

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network *CGN June 9, 2004*

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOUR COVENANT GROUP MEET?

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When we began Covenant Groups at First Unitarian Church, Oklahoma City, I was skeptical that many people would want to meet more than once a month. I was wrong.

Immediately, people began asking for a twice a month group. Our initial sign-ups resulted in a large number of people wanting to join the one group that already existed -- "Exploring Spirituality." The logical way to divide the group was by frequency of meeting -- roughly an equal number of people wanted to meet once a month as wanted to meet twice a month!

Since then, we've seen a variety of desires for frequency of meetings. Our groups decide how often they'll meet, as long as it's at least once a month.

Five of our fifteen groups meet twice a month; one meets weekly; and a third varies its meeting schedule depending on activities. At least one group has a regular monthly meeting, with its second meeting being a more casual social gathering. Other groups get together for social gatherings in addition to regular meetings.

Groups that meet often deepen their friendships quickly. Twice a month meetings can create closer, more intense relationships. The Covenant Group becomes more a part of participants' lives. Also, if someone must miss a meeting, they don't have a two-month stretch in between seeing their Covenant Group friends.

While it's important to offer monthly groups for people whose schedules don't allow a more frequent connection, once a month just isn't enough for everyone.

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