



## LEADER GUIDE - LIFE GROUPS COVENANT & GUIDELINES

Leaders \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Hosts \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

### Why This Agreement?

Life Groups thrive on participation! This guide is meant to help us talk through and clarify our group's goals, expectations, and commitments to one another. It's not a contract with the church, but a shared understanding of how we'll grow together in Christ.

### LIFE GROUPS: THEIR PURPOSE

Life Groups exist to promote spiritual growth through authentic Christian relationships and study of God's Word (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24, 25). We'll do this by focusing on four rhythms:

#### **SHARE**

Each week we'll take time to share what's happening in our lives. At first, this may involve some guided questions, but over time it will become more natural and personal as we grow in trust.

#### **STUDY**

We'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or another helpful topic. Our goal is to discover together how to live out our faith in everyday life. *Our goal is to interact interpersonally on the topic and how we can practically follow Christ, not to answer all the questions.*

#### **SUPPORT**

We'll learn how to care for one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9–13). This includes prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting practical needs.

#### **SERVE**

Spiritual growth also comes as we serve. Each of us has a role to play in the health of the church and in being the hands and feet of Jesus to our community (Ephesians 4:11–16). Together, we want to explore and affirm how God has designed us to make a difference in His Kingdom.

### FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP

For our group to be healthy, we will aim to . . .

❶ **Make spiritual growth our top priority (Romans 8:29).**

→ *Tangents – they are okay sometimes, but sometimes we need to be refocused. We'll need to keep spiritual growth our focus and stay on topic.*

❷ **Welcome and accept one another (Romans 15:7).**

→ *We will have different preferences and opinions. Lead your group to be understanding about that.*

③ **Care for each other with love (John 13:34).**

→ *When crisis happens we're there to help with support, prayer, encouragement, listening, meals, etc.*

④ **Treat one another with respect (Ephesians 4:25-5:2).**

→ *Listening to one another, if someone is talking let's all listen, nothing worse than two conversations going on at once.*

→ *Our goal is to listen, not give advice. (Advice is given when asked for) We are not here to judge or fix—unless someone asks. An example of giving advice is by saying, "Well this is what I think you should do." On the other hand, that doesn't mean we can't question what is said or what someone is doing.*

→ *Some of us have the gift of gab, also known as a "dominator"—be careful, I as a leader might have to help you.*

→ *Be careful of gossip prayers. For example, "we need to pray for (person's name) because they are doing this..."*

→ *No put-downs.*

→ *What is said here, stays here—of course we never promise confidentiality if something shared would be harmful to yourself or someone else and/or if I, as the leader, need to seek counsel on how to respond to an issue in the group.*

⑤ **Follow through on our commitments (Psalm 15:1-2, 4b).**

→ *Please give us a call if you can't make it to Life Group so we know what's going on and how to pray for you.*

## GUIDELINES & COVENANT

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<b>Dates</b>	We will meet on _____ nights for _____ weeks. Our final meeting of this session will be on _____. <i>Fill in the blanks.</i>
<b>Time</b>	We will arrive between _____ & _____, begin at _____, spend about _____ minutes in study/discussion and _____ minutes in prayer/sharing. Singing may be included if our group desires. <i>Fill in the blanks.</i>
<b>Children</b>	For the sake of focus and participation, group members will arrange childcare as needed. Nursing newborns are always welcome.
<b>Study</b>	Our studies will be based on the same topic covered in the previous Sunday's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life. <i>Not to answer every question.</i>
<b>Prayer</b>	We will pray for and with one another regularly. <i>We will go over tips on topical prayer the second week of group. Remember – being forced to pray in group or just the idea of it can cause people to not want to come to your group. If you have new people in your group, you might want to say something like this: "It's exciting to see how God works in our lives through prayer. We also</i>

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*recognize prayer in groups is something many have never done. Know that you will never be forced to pray.” Let them know you’ll talk more in the weeks to come on how we do group prayer and that we break a lot of stereotypes of what it means to pray.*

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**Homework & Attendance**

Life Groups work best when we show up for each other consistently and come prepared. We know life happens—sickness, travel, or unexpected events—but our goal is to make this time a priority. *This commitment is key to a healthy group.*

If we cannot attend a meeting, we will call \_\_\_\_\_

→ *Emphasize the importance of the commitment to attendance and preparation. (A good group starts with good preparation)*

→ *Make sure everyone is with you. (Do we agree? Is this what we want? Make eye contact, etc.)*

→ *Most weeks require 15-20 minutes of homework to prepare for the group study and discussion.*

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**Desserts**

*Have everyone sign up for a night to do dessert.*

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**Social & Service Projects**

*Emphasize the importance of a quarterly social and service project. As a leader and host, have 2 or 3 suggestions ready and 2 or 3 potential dates. Choose a date or ask the group to bring their calendars next week. New groups are preferred to have their social gathering by mid-session.*

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**Other**

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***We have read, and agree to honor this covenant.***

(Initials Below)

*It’s totally fine for members to delay initialing if they have questions or concerns they’d like to further discuss with you.*

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 10. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 11. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 12. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_ 13. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_ 14. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_ 15. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_ 16. \_\_\_\_\_