

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,
May 8th, 2016

My Heavenly Father is in Control.

Matthew 10:16-33

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 equips me for what he wants me to do*. Was there a situation in your life this week when this Life-giving Truth was (or could have been) applicable?
2. Read Matthew 10:16-33 out loud in your group. Was there anything that 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. Suffering and persecution is normal (though often intermittent) for the Christian. Look up these verses: Matthew 5:12, John 15:20, Acts 14:21-22; 2 Tim. 3:12. Why is suffering and persecution “normal” for a Christian?
7. Are there any stories or biographies you've read of Christians who have gone through suffering or persecution that has impressed or encouraged you? Share some of the things you've learned or read.
8. Sidney tells you, “I really don't think God is in control. I mean, look around - good people are suffering so much. There is so much evil. God might be trying to do his best, but he's not in control.” How does Matthew 10:16-33 help you answer Sidney?
9. When Jesus says, “do not fear...” what are the things in your situation that you think, “this is what I fear.”
10. Read 1 Peter 4:12. Why do you think suffering and trials “surprise” us?

11. Matthew 10:18 says that part of the reason God allows his people to be persecuted is because such is a “witness” to the world. Why do you think God wants to use this form of witness? How is this different than if God gave each follower a mansion with servants to show how God blesses his people, and use that for a witness?

12. Imagine the certainty of suffering without the accompanying truth “My Heavenly Father is in Control”. What would that do to our hearts?

13. When you consider the Life-giving truth “My Heavenly Father is in Control”, what are some examples in the Bible, history, or your life that helps you believe this truth?

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.