

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,
Sept 25th, 2016

Jesus is my Advocate

I John 2:1-6

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. Did you think about last week's truth *God is Light* last week? As you look back on the week, how did or might have this truth changed your perspective?
2. Read 1 John 2:1-6. What was one thing you learned from the sermon on Sunday?
3. What was one question you have from the sermon on Sunday?
4. When you think of an "Advocate", what comes to your mind?
5. It's natural for us to either want to cover up our sin or try and correct it instead of confessing our sin to the Lord. How might the work of Jesus as our Advocate, who appears before the Father to plead his sacrifice on our behalf, encourage us to confess our sins and not try to cover up or fix it ourselves?
6. Another aspect of Jesus' Advocacy for us is his intercession for us. In other words, *Jesus prays for us!* (And what more is prayer than talking to the Father? We need not think of Jesus currently on his knees in prayer, but speaking directly to the Father) Look up these verses: Romans 8:34 and 1 Timothy 2:5-6. In fact, this current work of Jesus on our behalf was prophesied long ago: read Isaiah 53:12 (this whole chapter is a prophecy about Jesus written about 700 years before his birth). Have you ever thought about Jesus praying for you? What kind of thoughts or feelings does this generate in you?
7. Read these two examples of Jesus praying for people during his ministry on earth: Luke 22:31-34 and John 17:9, 20-21. Now, consider this thought from Louis Berkhof, an excellent American-Dutch theologian who died in 1957: "*It is a consoling thought that Christ is praying for us, even when we are negligent in our prayer life; that He is presenting to the Father those spiritual needs which were not present to our minds and which we often neglect to include in our prayers; and that He prays for our protection against the dangers of which we are not even conscious, and against the enemies which threaten us, though we do not notice it. He is praying that our faith may not cease, and that we may come out victoriously in the end.*" (Systematic Theology, p 446). How might this truth encourage you in times of trouble?

8. Spend some time giving God glory, honor, and thanks for the work of Jesus as your Advocate.

9. Sabrina feels discouraged with her walk with Christ. "I thought it would be easier to be a Christian the older I got. I thought it would be easier to spend time with Jesus, to pray, to confess sin and to do good. But it's still so hard!" How might you be able to use this truth that *Jesus is my Advocate* as a way to encourage Sabrina?

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.