



## About Life Groups

It's tough to have deep relationships through one meeting a week. In fact, it's tough to really know people by just attending a big event like a church service together. That's where our life groups come in. Community means meals together, spending quality time together, showing up to each other's homes, serving others together, being there when there is a need, offering resources that we have to each other, and exemplifying a life that is surreal to most people today.

We are a people who come together to build community around and because of our connection with God. **It is more than just a Sunday thing. It is a way of life.**

### Life Groups Defined

Simply put, a life group is a group of friends (new and existing) who **consistently** get together with a purpose and are **intentional** about having **spiritual conversations** and **following Christ**.

If this seems like a "flexible" definition, it is! Real community doesn't always fit inside one set box. That's why we've gone with the *values* approach. Whatever a group looks like, as long as we're pursuing and living out our four values in one way or another, then it's great! Our four values are our "bulls eye" for a healthy group. Beyond that, get creative, seek God, and learn together.

This means that as long as we're being real with each other and living out Jesus' teaching together, each group may look a little different from the next.

This may look like a more "traditional" small group - with 6-15 people meeting weekly to study the Bible and share about their lives. A few groups could even get together and throw monthly parties that are more laid back and "invite-able" for non-Christians. Another group might be smaller, with 2-4 people who work in the same place and are focused on serving that area. One might look more like a support group for people who are going through a certain trial in life. Another might be for college students. Still another might be a life group for all the people who help set up sound equipment on Sunday mornings. The ideas are limitless.

## Values-based life groups

### INTERACTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

This means that as a group we're **actively growing** in our **relationship with God** through worship, Bible study, and obedience. We're learning what it means to **follow Jesus** and live out his teaching.

### TRANSPARENT CONNECTIONS

Life groups are so much more than sitting in a circle confessing your deep, dark secrets. We need to be **real** and **authentic** with each other, but those relationships come through a life lived together. This means we take time to **play, eat together, and share stories**. Bible study is important, but so are trips to the beach, weekend hikes, and parties.

### AUTHENTIC SERVICE

It's easy for small groups to become inward focused, but a group that becomes all about the members quickly dies. The Christian life is by nature outward-focused. We're called to bring the kingdom of God to the world! So, each group should have at their heart some way to **serve others**. This involves **engaging with non-Christians in real friendships and pursuing social justice as a team**. It could be anything from adopting a neighborhood park that the group regularly cleans and hangs out at to develop relationships to a social justice cause the members are passionate about. It could even be active involvement in a local school where some members' kids attend.

The crazy thing is - this service side is actually good for the group. Some people connect with others through face-to-face interaction, but we also connect through side-by-side work. It's amazing, but as we follow Jesus and look beyond our own needs to the needs of others, **that service to the world will actually bring us closer together**.

### NATURAL GROWTH

Anything living grows and eventually **reproduces**. It's important that our life groups are always open to new people and are always growing. This is a life characterized by **hospitality**. We care for the people who are here and constantly welcome outsiders in.

It isn't a forced thing, and there are no time lines or systems here. But as we're living life together, we'll naturally want to **invite others along on the journey**. This also means that at some points along the way, we'll feel led to **send people out** from our group to start new groups and continue the growth process.

# Life Group Leadership Information

## What does it take to lead a group?

What are the requirements for ministry team (small group) leadership? As we are prayerfully starting new groups and you're prayerfully considering leading one, it's an excellent question to ask. So what does a small group leader look like? In short, there's a necessary **high bar** and **low bar** to leadership – both a **high standard to live up to** and a **real sense that everyone is welcome**.

There's a **low bar** because most of the time, perfectly qualified leaders doubt their ability to lead. If a ministry team is a "*group of friends (new and existing) who consistently get together with a purpose and are intentional about having spiritual conversations and following Christ,*" then there are a lot of people who can facilitate that. You just have to be someone who can invite people over and make them feel welcome!

But there's also a **high bar** for leadership. If ministry teams are the heart of the church, than **life group leaders are really the frontline pastors. They're the lead servants**. They set the tone for the church and make people feel welcome. A team leader who catches a missional, or outward-focused, vision and has a

heart for God, the people in the group, and the world outside of the group can absolutely impact the entire church and the world through his or her leadership and service.

So while we want anyone to see it's possible to lead, we also need certain criteria. Here's a short and simple list that includes mainly character traits, with a few practical needs as well.

- ▶ Teachable
- ▶ Empowers people in group to lead and serve
- ▶ Active at Oasis - if you're a leader in the church, you need to be committed to this local body
- ▶ Called and growing – feels a call/passion to this ministry and is actively growing in his or her walk with God
- ▶ Hospitality gift – able to reach out, connect and make people feel welcome.

Does that look like you? You may be a perfect fit for small group leadership. If it seems overwhelming, don't worry. God equips us as we start moving in obedience to his leading. We're here to help you figure out whether this is the right fit and to support you as you get things rolling!

## Leadership Roles

Our main need is life group leaders, but there will be other ways to plug into the community/discipleship side of church.

Eventually, we'll be looking for **coaches** who will support a small group of life group leaders. They'll meet with them regularly and help them get any resources they need. We'll also be creating two teams: a creative team and an event team. The **creative team** will help with materials and publicity for life groups. This can be anything from creating a video to show on Sunday morning that promotes groups to writing studies our groups can use. The **event team** will work to plan any large events we have as a discipleship ministry that involve all the groups or leaders. This could involve anything from a big party for all of the groups to a leadership retreat.

If you're interested in helping out in any of these ways, talk to Jon! (His email address is [jonsamp@gmail.com](mailto:jonsamp@gmail.com) and his cell phone number is 626-8087-1476)