

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,
April 17th, 2016

**Jesus is the Promised
Messiah**

Matthew 9:18-34

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 is the friend of sinners*? Was there a situation in your life this week when this Life-giving Truth was (or could have been) applicable?
2. Read Matthew 9:9-17 out loud in your group. Was there anything caught your attention as you read it this time?
3. What do you notice, appreciate, find amazing, or find confusing about Jesus or his actions in this passage?
4. What was one thing you learned from the sermon on Sunday?
5. What was one question you have from the sermon on Sunday?
6. Our doctrinal statement, article #4, specifically says that Jesus is “Israel's promised Messiah”. Why do you think it's important to say this? What would be missing if we didn't believe this?
7. Do you know of any songs that have lyrics that say that Jesus is the Messiah? How might they be able to help you remember this truth?
8. The woman with the discharge of blood was ritually unclean and should not have even been in a crowd where she would touch other people. Yet Jesus was not mad at her, but speaks words of comfort. How could Jesus' words and actions towards this woman also bring comfort to you?
9. That Jesus is the Messiah means that he will come again to complete his mission as Messiah. Read Luke 4:18-21. Now read the OT passage where Jesus was quoting – Isaiah 61:1-3. What is left for Jesus to do at his second coming? You can read Revelation 19:11-16 for one aspect.
10. You meet someone who says, “You've got to have positive thinking. If you just believe something is true with enough sincerity, then it will happen for you. That's what Jesus meant when he told the blind men 'according to your faith be it done for you.' The reverse is true too – if you think bad things will happen, they will. So you need to focus all your energy on good thinking. And those good things will happen!” Have you met anyone who thinks this way? How would you respond to this person?

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