

## 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, teen’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 13th, 2016

**Jesus calls me to follow him  
without reserve.**

Matthew 8:18-34

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### Life-giving Prayer (about 10 min)

1. Do you have any stories to share this week about worshiping 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 (or want or surrender) \_\_\_\_\_ to you.

Thanks: God, thank you for \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Look at the bulletin from Sunday. Go through the Scripture or a song and see if you can pick out statements that give God glory, honor, or thanks.

## 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 *Jesus bore my sickness and will make me whole*? **Was there a situation in your life this week when this Life-giving Truth was (or could have been) applicable?**

2. Read Matthew 8:18-34. After you read it, point out things from this passage that illustrate why Jesus said, “the way is hard that leads to eternal life” (Matthew 7:14).

3. Let's say you've finally had the chance to share the gospel with a neighbor for whom you've been Praying & Watching. You've made it clear that there is nothing she could contribute to her salvation; that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection did for her what she could never do for herself. She finally says, “So there is nothing I can do to earn this? You mean all I have to do is believe in Jesus and only trust what he did for me?” When you say “yes”, she responds, “So there's nothing I need to do? No changes I need to make in my life? There's no cost to me? I can live like I've always lived?” How do you respond to this?

4. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German pastor known for his opposition to Hitler. His most well-known book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, has this paragraph: *The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death—we give over our lives to death. Thus it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow him, or it may be a death like Luther's, who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world. But it is the same death every time—death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call. (99)*

As you look at your life and your following Jesus, in what ways (little or big) have you “died” to yourself and this world so that you might follow Jesus?

5. When you think about following Jesus with “no reserve” what are the things or aspects of your life that you are most resistant to part with? Put another way, as you imagine a life of following Jesus with no reserve, what are you most afraid Jesus would call you to do?

6. Jarrad says, “When you say that Jesus is calling me to follow him with no reserve, it seems like you are telling me I've got to give everything away and go be missionary in some hard place. But can't I follow Jesus here?” So how might you help Jarrad understand what following Jesus with no reserve looks like in his ordinary life?

7. Our Statement of Faith, #9 says “*The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.*” In what ways does the knowledge of Christ's return and heaven thereafter motivate you to follow Jesus without reserve?

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