

# Life Group

Leader Manual

**Dear City Life Small Group Leader,**

Welcome to Life Group leader training! You are here to learn a basic building block of how we minister to people at City Life. As a small group leader, you will join a team with those who have been entrusted with the precious gift of caring for the Body of Christ.

We believe the concept of small groups is Biblical and deeply spiritual. Our model is the early Church, and the disciples of Christ who devoted themselves to fellowship and teaching. Leah and I have benefited in big ways from our involvement in small groups, and we want those benefits for everyone who is a part of our church!

I know that stepping into leadership like this can feel intimidating. If you're feeling a little afraid, be encouraged. You're normal! I pray you can leverage your fear as an opportunity to rely on God like never before. If we only do what we feel comfortable doing, we don't need God. It's when we step out of our comfort zone to follow His call that we put ourselves in position to experience His power in a supernatural way!

I also want you to know you're not alone. If you ever encounter a difficult situation within your group, remember you are a part of your team. Your coach is here to serve you, and has the backing of our Pastoral leadership team as well. We value you and we're cheering you on!

I'm praying for you as you lead your group. It's so much fun to reach THE ONE together!

I love being your Pastor,



**Pastor Brad & Pastor Leah**

# Why Life Groups?



- **Spiritual Growth at City Life**

- Our church exists so that THE ONE far from God will be filled with life in Christ. We accomplish our mission by building disciples who love God, love people, and prove it.

- **LOVE GOD**

- We encourage people to build a thriving relationship with God by creating inspiring weekend worship services, and teaching people to practice the spiritual disciplines.

- **LOVE PEOPLE**

- We encourage people to build thriving relationships with others by leading family-oriented Life Groups, and teaching people to value community.

- **PROVE IT**

- We encourage people to make a difference in our city by building a dynamic Dream Team, and teaching people to use their gifts to serve the world.

# Purpose of Life Groups



## 1. Life change happens in the context of relationships.

Our culture devalues personal relationships, but the Scripture teaches we are designed for relationships. (Acts 2:42-47; 1 John 1:7; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

2. We believe our church must grow larger and smaller at the same time. Small groups are the organisms through which ministry at City Life takes place. They are the most effective way to help the people of City Life feel needed and known. (Acts 5:4)

3. Deep community forms when relationships build organically. 3

Our free-market small group system allows leaders to turn their existing relationships, gifts, interests, passions, and hobbies into disciple-making small groups. God has blessed you with a certain set of passions, gifts, and abilities. Life Groups is your opportunity to use what God has given you to connect others who have similar experiences (Ephesians 4:11-13).

# A Family within a Family



**God sets the lonely in families. (Psalm 68:6)**

God knows we need a loving group of people around us. It is through small groups that we can see the church family functioning in relationships of genuine love and practical care. In small groups we celebrate personal victories, we support each other through difficult times, we believe in each other's potential, and we show loyalty by keeping confidence.

- Life Group leaders are an extension of the pastoral staff at City Life.
  - Life Groups are important for handling the pastoral care needs of the church. They provide the personal touch that people need, especially in a crisis.
  - Life Groups help people feel needed and known as the church grows. Caring For Your Family
1. Accountability—Ask tough questions and expect group members to keep commitments.
  2. Affirmation—Offer words of encouragement and support; affirm their strengths.
  3. Assessment—Evaluate their condition objectively; help them gain truth and perspective.
  4. Acceptance—Provide unconditional love and grace to them even when they fail.
  5. Advice—Speak words of wise counsel and provide them options for their decisions.
  6. Admonition—Offer words of caution and warning so they can avoid pitfalls.
  7. Assets—Give them tangible gifts and resources (a book, a CD, a link, or a personal contact).
  8. Application—Direct them to discover how they can practice what they have learned. Be sure you know the condition of your flocks; give careful attention to your herds. (Proverbs 27:23)

## Understanding your Role



### **Life Group Leaders' Job Description**

Responsibilities:

1. Pray for and coordinate weekly meetings to include fellowship, topic or activity, and a spiritual component (praying together, scripture, sharing testimonies).
2. Pray regularly for everyone in your small group and for your coach.
3. Be an example to your small group, developing them into disciples of Christ.
4. Maintain unity by representing the vision and theology of City Life.
5. Be open to counsel from your coach and provide regular highlights and concerns about your small group.
6. Follow-up with group members who miss weekend services or go through times of crisis.
7. Record group attendance in CCB.
8. Lead the group to engage in a service project or outreach during the semester.

## **Counseling During Times of Need**

E: Encourage people

S: Share Scripture

P: Pray

N: Next steps (church attendance, giving, baptism, Dream Team, Bible reading, reach out for support, etc).

## **Tips to Being a Successful Life Group Leader**

1. Pray daily for group members and encourage them to pray for each other.
2. Develop an apprentice. Help someone else fulfill their calling!
3. Spend time individually with people outside of meetings.
4. Encourage communication and fellowship outside of group meetings.
5. Rally the group around a member going through a transition or crisis ([www.takethemameal.com](http://www.takethemameal.com))

# How to Lead your Life Group Meeting



### **What to do:**

1. Fellowship (have fun!)
2. Topic or Activity
3. Spiritual Component (prayer, scripture, testimonies)

### **What to avoid:**

1. Domineering personalities
2. Offerings
3. Unapproved speakers or material
4. Controversy, debate, or argument

### **Preparing for the meeting:**

- Invite people to your group
- Email or call the day before your group as a friendly reminder

- Create name tags for those who have called or emailed
- Have food and snacks available
- Create an inviting environment

### **The Unseen Element**

For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them. (Matthew 18:20)

Think of a recent worship service or small group meeting you really enjoyed. What made it encouraging or helpful, so that you were looking forward to the following week? Lead a small group meeting you'd like to attend!

- A Positive Atmosphere that is full of faith, hope, and love inspires people to grow and makes room for the Holy Spirit to work. Small groups are a reflection of church in your home. Your meeting can reflect the heart and vision of City Life!
- Cultivate a life-giving atmosphere that builds people up. Be a source of encouragement. You don't need to know all the answers or be the source of all wisdom. Rely on the Holy Spirit to guide you!
- Develop a spirit of prayer in your group. Offer an opportunity for the ministry of the Holy Spirit to take place in people's lives.

## Getting Started



### **Recruiting**

- Start with people who are already in your sphere of influence (co-workers, friends, neighbors).
- Find people around you who are new to the church, new believers, or have shown interest in getting involved.
- Look for people who you think you can help draw out their potential. ● Pray for God to send people to you who you haven't already discovered. ● Follow-up with anyone who registers through the City Life website. ● Participate fully in the Life Group launch party.

### **Location**

If you cannot meet in your own home, look for a host home (possibly the home of someone attending your group). Other possibilities include:

- The Church

- Recreation center
- Outdoors in a park
- Restaurant
- Coffee shop

## Coaching Care



- Praying regularly for you
- Providing care through relationship, counsel, accountability and support
- Visiting groups in person

