



Why are students REQUIRED to participate in IMPACT Groups?

The Greatest Commandment, as given by the Lord Jesus, is “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...and the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”* (Matthew 22:37-39) We are called to be lovers, learners, and followers of Jesus...we are called to be disciples!

The Lord Jesus also gave the Great Commission to “*make disciples*” (Matthew 28:19, 20). We are not only called to be disciples but we are also called to make disciples.

Obedience to these commands (i.e. *Love the Lord your God, “make disciples”*) is the heartbeat and mission of the Church. Therefore, every Christian has both the responsibility and privilege to intentionally pursue a passionate relationship with God. From this authentic love relationship flows a commitment to serve Him and obey His mandate to “make disciples” of all nations. Living as a disciple of Jesus is a life long journey or adventure “To know Christ and make Him known”. This is the greatest adventure of life!

The IMPACT group community is an effective vehicle to take us on this adventure journey toward the destination of becoming like Jesus. It is an environment in which we expect God will transform our lives as we practice His priorities.

The following principles provide a rationale for why the biblical small group community is an excellent discipling environment and thus why students are required to participate in IMPACT Groups as part of their educational experience at Prairie:

- *The IMPACT Group follows the example of Jesus* - Jesus ministered in large group as well as in one-on-one ministry. However, for training Jesus chose the small group as his primary vehicle. He chose the Twelve to be “with Him” (Mk. 3:14) so that in turn He could send them out to minister.
- *The IMPACT Group provides a ministry development opportunity* - The small group provides a training context through demonstration, delegation, and supervision of ministry responsibilities.
- *The IMPACT Group provides an environment for leadership development* - Character and skills are developed in the context of serving. We learn by doing. The IMPACT group is designed for Christians to grow into

leadership as they demonstrate faithfulness. There is also a revealing of those who are untrained, uncommitted, and/or unqualified for taking leadership.

- *The IMPACT Group provides a teaching/learning environment* - We grow best in a community where we experience things together with other learners, are held accountable for continued growth, are loved, and where we are part of a structure that allows for and reinforces growth. The IMPACT group invites us to become a participant rather than a spectator.
- *The IMPACT Group provides a community of care* – The small group provides an intentional structure for a foundational network of care. Every student has a “place” of belonging where primary and mutual care is provided. We are not called to travel the journey alone. The community is a dynamic expression of Christ's body and influences development that is possible in no other way.
- *The IMPACT Group provides an opportunity and challenge for growth* - IMPACT is a purposed and deliberate attempt for students to experience spiritual formation within a small group context. We grow as we get involved. We are challenged in an environment where commitment is expected. In addition, students can develop skills of investing relationally in the spiritual development of others.
- *The IMPACT group provides a basic building block for Christian community* - Community, if it is to be authentic and Christian is not simply a theory. Community does not happen automatically or easily. This ministry intends that each student is involved in face-to-face community, at least at its most basic level.
- *The IMPACT group provides a Church Body Life preparation* – The above contributions combined develop a foundation of experience/learning to assist students in entering and contributing to the body life of the local congregation.