



LIFEGROUPS

LEADERMANUAL

What is a LifeGroup at Timberlake Church?

A LifeGroup is an intentional and committed group of believers seeking to encourage and develop each other into becoming mature disciples of Jesus. While many aspects of church life help develop disciples, LifeGroups is the principal ministry focusing on making disciples and cultivating spiritual growth. As a disciple, the aim is to put on the character of Christ. As John Wesley taught, it is a growth in grace. Asking the question, "How is it with your soul," Wesley would place the center of the person in focus. LifeGroups seek to help develop the deepest part of the soul, the character, into the likeness of Christ.

LifeGroups and the Great Commission

Matthew 28:19, 20 records Jesus' words: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...."*

LifeGroups fulfill part of the responsibility to not simply make converts but make disciples. A disciple, as a follower of Christ, is obedient in all that our Lord commands. The goal of the LifeGroup is, in part, to teach ("teaching them") biblical principles in a practical way ("to observe"). The goal is not simply to learn but to apply.

What is Encouraged in LifeGroup?

Prayer

"Continue steadfastly in prayer" (Colossians 4:2). A LifeGroup is a place where prayer and intercession happen. We love one another, so we pray.

Intimacy

God's Word encourages us to "walk with the wise and become wise" (Proverbs 13:20), so LifeGroups encourage an intimate community with whom we can "walk." A LifeGroup should be small enough that vulnerable and prayerful conversations can occur. If a LifeGroup is large, it should encourage opportunities for smaller groups ("cells") to meet. This can happen within the meeting or at another time during the week. Within this intimacy, confidentiality is essential except in cases of threat or harm.

Spiritual Discipline

In LifeGroups, the practice of spiritual discipline is encouraged. Spiritual disciplines ("exercise yourself rather to godliness" 1 Timothy 4:7) like fasting, worship, and giving are practiced. This will be done with a calendar so that all LifeGroups will be encouraged to focus on a particular discipline simultaneously.

Accountability

The loving accountability of the family of God is a valuable part of spiritual growth ("As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" Proverbs 27:17). Members are accountable to leaders and one another, both in the matter of spiritual disciplines and, generally, to the high standards of the Christian disciple.

Discussion

While LifeGroup is a time of teaching, discussion within the group is encouraged. That discussion can happen within a larger group or a smaller cell within the group. But it is affirmed that "there is wisdom in a multitude of counsel" (Proverbs 11:14), and that different voices can add insight to a time of teaching.

Reproduction

In an effort to try to keep meetings intimate, LifeGroup are encouraged to reproduce. This reproduction should be viewed as a blessing. Among other values, reproducing allows others to benefit from the culture of that group that cannot meet at a particular time or place and allows our ministry to reach new people (2 Timothy 2:2).

Unity

As the church is encouraged to be “united in one spirit” (Philippians 2:2), LifeGroups are purposeful in being united in teaching. Like with spiritual discipline, LifeGroups, within the course of the year, may be encouraged to join all the groups in the same lessons. This may happen for a short time (perhaps a month), possibly leading up to critical times in the Christian Calendar (like Easter). This occasional “togetherness” in teaching will encourage some unity among the groups.

Service

We remember, “... he that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matthew 23:11). Every LifeGroup should identify some form of service to which they dedicate their time and resources. They should seek to serve together and be missional in the world around them. The LifeGroup should be a place to practice being “the hands and feet of Jesus.”

LifeGroup Specifics

LifeGroup leaders are encouraged to:

- Find a co-leader for the group
- Keep your LifeGroup page up to date on PCO
- Keep attendance on PCO
- Communicate often and clearly with your group