitiser, if possible.
- Avoid sharing Bibles / books, drinking cups or other shared objects used during the Small Group meeting.
- *For the person hosting the Small Group:* clean / disinfect frequently touched



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areas and surfaces before and after the meeting. This includes doorknobs, handles, light switches, tables, hard-backed chairs, desks, toilets, sinks and basins.

- If providing supper / food, consider purchasing individually packaged items, for example wrapped chocolates, 'fun-size' chips, etc... (think recess / play lunch!)

#### **4. Gathering Outdoors (e.g. at a park)**

- There are no limits to the number of fully vaccinated people gathering outdoors.

#### **5. Gathering at a Cafe / Restaurant**

- If you are fully vaccinated you can visit a cafe / restaurant; however you must:
  - carry [proof of vaccination](#) or [medical exemption](#) with you and produce it for inspection when asked.
  - check in with the Service NSW app or provide your contact details to the Cafe / Restaurant.
  - follow the [face mask rules](#).

#### **6. Record Keeping**

- Keep a record of who attends each Small Group meeting using the LEAD App or by responding to the Small Group attendance email (this information is stored confidentially and securely).
- Ensure group members are aware of the [COVID Safe app](#) and its benefits to support contact tracing if required.
- Always check in with the Service NSW app or provide your contact details to public venues (e.g. cafes, restaurants, shops)

### **STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK**

COVID-19 spreads from an infected person to other people in close contact through contaminated droplets spread by coughing or sneezing and by contact with contaminated hands, surfaces or objects.

Symptoms include:

- fever (37.5 degrees Celsius or higher)
- cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath (difficulty breathing)
- runny nose
- loss of taste
- loss of smell.