



Our most recent Living Room support group meets at Granville Chapel

Living Room Support Groups Offer Hope to the Christian Community

In September of 2006 author Marja Bergen facilitated her first meeting of the faith-based MDA support group, *Living Room*, at Brentwood Park Alliance Church in Burnaby. There were about six participants around the table at this mid-day

meeting. Now-a-days attendance amounts to an average of twenty people. We still sit around a table – a very big table with candles or flowers in the centre – as we enjoy the lunch provided by the church. Chocolates are traditionally always a part of the dessert. (We know they're good for us☺)

Meetings begin with a devotional time as we draw lessons for life from biblical passages. A discussion about living with our disorders as Christians follows. After filling our plates and cups, we break into smaller groups for a sharing time.

Living Room is primarily a church ministry, founded with the belief that people who have a faith need to have a place where they can discuss both their faith and their mental health issues. Discussion of this nature is not comfortably possible elsewhere – neither in secular support groups nor church groups. From the beginning we partnered with the Mood Disorders Association of BC and, almost in tandem, another group started at New Life Community Church, also in Burnaby. Marja was encouraged by the response and the obvious need for this kind of support. She developed a website and manuals. The Christian TV program, 100 Huntley Street, learned about the ministry and featured it on a show in January of 2008. Word has spread and currently there are nine *Living Rooms* in Canada. Now, interest in these kinds of support groups has also been shown in New Zealand. *Living Room* is very quickly becoming a movement, filling a great need for support amongst Christians with mood disorders.

If you are interested in faith-based support – as an attendee or facilitator – check out the *Living Room* website: www.livingroomsupport.org.