

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 22nd, 2016

**Only God can show us how
great Jesus is.**

Matthew 11:16-30.

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 *My job is to point to Jesus?*. Was there a situation in your life this week when this Life-giving Truth was (or could have been) applicable?
2. Read Matthew 11:16-30 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. Read Matthew 11:16-19. Jesus is pointing out how his opponents were inconsistent and hypocritical in their rejection of him. In what ways have you seen people be inconsistent and hypocritical in their rejection of Jesus?
7. Read Matthew 11:22. Jesus said it would be “more tolerable” for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment. From this we learn that when God judges, he takes into account the opportunity people had. Read Luke 12:47-48 for a similar thought. Just as there are differing degrees of reward for those who follow Jesus in heaven, so too there are differing degrees of punishment for those who have rejected Christ. How does this teaching strike you?
8. Jonathan Edwards, an early American pastor and theologian, wrote about this truth that God alone can reveal Jesus for who he is to his people. He writes, *“This doctrine may lead us to reflect on the goodness of God, that [the gospel] is attainable by persons of mean capacities and advantages, as well as those that are of the greatest parts and learning.”* In other words, he means that God is good to us because knowing Jesus is not based upon how smart you are. God opens our spiritual eyes regardless of our station or intellect. Read 1 Cor. 1:26-30. So, how might this truth make us humble instead of leading us to pride?

9. Jayden says, “If it's true that God alone can show us how great Jesus is, then I think God isn't so great. Why wouldn't he just save everybody then?” Can you identify with Jayden? What are some questions or comments you'd likewise have?

10. Think about Jesus's giving thanks to his Father for hiding his Son to some and revealing his Son to others. Can you think of any reasons why this is a reason to praise God, and not a reason to condemn him?

11. Why do you think Jesus says his “yoke is easy and light” when he just said a few verses before he said that we need to take up his “cross” (a hard yoke, it would seem!) and follow him? In what way is his yoke easy and light? ‘

12. In your opinion, what is the hardest part about believing the Life-giving Truth *Only God can show us how great Jesus is?*

13. How might this truth that *Only God can show us how great Jesus is* encourage your Pray & Watch Lifestyle?

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.