



## LIFE GROUP LEADERS!

At the time of writing, we've crossed over 200 adult registrations in groups for this semester!! We give the Lord all the honor and glory, and delight to journey with Him into this adventure of developing 'Meaningful relationships centered on God's Word and prayer.'

### ⇒ PREPARATION FOR YOUR FIRST MEETING:

- As this is the very first meeting of the Fall 2023 semester, we invite you to consider getting your group together in a social way for the first gathering! Schedule a potluck, a games event, an appetizer night, a pig-roast, or grill-your-own-meat night!! Do something to make sure that each person gets a chance to meet each other, and that the new people amongst you are welcomed, and leave knowing the names of everyone there!
- Some groups might still wish to dive into our material, which is why we've still prepared it! Even if you plan a more social night, you can, while talking about how our groups run, ask your group in a general way, "*what did you all learn from this week's teaching?*"

### ⇒ ATTENDANCE:

- 10 minutes ahead of your meeting, you'll get an email inviting you to log your attendance – please fill that in once your group concludes – do it right away and get into that pattern – so that you don't forget!
- Remember that as we do this accurately, it helps our Care Team Leaders and Ministering Elders make sure that no one is left falling through the cracks or going unaccounted for.
- And yes, I will do my best to invite you to go back and hit that blue button if you don't.

### ⇒ PICTURES:

- We're always looking for pictures of your groups, while in discussion, gathered around tables, chatting in the kitchen, serving in the community! Invite your members to capture some of your activities and to share them with me!

### ⇒ SERVE PROJECTS:

- Serving together is an important part of growing together! Head over [HERE](#) for a list of sites that we've pre-arranged. Pick a site and let me know what I can book for you and your group – remember, get your **BLUE SERVE SHIRTS!**

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU



We always encourage you to start your meeting off in a light-hearted way, that encourages all your members to start talking, and to be given the chance to be heard! What we do here in the opening moments of our group, sets the stage for the coming discussion. These are the lowest risk questions!

1) We're at the beginning of a whole new semester of Life Groups. What are you excited about, as you enter a new semester?

**LEADER NOTE:** It's always neat at the beginning of the semester to look forward to the coming nine weeks as you all commit your time together, and to consider what everyone is excited about!! Perhaps you might want to ask what everyone is nervous about?

2) What is the weirdest food that you've ever eaten?

**LEADER NOTE:** Going forward, it is more typical for these two questions to be more icebreaker in nature. You are encouraged to start this way, to get everyone talking – as those who are there, who might be nervous can answer a low-risk question like this, far easier than the high-risk question at the end. These style questions warm people's hearts and reduces any tension that might be present. Often, when groups use both questions, time gets lost quickly. Simply be conscientious of your timing!

## QUICK REVIEW



**LEADER NOTE:** These are two questions that have your group reflecting upon last Sunday's message. The first question will always be the same, and the second one is provided from our teaching pastor from the service.

1) Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

**LEADER NOTE:** Lead by example of taking notes during the message, and modelling the behavior of being prepared for your group time. Encourage your members at this point to grab a sermon guide from the tables by the doors at the auditorium, or to print a copy off from the Livestream, Online Bulletin, page on the church website.

2) This past weekend, Pastor Justin talked about how the bible addresses the topic of material wealth (and how we are instructed to use it) far more than other important topics like faith, prayer, evangelism, and almost every other topic in the bible. Why do you think that's the case?

**LEADER NOTE:** N/A



**LEADER NOTE:** In these initial weeks of this semester, follow these three questions as scripture is read. Encourage your members to even consider these three questions as they approach scripture on their own time! It's good practice and provides a good and helpful devotional pattern of reflection upon what scripture teaches.

READ 1 Corinthians 16:1-4

- 1) What does this passage say about the character of God?
- 2) What does this passage say about fallen humanity and the world we are in?
- 3) Where does this passage specifically expose sin or unbelief in my own life? How does it specifically call me to change my thinking, redirect my affections, replace behaviors, and trust in my Savior?

DIGGING DEEPER



- 1) READ 1 Corinthians 16:1. What was the last thing that you shared with another person? What drove the need to share with them?

**LEADER NOTE:** From neighbors wanting to borrow tools to complete their DIY project, to needing a cup of flour or an egg to finish off their recipe; from driving an aunt to the hospital to taking a friend out for coffee; from playing on the floor with your child to giving them a bite of your cake – people around us are always in some kind of need. What is it that we have done most recently for those around us? Perhaps this question can be difficult for some to answer, as they might not have shared anything. Remember that the last thing we want to do is make someone uncomfortable in these discussions, so be careful to not steer the conversation to a particular person, but leave it out for all to answer as they are comfortable.

- Sharing isn't exactly the natural state of humanity. Why do you think that is?

**LEADER NOTE:** I remember a poster in my grade 9 classroom, that looks close to this one pictured here. It's titled, "All I Really Need to Know I learned in Kindergarten." The very first item on the list, is "Share everything." That's interesting to think about. We must teach this concept at the earliest of ages, as it is not one that is innate within us. Why? you ask. At the core, it's our selfish and broken nature. Yes, Eve did share the fruit with Adam, that was nice of her – but she did so, out of her selfish nature, wanting to understand all that God knew. From there, we second guess our neighbor as they walk away with our skill-saw, and wonder if we'll ever get an egg in return, or if someone will share something back with us.

- READ Acts 4:32-35. What is the effect of a community driven to meet the needs of others?



**LEADER NOTE:** Acts is a beautiful book as it records the initial growth of God's church here on earth. Luke, the author tells us of Christ's ascension and command to be His witness throughout the world. We read about the fullness of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and many come to know Jesus. We read about healing, and the gathering of God's people –

who devoted themselves to teaching, to fellowship, and communion. As Chapter 4 develops, we start to see the activity of the early church unfold in their patterns. This passage at Acts 4:32-35 draws upon and “*good and bad example*” story of this activity. Here we look simply at the good example, where the believers made sure that everyone who was in need, had those needs met. The neighbor got the skill saw. The baker got the egg and cup of flour. Rent was covered. Fields were plowed. It perhaps isn’t written here; but the emphasis is certainly behind the text – and they did this without expectation of a return. They simply gave. “*They had everything in common.*” What an amazing picture!! Invite your groups to imagine their subdivisions, and think about the needs there, and what might be within their ability to be a resource, or to contribute to a solution?

2) **READ 1 Timothy 6:17-19.** What would Paul think of our modern problem of greed?

**LEADER NOTE:** What would Paul think of us now? He’d be “*appaled.*” 😊 It sounds like Paul quotes Jesus from Matthew 6:19-21, in his letter to Timothy, here in v.19, he writes, “*thus storing up treasures...*” Jesus was not just talking about monetary investments, He stresses more our need to invest in our lives of faith. So here, in 1 Timothy 6, Paul is doing something similar – while instructing Timothy to instruct his church to not just focus on their monetary wealth, but to invest themselves more in matters of faithful living. The monetary language in both instructions is valid for us to be challenged in this conversation. Those who have, should not look down upon those who don’t have, but should find a way to cross whatever barrier is in the way, and lean into the solution for the good of their community. Being both generous in sharing their faith, but also from their wallets and possessions.

3) **READ 1 Corinthians 16:2.** Paul guides the Corinthians through a few principles of giving in this text. What barriers or obstacles do we face as we consider each of the principles?

**LEADER NOTE:** This kind of question becomes more high-risk in nature, as it can be difficult for many people to talk about finances – and what makes this higher risk, is that this is the first stop in our Life Groups semester, and we’re talking about emptying out our wallets at Christ’s feet. That’s a tough place to start. So be sure to pay close attention to the comfort level of your group, and keep the conversation in more general terms, than specific ones.

- “On the first day of every week...” - Give constantly.

**LEADER NOTE:** While we noted that sharing isn’t our natural state, that doesn’t mean it can’t be taught. Paul articulates for us that when we give constantly, we teach ourselves the importance, and build the habit.

- “... set aside a sum of money...” - Give deliberately.

**LEADER NOTE:** Sharing and giving, as the Lord instructs us, cannot be an afterthought. The Lord instructed early to the Israelites to give out of their “*first fruits.*” Numbers 15:20 says, “*Present a loaf from the first of your ground meal and present it as an offering from the threshing floor.*” While this can mean that we need to give our best to the Lord, it also means that we need consider first what we give back to the Lord.

- “... in keeping with your income...” - Give proportionately.

**LEADER NOTE:** Paul is articulating that we need to give in proportion to what it is that we earn. Additionally, consider the teaching that Jesus did in Mark 12:41-44 – the woman who presented two coins to the temple treasury. Jesus points out that she gave more “*than all the others.*”



**LEADER NOTE:** This question is typically the highest degree of risk, where your group members are challenged to consider now how the theme that you've been talking about now hits the road and takes shape in their lives.

**READ 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, 12-15.** Commentator, Stephen Um, writes: "...when there is inequality, there are only two possible scenarios - either there's not enough to go around, or it's not going around." How is this true in our own giving habits? How are we left challenged?

**LEADER NOTE:** When reading scripture and sitting in its teachings we can all too often, as Pastor Justin often says, "we read it with binoculars, projecting what we're reading upon our neighbor. Whereas we should read scripture with our mirrors and see how we need to adjust our thinking." This question and overall conversation can easily lend itself to us projecting good giving habits upon our neighbors, as opposed to receiving personally, the challenge presented. Leaders, guide your members to places of self-reflection, as opposed to outward projection. Stephen Um, in his quote is trying to get us to consider the same thing. Here's the full context of the quote ...

*"Time and again the Bible frames inequality in a way that might come as a surprise to many. It defines it not in terms of misfortune, as most people would, but rather in terms of injustice. But why does it do this? It's because when there's inequality, there are only two possible scenarios —either there's not enough to go around, or it's not going around. And there is plenty to go around — now more than ever before."*

Stephen Um, "1 Corinthians," pg 290

In this high-risk question, your members will likely continue to contribute little, as finances are very personal. Be sure to acknowledge the safe place of your group and your meeting space, but also, don't force anyone into answering. There are times that are certainly ok to sit in silence. When that happens, people are processing what it is that they are learning. That is a good thing.

**CLOSE YOUR MEETING:** Invite your members into a time of prayer, chatting through prayer needs – remember the tip of praying for each situation as it is shared about. Be sure to in the midst of prayer, to offer prayers of gratitude & thanksgiving!

## PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION *(very much optional!!)*



**LEADER NOTE:** This following question is completely optional, and is intended for the participants' personal reflection. But do feel free to explore using the question within your groups meeting.

**READ Psalm 37.** David, the Psalmist is on a constant exploration of what a life of living for God looks like. In this Psalm there are a number of themes - from being patient in God's timing, to trust in God's protection, and seeing the Lord's hand of provision. In this conversation surrounding giving of ourselves to our communities, how does this Psalm prepare you?