

what life groups are all about

Life Groups are our main strategy for encouraging a life of following Jesus. These groups will be focused on learning four life-giving practices. These practices form the pattern of each group, and we will be sharing stories from our week of how these practices are growing in our lives:

- **Life-giving Prayer:** Prayer for the purpose of being with God rather than getting something from God. This kind of prayer is focused on God (The King) and what he is doing (building his Kingdom) rather than on what I want him to do for me. We often use the words “glory, honor, and thanks” from Rev. 4:9 to structure our time.
- **Life-giving Truth:** This is the practice of telling ourselves God’s truth over and over again so that it sinks into our hearts and changes us from the inside out. Practically, this means we will think through the truth which we learned in the Sunday Sermon. We will help each other process the truth of God’s Word together.
- **Life-giving Relationships:** This is an invitation to authenticity, being honest with yourself and others about what’s really going on in our hearts, clinging to the hope that God himself is able and willing to heal our brokenness as we seek him together. This is where learning the truths of grace and humility really will manifest itself. Being real is better than being perfect. Practically this means we will seek to pray for heart issues, not surface issues. For example, someone might want prayer for a job – he might be laid off. We want to know how we can pray for his heart – maybe he realizes that he is struggling with trusting God to care for him. And so we would pray God’s will in this area.
- **Life-giving Impact:** Prayer is the work! We use the pattern of “Pray & Watch” – where we pray for those all around us and then watch for how God is working in their lives. When we see the Lord working, then we both rejoice and respond.

Life Groups are what we do during the week—we don’t have other programs. So if you want to be involved beyond Sunday morning, this is for you! We have men’s, women’s, and couples’ groups meeting. And if you want to learn more about these Four Life-giving practices and how they work, tell us you are interested in being part of our 4 week “Getting to know LEFC” where we share about these practices, our mission, and our values.



For the week starting Sunday,
March 6th, 2016

**Jesus bore my sickness and
will make me whole.**

Matthew 8:1-17

Life-giving Prayer (about 10 min)

1. Do you have any stories to share this week about worshipping God in the everyday stuff of life?

2. Try using the simple sentences below, filling in the blank. You could spend a bit of time on “glory”, people completing the sample sentence as many times as they want. Then move onto “Honor” and then “Thanks”.

Glory: God, it’s amazing that you _____.

Honor: God, I choose to (or want or surrender) _____ to you.

Thanks: God, thank you for _____.

Life-giving Truth (about 45-55 min)

There are a lot of questions here. Your Life Group Coach will pick out a few below that are best suited for your Life Group to help process this week's Life-giving Truth. Don't try to answer every question – just think through a few together.

1. Last week's truth: Did you think about last week's Life-giving Truth *How Firm a Foundation is laid for your faith in his excellent word?* **Was there a situation in your life this week when this Life-giving Truth was (or could have been) applicable?**

2. Read Matthew 8:1-17. What do you notice about how the leper, the centurion, and Peter's mother-in-law respond to Jesus? **What does "faith in action" look like in these three people?**

3. Carol told Justin, who is suffering from a debilitating disease, "The Bible says that Jesus took away our sickness and diseases just like he took away our sins. When you continue to sin, it's because you don't trust in Jesus enough. And when you aren't healed of your sickness, it's also because you don't trust Jesus enough." Justin is confused, feels guilty, and is a bit angry at Carol for what she said. He comes to you asking for your thoughts. **What kind of things would you want to say to him?**

4. In our church's Statement of Faith (#3) we say we believe that "human beings are sinners by nature and by choice." That phrase "by nature" is talking about how we are born into a sinful world and are inherently corrupted. While it certainly means we are naturally inclined to sin, it also means that our bodies, minds, habits, and emotions are corrupted. It is important to understand that while our sinful choices can cause corruption in our bodies (like living an unhealthy lifestyle), all of us also experience corruption that is not caused by personal sin but is the result of living in a corrupted, fallen world. **Read John 9:1-3 and respond to Tim who says, "all sickness, diseases, and accidents are caused by sin—either your sin or maybe your ancestor's sin."**

5. **When you hear someone say, "Jesus came to heal us physically" what sort of reaction happens inside of you?** Do you have bad experiences with people who say this? Good experiences?

6. Have you prayed for someone to be healed of sickness or disease and yet they weren't? What in your experience makes it hard for you to believe that Jesus can heal anytime, but only will heal all our hurts at the end of time?

7. Read Revelation 21:4. Someday God will eliminate all sickness, death, suffering, and pain. And yet in this lifetime he often chooses to not remove the sins that plague us or the sickness that consumes us (2 Cor. 12:7-9). How does it make you feel when you consider that Jesus can heal any sickness he so chooses (and indeed he will one day at the end of time), and yet he chooses not to do so now for reasons known only to him?

8. Prayer is talking to God. So when the leper and the centurion came to Jesus, their requests to Jesus are much like our prayers to Jesus. Think about what the leper and centurion said—how does their prayer honor Jesus? **In other words, how do they submit themselves to the will and wisdom of Jesus, even though they want nothing more than a miracle?**

Life-giving Relationships (about 5-10 min)

If we have prayed for you in the past weeks, have you seen any way, small or large, that God is healing you?

Does anyone want healing prayer this week? Remember, this is praying for the heart of you, the person, not the circumstances you are going through or other people in your life. Is there anything churning in your heart that we can pray for?

Life-giving Impact (about 10 min)

1. Does anyone have any Pray & Watch stories from this week? Did you make a plan and follow through with getting together with anyone on your Pray & Watch list?

2. Get you're your Pray & Watch list. Let's spend our last minute or two together praying over all these names together.