

Hi my name is Emily Bush, and I was asked to share a little bit of my experience with my community group at Redeemer. I moved to Memphis about a year and a half ago to be the RUF Intern at Rhodes College. Except for my boss Andrew Flatgard and his wife Shelley, I didn't know anyone in the city when I moved here. But thankfully they introduced me to Redeemer on one of my first Sundays in Memphis. I knew immediately I loved this church and that I wanted to be a part of it. But I also knew I didn't want to just be a peripheral attendee. I wanted to know the families who make up the church, and I wanted it to be a church home.

I was also dying for friends so I decided to jump into a community group. I didn't know anyone in our group before our first meeting, and I had no idea whose house I was walking into, but over the last year and half in our group I have found wonderful friends and a wonderful community, to use the catch term. In these groups we act out what we are taught on Sunday mornings. The church is a group of deeply flawed people coming together to love and support each other and to point us to Jesus. Along with having deeper discussions about Sunday's sermon, we share the joys and frustrations of our lives and are able gain wisdom from other people's experiences in life and with faith. One of my favorite aspects of the community group is that it is made of a wide variety of people in many different stages of life. Most of the bible studies I have been a part of have been with girls my own age, but there is so much to be learned and shared with men and women both younger and older than oneself. I love that the friendships I have made within our group are not based on whether I'm just out of college or married with three kids.

Something we have talked about a good bit in our community group is how we treasure the ability to be absolutely honest with each other. We all know that life comes with it's fair share of hardships and that everyone is struggling with something major, but so often our pride tells us we should be able to handle it on our own in private or our insecurity tells us no one will accept us along with our junk, so we hide it away and suffer in silence. But God created us for community and relationships so that we would be able to help carry each other's burdens. Whether its marriage or parents or jobs or doubting God's sovereignty, I've appreciated seeing really strong men and women of faith be vulnerable with each other about their struggles. It just stands as further proof for myself that Jesus is our only true strength.

My community group has been one of the most important parts of my life in Memphis, and if you are wanting deeper relationships at Redeemer or are frustrated because you only know people on your side of the gym, I really encourage you to think about joining a community group.