

## GroupLink® Event Overview

GroupLink® is a two-hour event where people meet and connect with others in their area of town and stage of life to start a community group. Groups are asked to initially commit to meet together for eight weeks. This time is spent getting to know each other and doing a short Bible study together. At the end of the eight weeks, group members decide to either continue with the group for an additional 12 to 24 months, or wait and join a different group at another time.

## What Happens at GroupLink?

### Upon Arrival

When leaders arrive, they sign in at the leader check-in table and receive leader packets and leader nametags that are color-coded by their stages of life. Staff members are there to update contact or group information on the leader list. The leader list has the names of all of the leaders who plan to attend the GroupLink. It is important to have the most accurate information, as this list is used by our volunteers and staff to assist attendees in finding groups.

When attendees arrive they sign in. At Married Couples GroupLink they sign in by stage of life. At Men's and Women's GroupLink they do not identify stages of life. Inside the event, Men and Woman can choose single only community groups or groups of various stages of life (married, single, divorced, or widowed).

- Men's and Women's: Same gender single-only group members or various stage of life (married, single, divorced, or widowed).
- Married Couples: No Children, Children, and Empty Nesters

## **The First 30 Minutes of the Event – Meet and Greet**

After the attendees have signed in, they will enter a place we call the “Preview Room” to receive a briefing about what to expect when they enter the main event. Then the attendees move into another area where the main event begins.

The main event location is divided into the four areas of town that have been selected based on the location of the church. We use a 10’x 3’ banner in each quadrant of the room to identify the different areas of town. In order to put people at ease and to encourage them to mingle, couches, chairs, ottomans, and a few café tables are interspersed around the room to create a cozy, warm, living room atmosphere.

Once inside, attendees will mingle with the purpose of meeting people who live in their area of town and are in their stage of life.

During the mingling time, we:

1. Show a video that walks the attendees through the first 30 minutes of mingling time. (Optional)
2. Provide finger foods for people to eat while mingling.
3. Have assimilators (volunteers who help seekers connect into groups) mixing with the attendees to make sure no one is standing alone.

## **The Second 30 Minutes of the Event – Form Groups**

A live host directs attendees to start identifying other people whom they want to be in a group with and encourages them to identify a leader. Then brief instructions on the process for forming groups is given.

### **The Third 30 Minutes of the Event – Time to Watch a Video**

Once the new groups have formed, attendees sit and watch a GroupLink video that explains what to expect in a community group.

### **The Last 30 Minutes of the Event – The First Meeting**

At this point, all the groups that have formed have their first group “social” where they are sitting. Icebreaker-type questions are distributed on cards for the leaders to facilitate. The groups are then instructed to fill out datasheets that capture all group members’ information.

Assimilators collect the datasheets and hand out the study guides called *Community: Your Pathway To Progress* by North Point Resources. This curriculum is offered to group members free of charge as a starter study. Datasheets are turned in to staff members and the attendees are free to leave.