

Changes/Guidance for Fall 2026 Story Groups

All SGs will meet at Bergthold house (3204 Merlyn Lane) with normal schedule of:

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|--------|--|
| 6:30 | Fellowship/snack time - jointly with both groups |
| 7:00 | Split into groups for discussion |
| 8:30-9 | Normal end time range |

Leaders will decide whether to combine groups if attendance is low, as well as who will then lead the combined group:

- SG will thus almost never be canceled or postponed
- Ask members to text you in advance (individually is best, so as not to discourage others) if they are not able to attend. Set expectations that we all attend if we are in town and not working!

Ron & Gwyn will coordinate snack sign-ups

- We will always have tea/water and kitchen available (like normal)
- We will also solicit and remind volunteers to provide snacks for each SG

Leaders key roles:

- 1 - Encourage study of passages prior to SG and family study after SG
 - We have new study questions that allow members to study ahead
 - Ideally one would set aside at least 3 days/week for study
 - Questions are split into 3 sections to easily do this
 - 1) Observe, 2) Interpret, 3) Apply/Prayer
 - Note that everyone studies weekly, but only attends SG biweekly
 - After both study and SG discussion, the passage can be used for one or several days of family study that week
 - We will revisit discussion questions at end of Fall to revise as needed, so pay attention be prepared to give feedback as to what needs to be changed for Spring
- 2 - Manage time effectively
 - Plan ahead time to be spent for each section - such as 15 min for Observe Qs, 30 min for Interpret Qs, 30 min for Apply Qs and 15 min for Prayer (for 1.5 hrs).
 - No need to ask every study question, but try to ask at least one question from each section.
 - Work to get balanced responses - ideally everyone would share some and no one person dominate.
 - Ask, or encourage others to ask, follow-up Qs for understanding
 - Prayer time can be any format, but strive for requests that are personal, confidential, and authentic.

3 - Seek theological soundness

- Leader's role is NOT to teach, but to help let the Holy Spirit speak through each member
- Most theological interpretations will naturally flow out of and be resolved during discussion.
- In case of a theological dispute or question, ask an Elder or Pastor to clarify (during or after the meeting and bring it back to the group).

4 - Communication to members

- Text Church-wide information when requested (as requested by Ryan, Nyk, Kurt or Ron)
- Send SG reminders, encouragements to study, group prayer updates, etc. to both inform and encourage the group as you see fit
- Ask members to proactively text you if they are unable to attend (this will help leaders decide whether to combine groups or not)

Our first meeting will be an Introduction (see agenda below - no pre-study needed) since there are significant changes this year:

6:30-7:15	Fellowship
7:15-8:00	Ron/Nyk/Gwyn review changes, new Qs, expectations
8:00 -8:30	Align on ideal end time within your group Let people check in on their week and pray as a group

First men's session will be Wednesday, Sept 16

Women are deciding whether to meet on Sept 23 or at the Retreat that week

Got questions? Text or call me anytime. I am in Canada through the 10th and do not plan for us to meet before the intro sessions unless you really want to - the only time would probably be right after church on the 13th!