

The key then, is for the group to operate in a way which is flexible and helpful for members, not to impose a particular way of operating, although I can offer various suggestions for you to consider if you wish.

What do I need to do next?

Just drop me an email or give me a call....

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....and we'll work together to help you get involved in a group. Alternatively, talk among yourselves and come to me with your ready-made group!

In a COVID and post COVID world, with all its uncertainty, I believe these groups will be an important part of what it means to 'be church' where the danger is that we lose something of what it really means to be the family of God.

So, I encourage you to give this some thought and prayer over the summer and come back to me anytime from 11th August onwards

And as you do, don't just think *what difference will this make to me?*, but *what difference might it make to someone else if I'm part of a*

group? What might other parts of Christ's body be missing if I'm not there?

Maybe God is wanting you to be alongside certain other people as we explore what it means to live life and be church in a fast changing world.

With love and prayers, *Nick*



Stay connected

Get to know people better

Chat whenever you want

Go as deep as you want

Life's definitely better together!

Over the last few years St. David's has been running a number of small groups, groups which prayed together, learned together and supported and encouraged one another. One of the aims of the Year of Pilgrimage was, after Easter, to encourage more people to form such groups.

Since March, COVID 19 has interfered with a great many plans and changed many things. It's also caused me to reflect on a number of things; one of them being the importance of community and relationship, the importance of not being isolated and staying connected. Mental health issues can affect us all.

We just don't know how any future lockdowns may affect us here in the Holme Valley, but it seems to me the perfect time to bring together all the positives of small groups and tackling the present and possible future issue of isolation. This short booklet explains more.

Did you know you were designed to thrive in community with other Christians and learn to thrive together? Small groups are the friends you grow, laugh, cry and serve with.



Jesus called many to follow Him, from a large group, to the 12 disciples, but in particular; Peter, James and John. Growing and thriving as Christians has a lot to do with relationships and walking with God through life with other followers of Jesus. For many years Christians have found that Home Groups have helped them grow in faith and get to know others

much better. These often met weekly or fortnightly at a regular time. At St. David's we have one regular home group and a few more flexible Life Groups

Life Groups were set up to address the fact that people's lives have changed a great deal over the last 10 or 20 years and as a result many people find it very difficult to commit to a regular group which meets at a set time. Finding a space in 10 people's diaries is a big challenge. The intention is that for those who wish, the Home Group and Life groups will continue (now under the 'Bubble' umbrella) . But it's important we now extend these small and flexible groups to include much more of our church family.



These groups would meet at a time and in a place which is convenient to them and as frequently as they would like. The next few pages explore how we can move towards a 'mixed economy' of groups. So, let me explain a bit more.....

We are tentatively calling these 'Bubbles' - (the reason is obvious, but we're happy to receive better ideas. Just let me know!) These are groups made of no more than 6 people and are designed to be **supportive, energising and life-giving**. They are not about 'another thing in the diary' or anything which adds burdens to already busy lives.

They could meet in person when restrictions allow; in a garden, in a home, in a public place. They could be based around interests or 'stage of life' (e.g. with other retired people, with others with young children, with others with older children etc) or they could be much broader—its up to you.



During times when it's impossible to get together (such as during a lockdown or other restrictions) you could keep in touch via Zoom, email, WhatsApp, phone or any other means.

You can meet as often as works for you. ***Flexibility is the key!***

Why are we encouraging you to form 'Bubbles?'

The first aim is to provide a means of support for each person in their current circumstances, whatever they may be. Having a small group of fellow Christians you know will be there for you, praying for you , keeping you connected to the whole church can make a huge difference.



Secondly, these groups can be a place to grow in faith, to ask honest questions and to get to know God better. There are lots of ways of doing this and I will work with you to make your group operate in a way which works for you. The aim is to tailor resources which are appropriate for you and your group, not a 'one size fits all' approach.

There are a multitude of resources available to us and we will find what is right for you at any particular point.