

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,
November 20th, 2016

**Love means I lay down
my life for others**

I John 3:11-18

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 *Love Grows in the crucible of suffering*? Was there a situation in your life this week when this Life-giving Truth was (or could have been) applicable?
2. Read 1 John 3:11-18. What was one thing that you learned from the teaching on Sunday?
3. What was one thing that you had a question or concern from the teaching on Sunday?
4. Read 1 John 3:16. Now read what Jesus said about “laying down his life” in the Gospel According to John 10:11 and 15:12-13. This “laying down” began when Jesus became human, living a life of love and service to those around him. And it culminated ultimately in his death. Think about Jesus's life – how did he show “laying down his life” even before he actually died?
5. The Life-giving truth that *Love means I lay down my life for others* is an outworking of “taking up our cross and following Jesus” (Matt 16:24) and “I have been crucified with Christ” (Gal 2:20). As Dietrich Bonhoeffer memorably wrote in his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.” How is it that dying to your own agenda and self leads to a generous life towards others?
6. When you think of the truth that *Love means laying down my life for others*, who do you think of? That is, tell us about a Christian you have known or seen to live this kind of loving life.
7. Troy and you are talking about the poor. Troy says, “I don't deny that there are really, truly poor people. Some are in dire straights because of sickness, economics, or the like. I'm all for helping them. But then there are poor Christians who are just lazy. Didn't Paul himself say not to help those people in 2 Thess 3:10? And another thing, some people aren't really poor! They just have less than middle-class and still have a smart-phone and eat at McDonalds. I want to be generous, but I think that means I send money overseas. I just don't see poverty here.” Do you see Troy's point? What do you think?

8. “Laying down our lives for the brothers” could actually mean giving our life for them (like when we care for the sick and contract their fatal disease or care for the persecuted and are fatally persecuted ourselves). How does the fact that God has promised us eternal life enable a Christian to actually love unto death?

9. Wheaton College Professor Gary Burge wrote, “John the pastor understands that hatred and division are not always overt. For most of us there are sophisticated ways to avoid the command to love.” Reread 1 John 3:17-18. What are some of these “sophisticated ways to avoid the command to love” that you can think of?

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.