



# 2009 Christ-Centered Career Groups (C3G) Guide

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## for Weekly Support Meetings

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# Overview

We, in the Crossroads Career<sup>®</sup> Network, believe one of the most critical elements of the Christ-centered career search is not to go it alone. We need mentors, friends, pastors, and other career explorers to encourage us in the journey.

Accordingly, C3G's purpose is to provide both practical and emotional support to the both unemployed and mis-employed group members through weekly, one or two hour, small group meetings that facilitate prayer, relationship development, encouragement, individual and group accountability, and an opportunity for service by loving friends.

- ❖ Designed for anyone actively in career search – both employed and unemployed
- ❖ Meets weekly at the same time and same place
- ❖ Primary emphasis on prayer, service to others, and accountability
- ❖ Less formal and more relational than traditional networking meetings
- ❖ Facilitator responsibility can be shared

C3G is centered on some key biblical principles that will help the career searcher to focus on the right priorities in their search and to rely on the support and caring of others in successfully achieving the two primary goals of this program: 1) lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and 2) to accelerate the time to re-employment in work that is consistent with their God-given talent.

## ***Benefits for the Career Group members***

As mentioned previously, there are excellent resources and programs in most communities to support career searchers. These include seminars, networking events, industry association meetings, among others. C3Gs are not intended to replace these forums. Rather, they are intended to supplement them and provide the following unique benefits to the career searchers that aren't provided in these other resources:

- ❖ Provides personal and relationship support in this challenging and often lonely journey
- ❖ Provides accountability to sustain momentum in the career search
- ❖ Provides an opportunity for the members to feel that they're making a contribution to others
- ❖ Provides an extended network of contacts that is available because the relationship is better developed than most networking forums allow
- ❖ Allows a group to leverage their presence at networking events (divide and conquer) as members work on behalf of each other
- ❖ As group members become employed:
  - More people become focused on the needs of fewer unemployed members
  - Further extends the network to new employers
- ❖ Can create lifelong relationships with each other and with Jesus

## ***Guidelines for a Safe, Supportive Group***

- ❖ Confidentiality may not be breached by any member or visitor of this group, for any reason, at any time. Trust is the basis for the success or failure of this group.
- ❖ Speak one person at a time so that all can hear. No side conversations. Listen attentively to the person speaking to the group

- ❖ Be friendly, warm, accepting, and understanding. Be aware of and avoid discounting and criticizing. We are here to support each other as we change and grow.
- ❖ Listen and understand not just the words but also the feelings that are shared. Be aware of not only what is being shared, but also what is not being shared.
- ❖ Recognize, acknowledge, and accept strong needs and feelings. Allow painful feelings to process, not only in others, but in yourself as well, even if the feelings and needs are uncomfortable.
- ❖ Do not deny, repress, minimize, or rationalize feelings that you have. We are here to learn to express and process feelings rather than ignore them and store them up.
- ❖ Speak only from your own personal experience. You are an authority only on yourself and your feelings. Keep your responses personal and be responsible for your feelings, reactions, and suggestions by owning "I feel", "I think", or "This is what I realized/did". .
- ❖ Stay focused on feelings and behavior, not persons. Do not judge.
- ❖ Groups of men and women will often be separate and will ideally consist of 4-6 members. Separate genders can help facilitate more open discussion within the group but is not mandatory.
- ❖ The groups will stay together until all members are gainfully employed (and optionally longer). Group continuity is important to maintain so new members will typically be joined to new groups, not existing groups.
- ❖ The group members will proactively work together and for each other – investing their time for the benefit of others.
- ❖ Career search experienced volunteer small group mentors may help launch new groups and participate in periodic follow up meetings to lend support
- ❖ There should be a diversity within the group – i.e. functional expertise, levels, industry expertise
- ❖ The meeting time and location will be determined by the group to best facilitate consistent participation of the majority of members each week. The location should be quiet, regularly available, and an inexpensive place to buy coffee or soda (i.e. fast food restaurant, coffee shop).
- ❖ Remember, any time someone shares they are taking the personal risk of being known and accepted for who they really are inside. No matter how small the risk taken, they are learning to trust others to be safe and supportive. That risk and that trust should always be affirmed and reinforced by someone in the group who identifies with what has been shared.

### ***Biblical Foundations***

*...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.* Hebrews 10:24-25

- ❖ Common unity provides emotional energy and endurance to continue moving forward. That is why small group community is essential to progress in the job search process.

*“...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well”* Matthew 6:33

- ❖ Often the career searcher is exclusively focused on the job pursuit and misses this unique opportunity to either re-connect or, at least, to strengthen their relationship with Jesus. Career transition may be one of the best opportunities for us to experience both the time and the humility that can be so critical in learning to rely on God for our peace and happiness, not relying on harder work or more business success to be “fulfilled”.

*“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose”* Romans 8:28

- ❖ Career transition can be God’s way of opening doors to better opportunities, to take better advantage of the gifts he has blessed us with if we will focus on His purpose for our lives. While certainly a challenging time, if we’ll learn from each challenge we face, it only serves to strengthen us.

*“Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others”*  
Philippians 2:4

- ❖ We are not asked to go through trials like career transition alone. In fact, it is for these types of challenges that we are encouraged to develop communities of believers who are able to support our needs and to contribute to the needs of others.

*“Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brothers in need, yet closes his heart against him, how can the love of God be in him.”* 1John 3:16-17

- ❖ This is the challenge and opportunity that God has given us – to love our neighbors as ourselves. It is in challenging times like career transition that we are enabled to help others in a Christ-like fashion.

These biblical principles represent the essence of what C3G is designed to accomplish – to provide practical, emotional, and spiritual support to career explorers through weekly, 2 hour small group meetings and other one-on-one meetings that facilitate relationship development, encouragement, individual and group accountability, prayer and represents an opportunity for service by loving friends.

### ***Commitment***

The C3G concept is not for everyone and does come with responsibility. In fact, in order for the groups to be effective each of the members must be prepared to invest their time and talents to help develop the relationships with other members through weekly group meetings and one-on-one meetings that facilitate the relationship development process.

The other commitment group members should be prepared to make is to proactively work to help others in the group to make progress in the career search process through network introductions, personal advice, encouragement and caring support until all members of the group are employed. While this represents a significant investment of time and energy, this commitment is what converts this journey from a lonely endeavor to one that can be shared with caring friends. This is the type of support that few people enjoy in the career search process today.

Each prospective C3G member should thoughtfully and prayerfully consider their willingness to uphold these commitments before joining a group. The following feedback is indicative of what we've heard from members of small groups thus far:

*"I had accountability when I worked but I had none in my career search. This is exactly what I needed."*

*"This has been a life changing event for me."*

*"I had 100 reasons not to join this group and then I was shocked to know that there could be a community of men who cared about my needs and challenges instantaneously."*

### ***Values of a C3G***

1. **Faithfulness** - To regular attendance or personal contact each week.
2. **Confidentiality** - To maintain privacy in all personal conversations.
3. **Honesty** - To be transparent with one another.
4. **Enthusiasm** - To be helpful by showing a positive attitude.
5. **Patience** - To recognize and accept the time needed to locate the right career opportunity.
6. **Compassion** - To be sensitive to the spiritual, physical, emotional, economic, and social needs of participants.
7. **Love** - To be living proof for Christ's unconditional love in the lives of group members.
8. **Understanding** - To discern what is happening in a person's life.
9. **Stewardship** - To be a good manager of the time set aside for C3G meetings and the content of the meetings.
10. **Prayer** - To continually hold C3G members up in prayer.
11. **Family** - To be sensitive to the needs of the family and to strengthen and to preserve marriages.

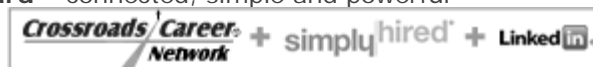
## C3G Quick Start

**What are they?** Christ-Centered Career Group weekly meetings are facilitated by a career ministry volunteer for one-two hours. It is a great way to invite and connect career explorers into the ministry and one another for help, encouragement, contacts and tools for exploring crossroads and maximizing career potential. C3G groups turn what can be a lonely experience for career explorers into a connected journey with others.

Once set-up, this combo can serve up to 20 people weekly with only one facilitating volunteer investing a couple of hours per week. It is a great way to draw participants into helping one another and possibly volunteering in the ministry.

You can start or renew your career ministry simply by combining these meetings with invitations for people to register for free on [www.CrossroadsCareer.org](http://www.CrossroadsCareer.org) for 24x7-access to the password-accessed career resources, which include:

**Crossroads Career Job Board** – connected, simple and powerful



Just one click searches our job board partnered with SimplyHired, the web's biggest and smartest search engine for jobs with millions of job postings and LinkedIn, the world's largest business network with over 25 million members.

### Crossroads Career® Explorer Guide



- Simple 6-step exploration process
- Online with hotlinks or download and print
- Focus on hearing and following God's calling
- Only 80 pages packed with hundreds of career tips
- Instructions, exercises and devotionals

**Over 100 online career tools and assessments** with great articles, websites and resources

### Five great work life bonus resources...

- Real Success at Work – How to hear and follow God's calling
- What the Bible Says, If You Are Between Jobs – Job search and personal discovery
- New Job Jump Start – 30 days with over 100 ways to get a great start in your new job
- Worklife ViewPoints - eDevotional from His Church at Work

**When are they?** Any time you want. We have found that best times are before or after work, because many people are employed while looking for new jobs or career direction. You might consider either 7am or 7pm, Monday thru Friday or even on a Saturday at 7am. Mondays can be particularly good because felt need is usually higher.

**Where can you meet?** Meeting places are usually either public (like coffee shops) or professional (like conference rooms), as well as at the church.

**Who comes?** Meetings are usually open to everyone, men and/or women, unemployed and mis-employed from the congregation and community who seeking a new job.

**How many can come?** As many for which you have room so long as you cluster in discussion groups of 4 to 6 at a table.

**How do they work?** The agenda for 1-2 hour meeting is simple...

- ❖ 1<sup>st</sup> 5 to 10 minutes is welcoming people individually and introducing yourself to newcomers
  - You can have everyone wear “Hello I am...” tags with their first name only
  - You can also have a sign-up sheet for newcomers names with preferred email and phone #
  - You can also give them the 6 Steps – Review/Preview Worksheet
  - Pick one of the experienced explorers to meet and greet late arrivals
- ❖ Next 10-20 minutes is an opening introduction
  - Present meeting’s benefits as...
    - Learning about career transition, job search and God’s calling
    - Networking, support and encouragement
    - Helping each other collaborate during the week
    - Holding one another accountable
  - Introduce 6 Steps – Review & Preview Worksheet
    - Newcomers do not need to worry about completing
    - They should note opportunity to sign-up on [www.CrossroadsCareer.org](http://www.CrossroadsCareer.org) for free career resources such as Explorer Guide. Volunteer should hold-up guide.
  - Brief prayer by volunteer and (if time) a 10-minute devotional by volunteer or regular participant
  - If there are 7 or more explorers, then split into smaller groups of 4 to 6 per group, with a regular participant facilitating the smaller group meeting. The shorter the time you have for small group meetings, the fewer the people you should have in each group
- ❖ Next 40-75 minutes small group meetings of 4-6 participants
  - Each regular participant talks 10 minutes about...
    - What they’re searching for/target companies – can use outline on 6 Steps
    - Review accomplishments from past week
    - Preview plans for week
    - Help needed
  - New participants talk 10 minutes each about...
    - Headlines about background and experience
    - What they’re searching for/target companies – can use outline on 6 Steps page
    - Help needed
- ❖ Last 5-15 minutes all groups listen up for announcements and closing prayer...
  - Announcements of events for coming week
  - Reminder and invitation to next week’s meeting and register if not yet registered on website
  - Encourage individuals in meetings to connect between meetings

Brief closing prayer by volunteer

Recommended style points of facilitating the meetings include...

- ❖ Quick and to the point
- ❖ Keep the pace moving
- ❖ Positive and encouraging
- ❖ Smile and connect with eyes
- ❖ Informal and pleasant and nice
- ❖ Leaning forward sitting or standing
- ❖ Purposeful, thoughtful and respectful
- ❖ Comfortable presenting and facilitating
- ❖ Caring with accountability
- ❖ Honest and vulnerable

***Post meeting follow-up***

- ❖ Email follow-up note to newcomers with invitation to register for Career Explorer Membership on [www.CrossroadsCareer.org](http://www.CrossroadsCareer.org) and attach a copy of 6 Steps and Weekly Progress Worksheet. (*refer to Sample Email on next page*)

***Sample Email for Post Meeting Follow-UP***

Welcome to the Career Explorer Meetings program! I'm glad you're able to join us and I hope you'll find the approach helpful in your career exploration and journey.

I have attached a registration form for you to complete and return to me. I would also encourage you to explore our website at [www.crossroadscareer.org](http://www.crossroadscareer.org) by using the membership key "\_\_\_\_\_". You are able to use this site and resources because of the sponsorship of \_\_\_\_\_ Church in \_\_\_\_\_.

You'll find many useful links, information and tools there. Please call me if I can be of any help in the meantime,

God Bless,

Your name  
Your preferred phone number  
Your preferred email

***Pray and prep before the next meeting***

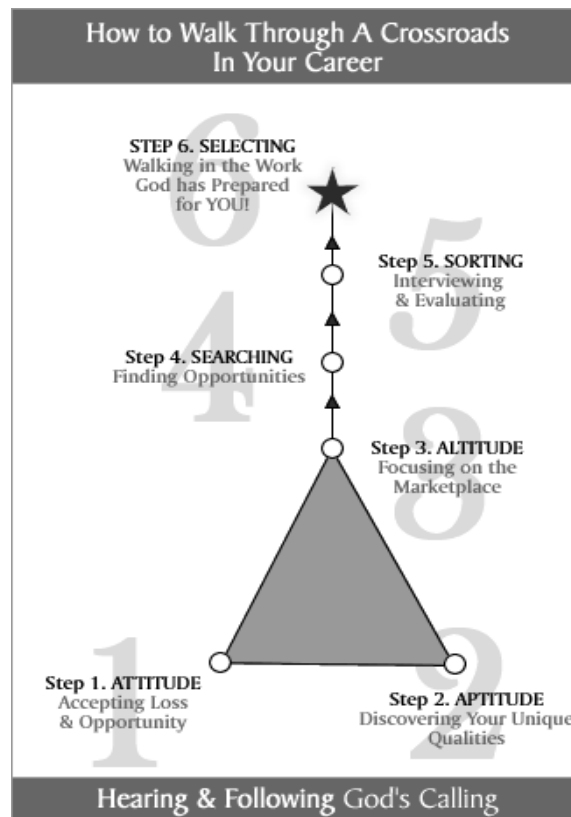
- ❖ Send email reminder for next meeting on Friday
- ❖ Review outline, participants and special topics on Saturday
- ❖ Pray for regular and new participants, their needs and the meeting on Sunday
- ❖ Day of meeting pray and prep with what you need to have at the meeting...
  - Materials like tags, printed front-back worksheets
  - Bring copy of Explorer Guide to show or use as reference
  - Special announcements

On the next two pages you will find handouts to help facilitate discussions and keep explorers focused and active between meetings...

- ❖ 6 Step Process
- ❖ Weekly Progress

...even better for use at meeting if you print them front-back on same sheet.

*Thus says the Lord, "Stand and the crossroads and look...ask where the good way is...and walk in it"...*  
 Jeremiah 16:6



**Prepare for the question “What are you looking for?” with a 30-Second Elevator Pitch**

- ❖ Occupations – what work do you want to do – position/job functions? \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Employers – what employers/industries do you want to work for? \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Location – where do you want to live and work – city, state, zip, country? \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Compensation – how much do you want to you earn per year \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Platform – want to be employee, independent contractor, in your own business or volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Culture – what values are important to you in an organization for whom you work? \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_

**To register, go to [www.CrossroadsCareer.org](http://www.CrossroadsCareer.org). Click on the red tab, Register Now, and then click on Explorer to complete your registration and set up your personal, password-protected account.**

- ❖ Select name of church: \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Enter membership key for Career Explorers: \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Remember email login \_\_\_\_\_ Password \_\_\_\_\_

**WEEKLY PROGRESS**

Affirmation: *I know* that God is with me on this journey. *I know* that I am qualified. *I have* the experience needed by top companies within and outside my industry. *I am* committed to putting forth the effort necessary to find or create a challenging job. *I know* the opportunities exist. *I will* find or create a fulfilling and monetarily rewarding position that will allow me to maintain balance in my life. *I do NOT* have to compromise. *I will* succeed in finding the company, position and work environment that takes advantage of my God-given talents. *I will* get started **RIGHT NOW!**

|  |  |                                |  |
|--|--|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Bible Verse to share:</b>   |  |                                |  |
| <b>High Point of last week:</b>  |  | <b>Low Point of last week:</b> |  |
| <b>My key accomplishments for last week:</b>   |  |                                |  |
| 1.   |  |                                |  |
| 2.   |  |                                |  |
| 3.   |  |                                |  |
| 4.   |  |                                |  |
| <b>My goals for this week are (target companies, meetings, follow up calls, etc.):</b>   |  |                                |  |
| 1.   |  |                                |  |
| 2.   |  |                                |  |
| 3.   |  |                                |  |
| 4.   |  |                                |  |
| 5.   |  |                                |  |
| <b>Things learned that could be useful to others in the group:</b>   |  |                                |  |
|  |  |                                |  |
| <b>Help most needed: (resume writing, interviewing skills, emotional support, networking contacts – share those areas that represent the biggest challenges in your career search)</b> |  |                                |  |
|  |  |                                |  |

# APPENDIX

## C3G MINISTRY LEADER

### ROLE PROFILE

- ❖ Review and understand the C3G support materials to gain a full understanding of the approach, philosophy, lessons learned, etc. of the program.
- ❖ Work with the overall team to understand how the C3G program will fit into the ministry.
- ❖ Recruit potential members through the church and by reaching out to other local unemployment meetings/ministries that can help promote the program. Remember, C3G is not intended to replace or be a substitute for networking meetings, it actually can help people take better advantage of these other forums because the group provides encouragement and support for individuals to get out of their house and take advantage of these resources and events. Work with the publicity lead to do this.
- ❖ The other role the C3G Ministry Leader must play is to consistently interface with the church leadership and other ministry leaders. Because unemployment can be such a multi-dimensional issue, there will likely be a need to connect members to other care ministries including marriage assistance, financial/benevolence, among others. This is one of the benefits of having this ministry conducted in conjunction with a church versus purely stand-alone.
- ❖ Provide Career Explorers with Crossroads Career Membership Key to register on [www.CrossroadsCareer.org](http://www.CrossroadsCareer.org).

## Stages of a Small Group

| GROUP MEMBERS' THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS |   | GROUP MEMBERS' ACTIONS  | LEADER'S ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS  | PLANNED ACTIVITIES  |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Stage 1</b>                       | Do I belong here? Do they like me? Do I like them?<br>Anticipation, enthusiasm, anxiety, caution.                       | Give only basic information about themselves. Accept others on a superficial basis.                                 | Warmth, enthusiasm, clear communication about the group's direction.   | Use "ice breakers" to stimulate interaction. Plan informal time with group leaders. Initiate vulnerability. Use guided discussion instead of lecture. |
| <b>Stage 2</b>                       | Can I trust these people with my thoughts? What is the direction of the group?<br>Less enthusiasm, impatience, anxiety. | Some stop attending. Some become vulnerable and begin to take on the goals of the group.                            | Empathy, encouragement, flexibility, honesty. Get to know members more intimately. Continue to give clear direction. | More open sharing. Group prayer. Spend time together outside the group. Group involvement in outreach and service.                                    |
| <b>Stage 3</b>                       | Let's accomplish something together! I like these people. Acceptance, freedom, vision, determination.                   | More commitment to goals. Mutual encouragement. Willingness to work through conflict. More leadership is developed. | Encouragement, challenge, clear goals, continued enthusiasm.   | Members initiate outreach and service. Members begin to lead others. Training in ministry skills. Quality time together outside the group.            |

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***How long will it take for a group to form effectively?***

It takes time for the groups to transform into a community based on trust and relationships (see stages of a small group below). Initially the members will view the group as interesting and somewhat helpful. In the space of a few weeks, assuming the members commit the time and energy required, the group will begin to significantly impact the progress of each member including their attitudes, motivation, spiritual growth, etc.

### ***Is the C3G format helpful for everyone?***

There will be some people who try out the concept but won't stay, largely because of the discomfort associated with either the accountability or the close and personal format (versus large networking meetings). We know this program will not be for everyone. But for those who have found the career search journey to be lonely, exhausting, and/or not very effective and would benefit from having a community of believers to collaborate with and to support them (and visa versa) in this process, that is whom C3G is intended to serve.

### ***How do we add members to a group?***

New members can be added to an existing group but this should not be done with regularity. The relationship and trust developed between members is vital to the success of the group and this takes time to establish. It is likely better to start a new group, where possible, than to continuously add new members to existing groups. The exception is outlined in this facilitator's guide on page 8.

### ***How can the group continue to meet as some of the members find employment?***

As members of a group become employed, the challenge becomes finding a convenient meeting time for all members (including the employed members). If it proves too difficult to find a convenient time, it's better to pick a time that all of the un-employed members can make and have the employed members join whenever they are able. In addition, the employed members should be encouraged to meet individually with the other members to ensure that they are being supported and encouraged throughout.

### ***How much of a commitment is required of each member?***

In order to be most effective, members must be proactive in their support and commitment. A two-hour meeting every week, by itself, is not that helpful. The most effective group's members will be proactively trying to network on behalf of the others, determining how they can help the others with challenges (perhaps help writing a resume) or any other activities that convert this from a group to a real "Christ Centered Community". We would expect each member to spend approximately 4 hours per week associated with his or her C3G group in some form.

### ***How important is the spiritual component of this program?***

Unemployment represents a unique opportunity for God to get our attention and a real invitation to grow in both our knowledge of and relationship with Him! It is imperative that the groups keep the focus on the spiritual part of this journey. If all we accomplish is returning members to work, we have not only missed the opportunity to help them grow closer to our Savior, we have also fed the problem because a busy work life can actually draw people further away from Christ.

### ***Does this replace the need to attend Networking meetings, etc?***

No! There are typically plentiful resources and networking meetings in most communities (especially in many Crossroads Career® Ministries) that serve the purpose of educating people on the job search or inspiring, or connecting people via networking. The C3G concept is not intended to replace or compete with these great resources. In fact, we believe that getting individuals connected with a caring, supportive small group will actually enhance their use of these types of programs and resources.

***How does C3G help a family?***

If the unemployed spouse can learn to confront his/her frustrations and fears, he can better lead his family through this difficult time of interruption in employment. C3G can help promote communication in the family. We encourage the groups to involve families in periodic social gatherings.

***Can C3G be used to reach those who are not church members?***

We encourage you to use this as both a support vehicle for your congregation members and as an outreach where possible. Your own church members who participate or volunteer will exemplify love and compassion that will strongly influence those who are not church members.

***Can C3G help get jobs?***

Yes, although it is not the singular purpose of this program to secure employment. We believe that through this Christ-centered support, career searchers will both grow in their relationship with Jesus and will become more effective in the career search process.

***Who leads each group?***

The establishment of a formal group leader is discouraged because it places the organizational responsibility on one person. As a consequence, the group's identity matches the "leaders". With weekly rotation of the facilitator, the group continues to belong to all the members equally.

***Are groups separated by gender?***

Most commonly, yes. Communication of personal matters is difficult enough; mixing genders would make this more difficult. Some may choose to mix genders and as long as there is recognition of the difference in group dynamics, this can be workable.

***Where and when do the groups meet?***

It is best to have meetings in the early morning or early evening to minimize the impact on time required for other networking opportunities. The groups elect their own meeting place based entirely on convenience for the members. Most groups choose to meet at restaurants, some in offices; however, we discourage using private homes since someone is burdened with "picking up" each week.

***What happens if I can't attend a meeting?***

Absentees are encouraged to contact their group members by phone or drop a note. Regular attendance will be a key success factor for the group to be most effective.

***What do groups talk about?***

Whatever is important at the time. To keep meetings focused, a suggested agenda is provided in this guide.

***What about spouse support groups?***

A great idea and it should be recognized that the spouse relationship is significantly tested during unemployment. Any resources/seminars that can be made available to serve this need will be helpful. In addition, church sponsored career seminars, financial seminars, networking classes and more would be useful. No project of this nature, however, should be considered until a leader within the groups is identified.

***Are there any fees associated with joining a group?***

No.

(FOR OPTIONAL USE WITH 'CLOSED GROUP')

## Group Covenant

*"...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well"*

Matthew 6:33

*"... if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how can the love of God be in him?"*

1 John 3:17

I \_\_\_\_\_ covenant with my C3 group to do the following:

1. Faithfully meet every week unless urgent circumstances beyond my control prevent my attendance. If unable to attend, I will try to make my presence otherwise known with personal phone contacts to my fellow members.
2. Keep confidential ALL personal conversations held at C3G
3. Help facilitate the C3G meetings on a rotating basis
4. Participate with honesty, enthusiasm, patience, compassion, love and understanding.
5. To proactively give help as I would wish it to be offered and to accept help with the same spirit as I would give it.
6. Continue this covenant until ALL members of this group are employed.
7. Pray for my fellow participants.

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Signature

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Date