

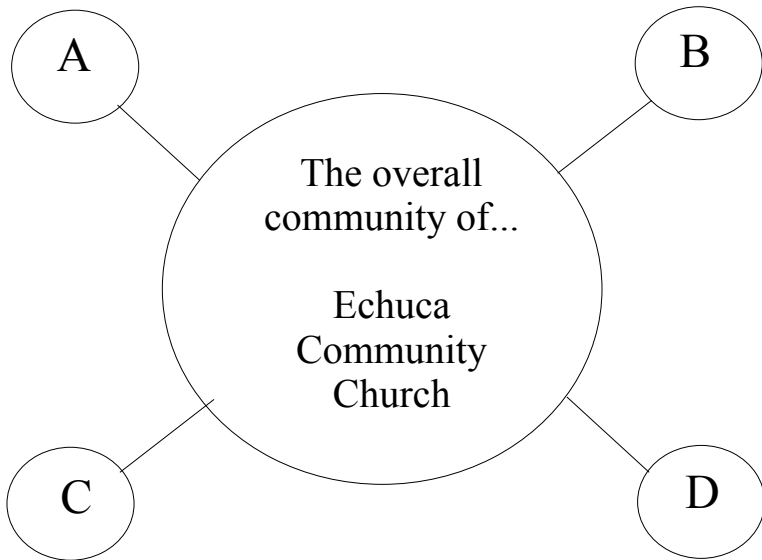
*Echuca
Community
Church*

*A Guide to Our
Cell Groups*

Our Structure

Our immediate goal is to have 4 groups up and running this year. Each group will have a leader who will be accountable to the Elders.

The leader will play a very important role. In fact, the future effectiveness of the group will be dependant upon the diligence of the leader of the group. The group will need to be high in the priorities of the group leader.



The 4 groups are:

- A. West
- B. East
- C. South
- D. Centre

a) *Involvement in a Cell Group*

It is the Elders' vision and direction to utilise the cell group structure to provide avenues for pastoral care and evangelism/discipleship. We encourage you to prayerfully consider your involvement in a cell group. We pray that God will give you the desire to be involved and to make a difference together with all of us at ECC.

b) *The Network*

- Each group will not always have social gatherings apart from the rest of the church. There will be ample opportunity for whole church to get together for outings and the like.
- Each group will be responsible for what they plan for the year. We will work within the overall framework that has been given by the elders.
- The pastor will work with all the groups supplying teaching when needed and resourcing the groups with Biblically sound material.
- The Cell groups will be encouraged to meet often and with some nights set aside exclusively for planning and prayer.
- The leader of a group is the key to the success of the group. His main functions will be: to communicate with, organise & motivate his group to achieve it's goals.
- The overarching vision is that the groups would achieve two objectives: Evangelism/Discipleship & Nurture/Caring of one another.

1. Evangelism in the 21st Century

It is commonly recognised that on-mass evangelism is no longer as effective as it once was in western society. In 1953, at least 35% of all Australian children attended Sunday School. Now, at the most, only about 4% have any contact with a church.

1. We need a new approach or, perhaps, an old one. How did the early Church evangelise? For starters, they did not have public church buildings for the locals to call in to hear the Gospel. They met in houses (cf. 1 Cor. 16:19). In fact, as they attended to the everyday activity of life, they met and shared their faith. The New Testament assumes that Christians will rub shoulders with the people of the world (1 Cor. 5:9-10).
2. The apostle calls on the church at Corinth to imitate his desire for the salvation of men and women. We should all do what we can, as Paul says, so “that they may be saved”. If we are serious about winning the lost for Christ, it will mean giving up some of our freedoms and privileges.

1 Co 10:32-11:1 32 Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; 33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved. 1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

The apostle calls on the church to imitate his desire for the salvation of men and women

a) **Some Principles for Evangelism**

i. Contact

If we hope to connect with a lost world, then we need the time to do it. Time is such a valuable commodity nowadays and we have filled ourselves to the full with activities which take up our time. Church activities, traditionally, have taken quite a bit of our time. These activities are good in themselves, but the time has come to re-prioritise church practice in light of the discussion above. Our small groups will give opportunity for us to connect with the world.

ii. Meetings

The opportunity of small groups gives us scope to make more regular contact with the lost. What can and should be done in these meetings? How often should a group meet? Here is a suggested list:

- * The good ole Aussie BBQ
- * Game of 500 or board game night
- * Special breakfast with guest speaker (can be for any mealtime)
- * Use of the various DVD material now available.

The home is a non-threatening environment for one to meet. Other activities just for Christians can be arranged...

* For Prayer

* Bible study/series

* Social gathering

2. A Caring Network

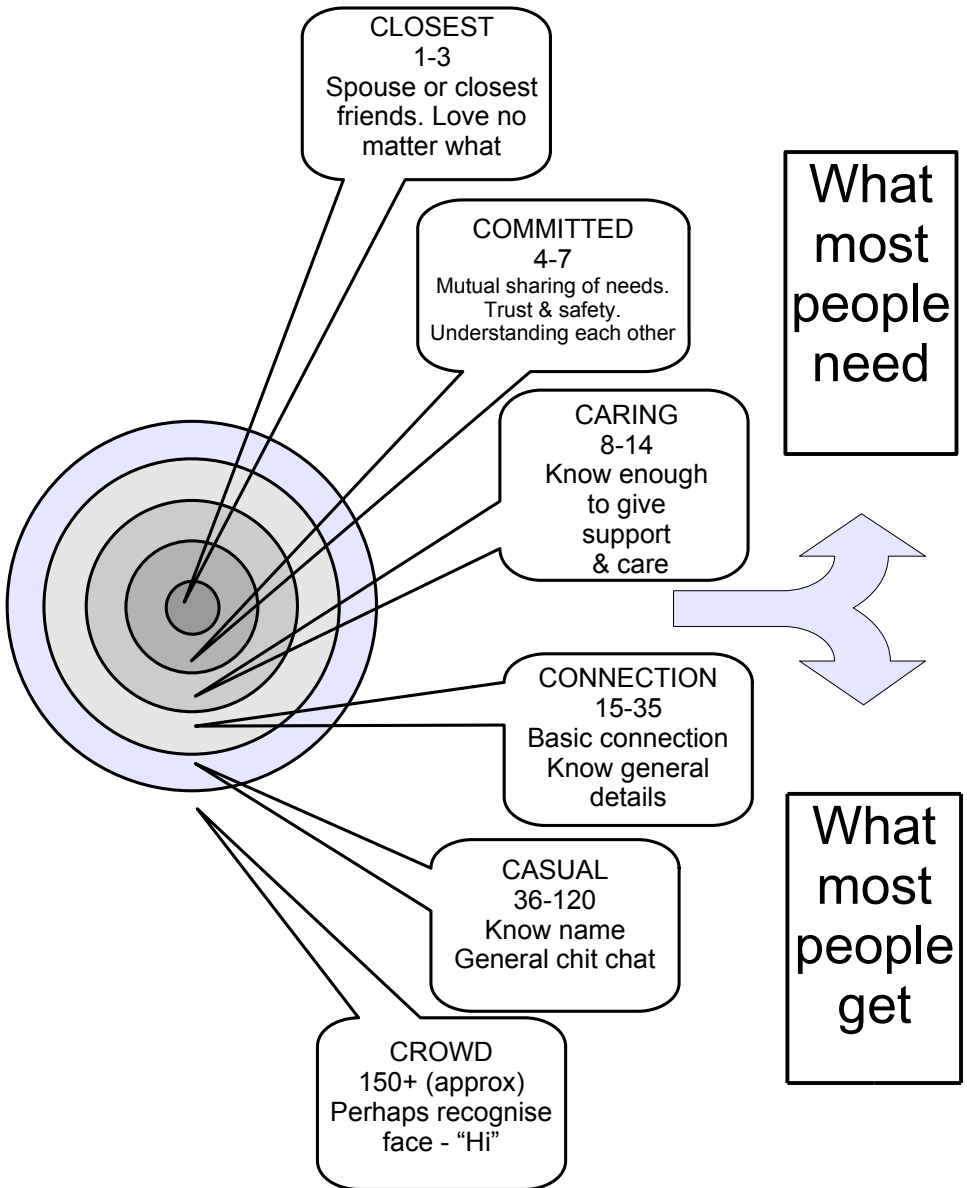
A Cell Group is a friendly gathering of about 6-12 people. They meet to help each other grow in faith, have fellowship, reach out to the unsaved and experience the kind of caring environment we all need. It's a place where you can reach your potential and together meet with God.

a) The Importance of Relationships

The Bible is full of "one another's"...

Love one another <i>John 13:34</i>	Honour one another <i>Romans 12:10</i>
Serve one another <i>Galatians 5:13</i>	Pray for one another <i>James 5:16</i>
Be kind and compassionate to one another forgiving each other <i>Ephesians 4:32</i>	Spur one another on to love and good deeds <i>Hebrews 10:24</i>
Confess your faults to one another <i>James 5:16</i>	Encourage one another, etc... <i>Hebrews 10:25</i>

Our Relationship Circles



b) Cell Groups Built Around Biblical Community Enjoy...

- ✓ A family environment.
- ✓ A safe place to discuss and apply the Bible to real life.
- ✓ Caring based on relationship rather than program.
- ✓ Natural opportunities to reach out to unbelievers.
- ✓ Many opportunities to discover and develop gifts.
- ✓ Personal growth for new and older Christians.
- ✓ A place where leadership potential can be recognised developed and released.

We sincerely hope that you will come "on board" with what the elders, before God, have determined to be the way forward for Echuca Community Church.

Please consider being involved in one of these Cell Groups and how you might contribute to the growth of Christ's church in Echuca.