

## What's my commitment?

The initial commitment will be for 1 semester with the group deciding on continuing for a 2<sup>nd</sup> semester or disbanding to form other groups & build more relationships.

Groups will have the option to either continue or to take a break during the summer.

## Why weekly?

Weekly meetings allow for the group to cancel on occasion if more than half the group cannot meet. This means that a group could cancel one week a month and still meet 3 weeks. If a group only met every other week, this would mean just one meeting in a month if they had to cancel. (If groups find they are continually cancelling more than 1 meeting a month, they should look to shift their meetings to a more convenient time.)

## What if I'm ready for something deeper?

Once you start in a Life Group, you may find that you are seeking a more challenging and deeper set of relationships to help you focus deeper in your faith life. Discipleship Bands are a smaller group of 3-4 same gender believers who ask similar, but deeper, questions. These groups are a great place to find support for issues that might be too intense for a Life Group.



## Why Life Groups?

*My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you.*

*John 15:12*

If you've been around churches for a while, you are probably aware that we love studies. In a typical church you're likely to find any number of Bible studies, small groups, Sunday schools, marriage or parenting classes, financial management classes... the list goes on and on. There's good reason for this – the Bible is filled with life lessons that reach into all aspects of our lives. Growing in knowledge of God's Word and how we can apply it in life is a great pathway to wisdom. (Wisdom is, after all, the right application of knowledge.) But as many classes as we have to grow in knowledge, how can we grow in love?

This is where Life Groups come in. A Life Group is unlike any other group that exists in the church. Bible studies focus on understanding the Bible. Accountability groups help us hold each other accountable to spiritual practices or to avoid temptations. Small groups use topical studies to help us learn how to apply scripture in various areas of life. But a Life Group is different. In a Life Group, the focus isn't on studying or even holding each other accountable – it is a place of love and support as we walk a mutual journey in faith.

In a Life Group, we focus on sharing our lives together and supporting one another. It is a place where we can build relationships that will support us when we are in need and celebrate with us in life's best moments. It is a place where we can pray for one another, share about our lives, and live out the grace that Christ has given us.

## What is a Life Group?

A Life Group is a group of 8-10 people who love and support each other in their walk in faith. It is built on a foundation of personal growth, supportive prayer, and loving, graceful community.

A Life Group meets weekly at a time and place that meets everyone's schedule. These meetings are person to person, either face to face or via technology. This group commits to the following 7 tenets of a Life Group –

1. Respect the clock: Do your best to share within 10-15 minutes.
2. Challenge by choice: You have the permission to skip a question at any time without any questions.
3. No cross-talk: Don't give advice or interrupt.
4. One Counselor (the Holy Spirit): Listen and pay attention to how the Holy Spirit might prompt you to pray.
5. Comfort with empathy: Hold space for others to open their hearts. Rather than offering pity or sympathy, show up and tune in – bless, encourage, and build up.
6. Community of grace: Commit to being a non-judgmental space where anyone can encounter the grace and love of Christ.
7. Strictly confidential: Everything is to be held in complete confidence and not to be shared outside the group without permission.

## What is the weekly meeting like?

A weekly meeting is approximately 1.5 hours (depending on the number in the group) Plan for 10-15 minutes per person. The basic weekly format is:

### Opening Prayer (unison)

God, we invite you here with us. Strengthen our time together as we open our lives to each other and to you. Help us to be vulnerable and graceful. Unite us as brothers and sisters in you. We give you this time together and welcome you among us. Come, Holy Spirit, and continue the transformation you have started in us that we may become the disciples of Christ we were created to be. Amen.

### The Questions

*Each person takes about 10-15 minutes to share around the questions below.*

1. How is it with your soul?
2. What are you doing daily to grow in Christ?
3. What can we pray for you or celebrate with you?  
*When you're ready to go deeper...*
4. Is there something you need to do/stop doing to become a better you?
5. Is God telling you to do something new?

### Closing Prayer (unison)

As we go out, O God, may you walk ahead of us to light the way, beside us to guide us, behind us to catch us if we stumble, and within us that we may reflect your love and grace. Amen.

Everyone is encouraged to share their answers and no one is forced to share if they are uncomfortable. Beginning groups may want to focus on just question 1 for the first month, adding questions as the group becomes more comfortable, building trust and maintaining confidentiality.