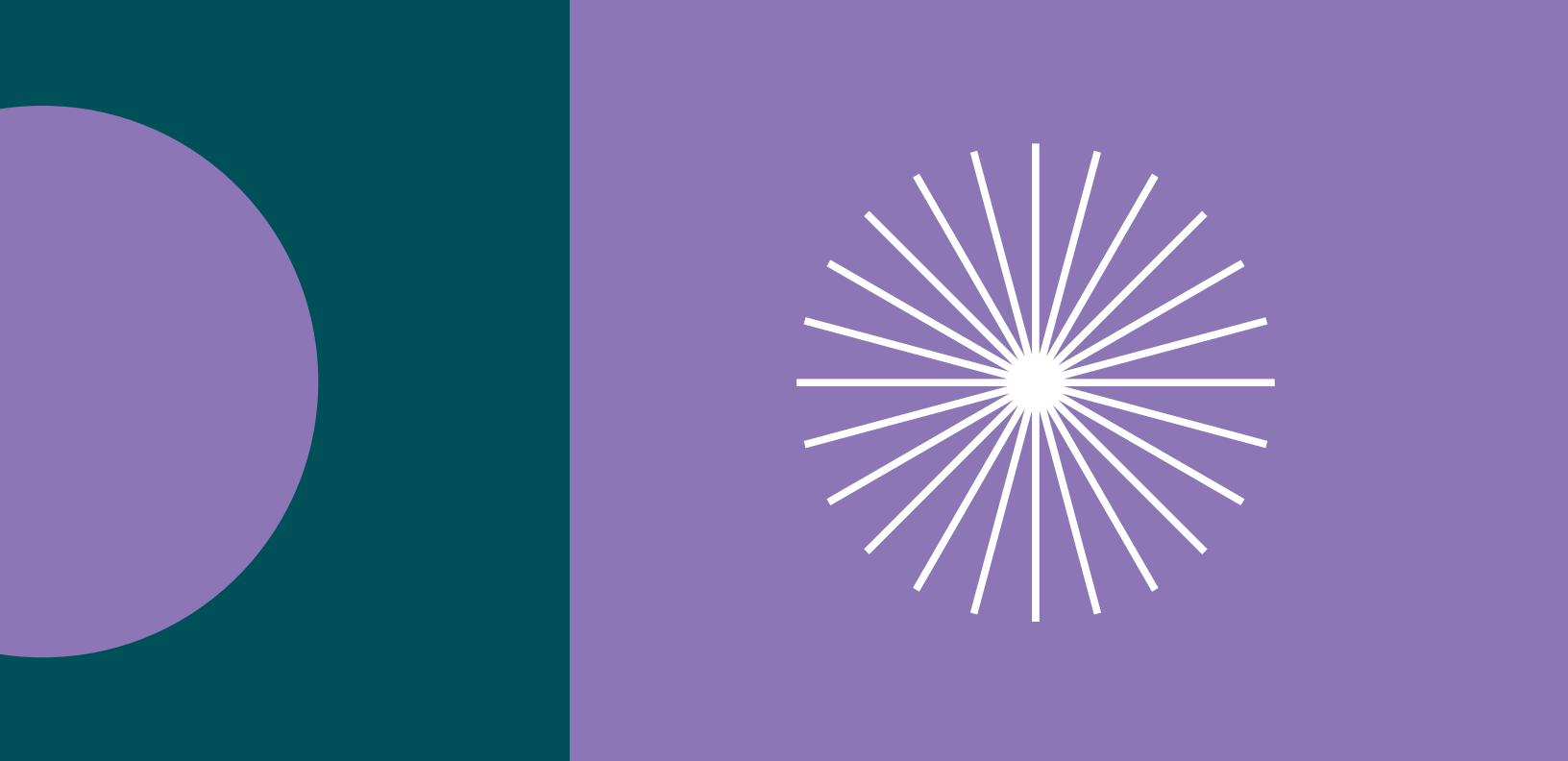
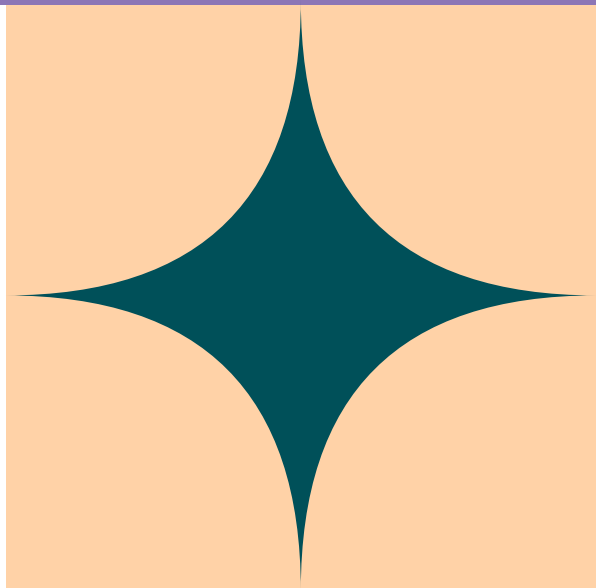


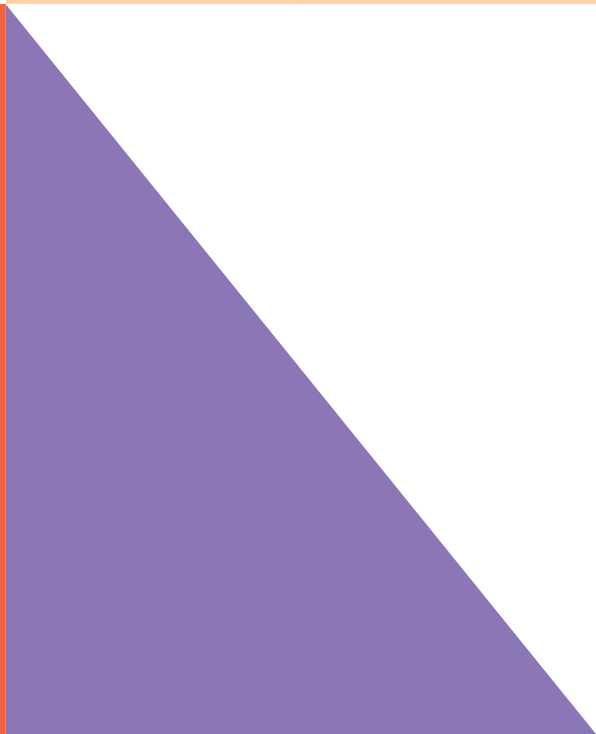


BECOMING A GREAT GROUP MEMBER

a 10 step guide



**FAIRMOUNT
WESLEYAN
CHURCH**



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WHY GROUPS?

We all want to be part of a community of people. Whether we say it or not, we want it. Think about how we talk about ourselves. It is often through groupings. Sports watchers, movie goers, hunters, fishers, coffee lovers – all of these associations are ways to try and create connection with others. This desire for connection isn't something we have made up – its been hardwired and designed into each one of us by God. We are created to connect with others.

We see throughout Scripture, God has designed all of humanity to be in communities and places of connection. Whether big or small, in rows or around tables, we are created to connect with others.

"Groups" is the term Fairmount Wesleyan Church uses for communities or small gatherings of people who are committed to spending regular structured time together with the purpose of growing closer to God and one another. Groups aren't just spiritual add-ons for us, it is an essential part of our growth with God and this community. Whether you're a group leader or a group member, whether you've been in tons of groups or none, we are invited to continue growing closer to one another by participating in a group.

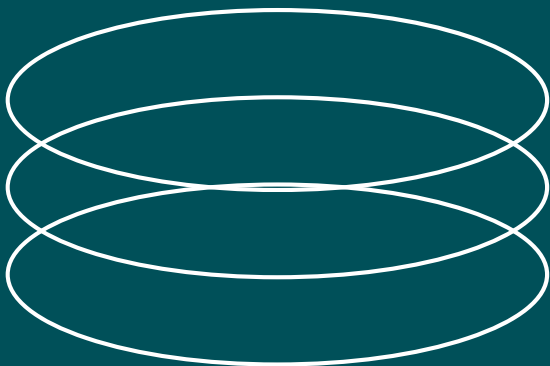
For many of us, we want the outcome of groups. We want deeper relationships with God and with others. Yet we feel frightened or intimidated by the process. Many of us fear opening up to others, or are nervous about joining a community. While these concerns and objections are valid, they end up holding us back from the growth and transformation God wants us to experience. As an attempt to help calm nerves, clear minds, and give steps towards growth we have crafted 10 tips for great group members so that you are equipped to step into a group this quarter and participate in what God is doing in your group. These tips are steps you can take, to help your group become the place where you and others can experience transformation in community.

1 **Pray for your Group**

Prayer is essential for us and for our group. It keeps us connected to God. The most important part of your group is a community committed to praying with and for one another. When you lean into prayer, we believe God is invited to work in us, through us, and in our groups in ways only he can. Being a great group member starts with praying for your group.

2 **Commit to your Group**

Creating community can only happen when we are committed to that community. We need regular, routine time with people to know, trust, and open up with one another. In order for your group to truly start to become your community you must commit to set aside time and space for group. Consider prioritizing your group as you would prioritize Sunday worship gatherings.



BEING A GREAT GROUP MEMBER

10 TIPS

3 **Prepare for your Group**

Every group has homework. We don't just arrive to our groups, there is work we need to do to prepare ourselves. It might be remembering to bring a snack, it might be grabbing the golf clubs, it may be the assigned reading, or even taking a few moments to reflect on a question or two. Great group members are aware of how they can prepare, and then make time to do it. Spend some time before your group preparing what will be expected of you.

4 **Participate in your Group**

People who love their groups are people who participate in their groups. Whether it's a learning a new game, asking that question you feel nervous to ask, or trying a food you've not had before participation breathes life into groups. If you are showing up to a group and struggling to get much out of it, ask the question "what could I do to actively participate in my group?" and then do it.

5 Listen to your Group

Great group members have learned to strike the balance between speaking and listening. Listening goes beyond just hearing someone else. It is seeking to understand what another is saying and how their words might resonate with our lives. When we embrace the posture of a listener, we can learn to hear God's voice speaking to us through the words of another. How can you move from someone who hears to someone who listens?

6 Share with your Group

In a perfect world, groups are the place where we can be vulnerable, authentic, and open with our group. For many of us, this dream is easier said than done. We've been hurt before, we fear what people may think of us, or we simply just don't know what to share. Great group members are willing to step out and share what's going on in their life – the joys, the pains, and the confusing. This quarter, what would it look like for you to take one step towards vulnerability in your group?

7 Invite Others to your Group

Without a doubt, the most effective way to get people to join something is through a personal invitation. This is true for dinner invites, event invites, and our groups. We go to things we have been invited to personally. Groups that grow are groups that take the call to invite others seriously. Who are the people in your life that would enjoy being in your group? How can you personally invite them to join?

8 Ask Questions

One of the best ways to bring life to a conversation is through asking questions. Questions invite different responses, dialogue, and reflection. When we participate in groups, we frequently think questions are the responsibility of the leader. What would your group look like if each member asked a question? Imagine the life, the discussions, and the transformation that could take place through that group. As you step into your group, what would it look like for you to be prepared to ask one question each time you meet?

9 Feel Empowered

Great groups embrace a collaborative spirit. You have the opportunity to shape the culture of your group and help make it what it is. This might mean leading a discussion one night or inviting your group to an event. It could be bringing cake or goodies to munch on or volunteering to pray. As a group member, we want you to feel empowered to contribute your skills, talents, and abilities as a means of loving your community. Spend some time this quarter thinking about your skills talents and abilities and how you can share them with your group?

10 Embrace What's Next

Great groups don't last forever. Life circumstances change, we graduate and move, our work changes, or we just sense God is inviting us to something new. This is a healthy part of any group, but we don't act like this is reality. What if instead of fearing the change, we anticipated it, and asked God to show us our role? The longer we are part of groups that embrace change, the more we wonder if God is inviting us to participate in that change as well. This quarter, begin with the end in mind. Dream alone, with God, and with your community about what might be next.

Groups Stories

01.

BROOKLYN HORNBACK

"Being in a group at Fairmount has completely changed my experience with the church. Before joining a group, I felt like I was going through the motions of coming in, worshipping, listening to the sermon, and then immediately leaving without really talking to anyone. I loved coming to church, but I didn't feel connected. Being a part of a group, allowed me to find the community I lacked and challenged me to step out of my comfort zone to talk to people I might not know very well. It has allowed me to grow relationships with people I didn't know previously. It has changed the way I interact with church completely."

02.

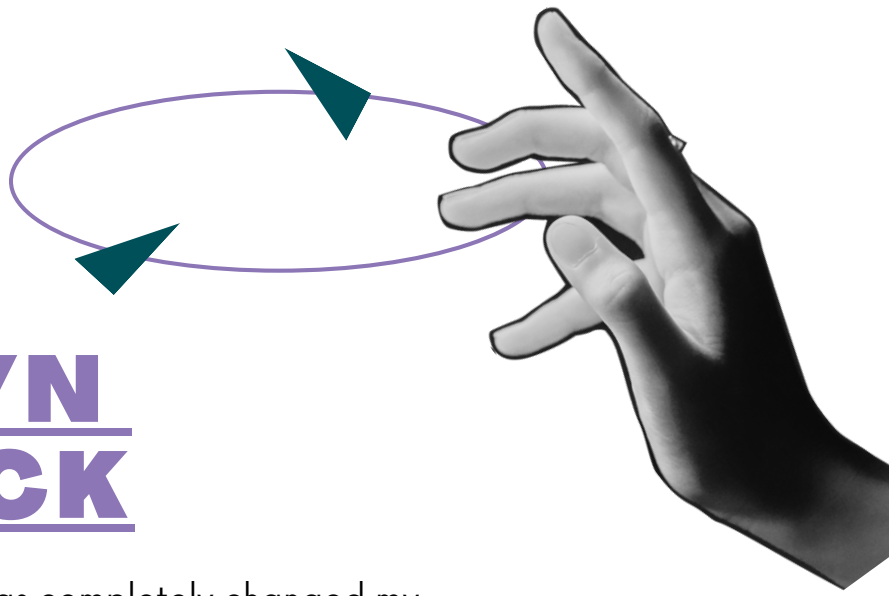
MATTHEW LLORENS

"I love that this church does groups! It's Fairmount Wesleyan Church living out its mission of helping people connect with others, and I've benefited from this by meeting new people and strengthening relationships with others. And I've picked up a new hobby."

03.

SAMANTHA MASON

"Groups have been an amazing blessing for our family. It has given us a community of people to live life with and support us throughout life's up and down. Our group has not only given Jarod and I 'our people' but a group of kids for our children to group up with. Our group has become more than just people we hang out with but rather family."





**“LIFE GIVING
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KEN SHIGEMATSU

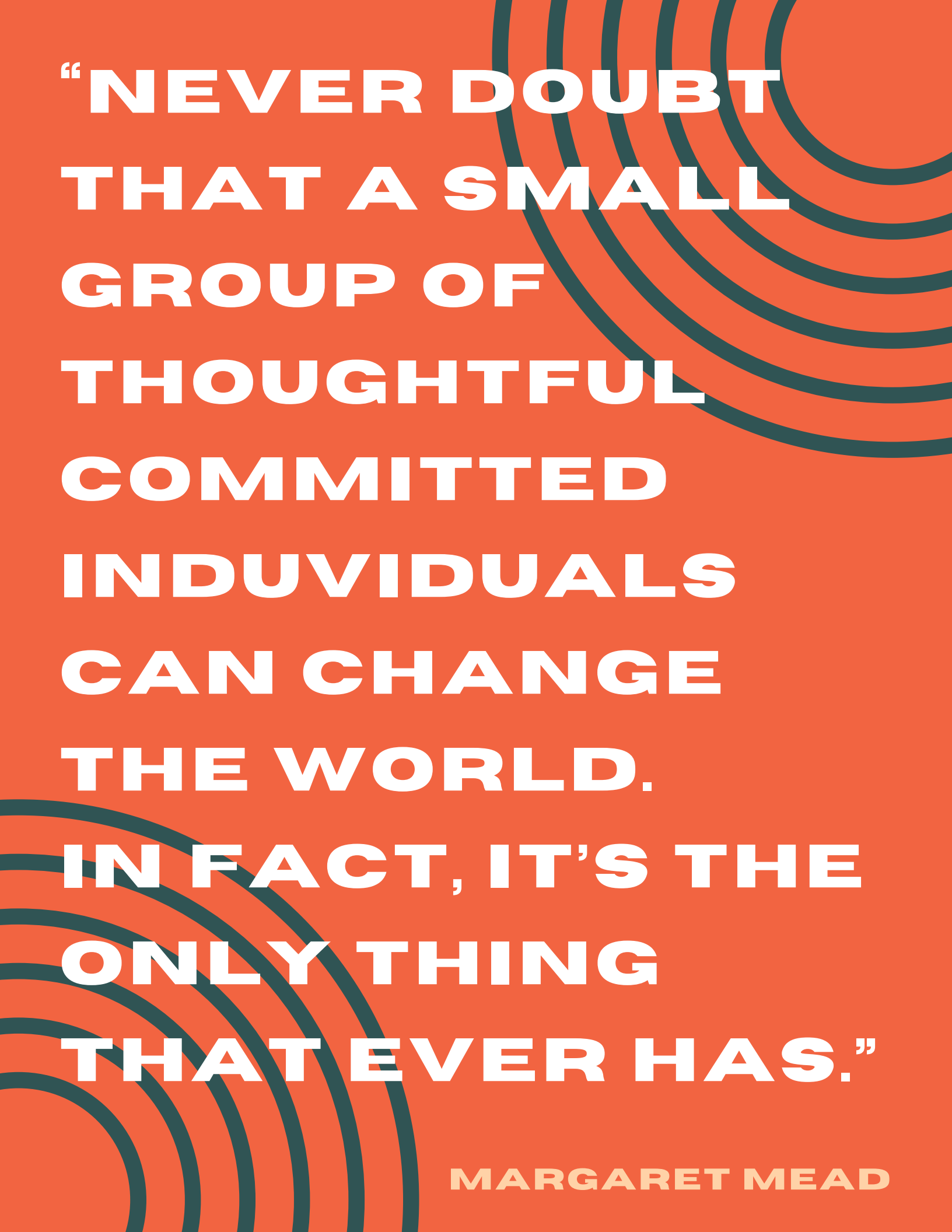
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



That was a lot, right? There's 10 whole tips I have to follow to become a great group member this quarter?

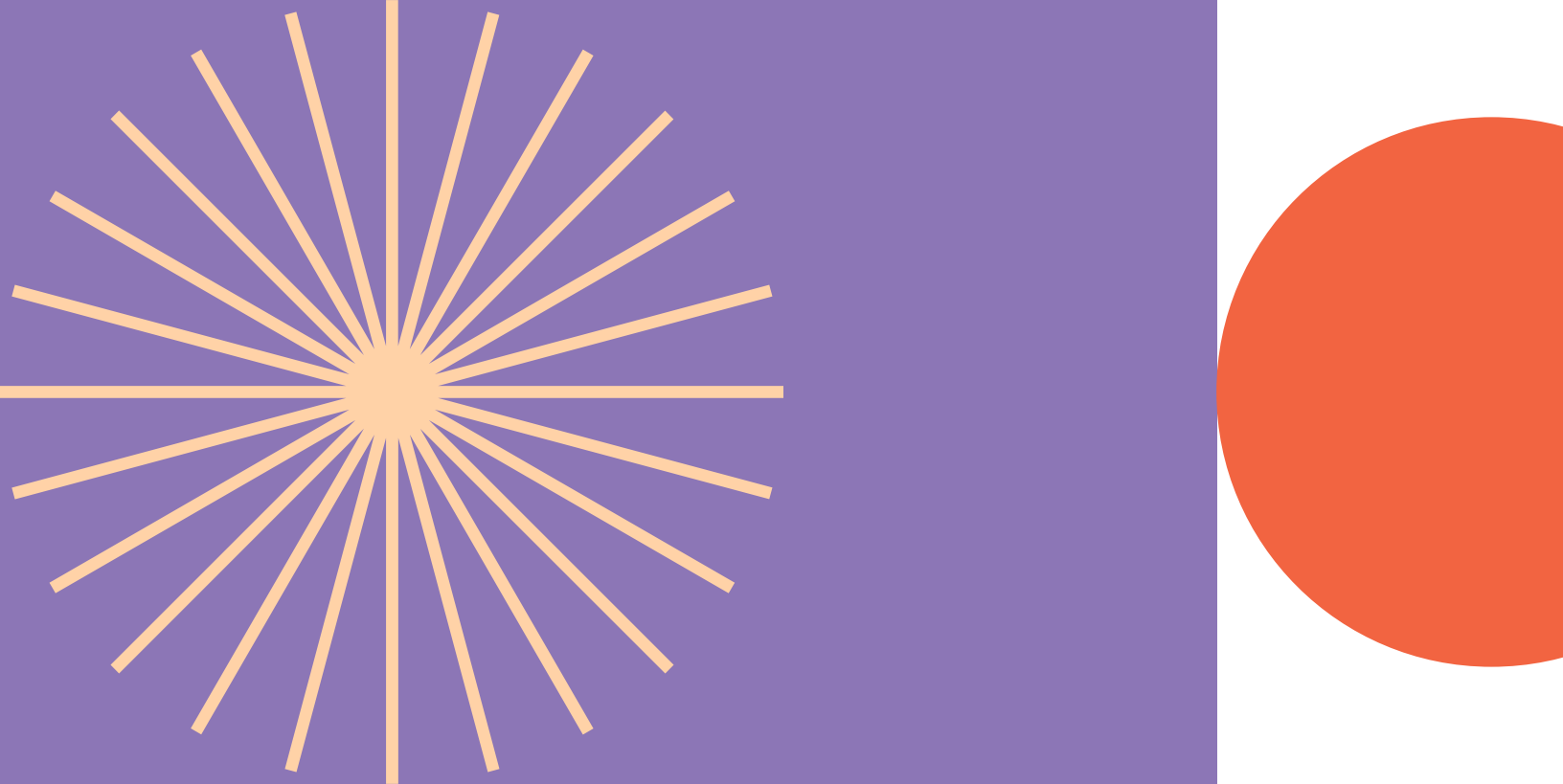
These are just some ideas to help you think about ways you can continue to grow in your group and as a group member. Instead of trying to do all 10 tips next week or even this quarter, we recommend starting with one, and working to take small consistent growth steps week after week. You may want to share with a spouse or another person in your group what your step is, your whole group may want to work on a step together, you may even want to take a few moments after each group meeting to reflect on your progress. Whatever you choose to do, the hope is you continue to invest in your group and your growth as a group member.

What if your entire group committed to growing as group members this quarter? Imagine what your group would look like, imagine the kind of place it could become. Think about how those changes could impact not only your group, but our church family, and our community. While these might seem like small steps, we are opening ourselves up to God's transforming community.



**“NEVER DOUBT
THAT A SMALL
GROUP OF
THOUGHTFUL
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IN FACT, IT’S THE
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MARGARET MEAD



SIGN UP FOR A GROUP



fairmountwesleyan.com/groups