

Life Groups

Definition – What are Life Groups?

Life Groups are small communities, within New Life Church, characterized by Gospel, Relationship, and Mission.

Gospel in Life Groups. These small Christian communities provide opportunities for followers of Jesus to experience His presence and power through His Word (the Bible), prayer, and worship. The gospel shapes these groups by making Christ central.

Relationship in Life Groups. As small communities within New Life Church, Life Groups provide an environment to develop relationships that challenge, support, and encourage Life Group Members to live gospel-shaped and Christ-centered lives. Led by a trained and approved Life Group Leader and under the oversight of New Life's elders, Life Groups serve as the primary place for pastoral care at New Life Church.

Mission in Life Groups. Life Groups take seriously Jesus' commission to "go and make disciples." To this end they engage people in their sphere of influence with the gospel in culturally appropriate ways and encourage each Life Group Member in personal evangelism.

Purpose and Goals – Why are Life Groups?

Life Groups exist to experience the presence and power of Jesus (*Gospel*) within intentional Christian community (*Relational*) where Christian disciples mature and unbelievers are converted (*Missional*).

Substance and Structure – How do Life Groups Operate?

Life Groups are communities of intentional relationship within New Life Church and consist of both relationship and meeting. Life Groups spend time building relationships by gathering informally to do things together such as eating, recreating, and working. Life Groups devote group meeting time to five key areas of Christian activity: (1) Worship, (2) Bible-Study, (3) Sharing, (4) Prayer and (5) Mission/Service.

Open/Closed Life Groups

All Life Groups are "open" by default, meaning that new members, visitors and non-Christians are always welcome to attend. Only those Life Groups meeting for the express purpose of dealing with sensitive issues (such as addiction, abuse, etc.) are "closed," meaning that visitors must contact the Life Group Leader before attending.

Life Group Leaders (LGL)

Definition – *What are Life Group Leaders?*

Life Group Leaders are spiritually healthy and biblically qualified members of New Life Church passionately committed to the care and maturation of their groups and group members. Operating under the oversight of New Life’s elders and the Life Group Coordinators, LGL’s are the most important instruments of pastoral care at New Life Church. LGL’s lead primarily by example and service, giving themselves sacrificially to the work of Life Group ministry.

Purpose and Goals – *Why are Life Group Leaders?*

Life Group Leaders exist to mediate the transforming love and passionate care of Jesus Christ, the church’s Chief Shepherd. Their primary purpose is to see that their group members mature biblically in thought and action. To this end, LGL’s aim to:

1. Draw their group members, both corporately and individually, into personal fellowship with God through the Bible, prayer, and worship (*Gospel*).
2. Care for and promote the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of their group and group members. Cultivate and maintain a safe and accepting atmosphere of trust where “truth spoken in love” is practiced and upheld as a foundational group ethic (*Relationship*).
3. Share and deploy their group’s talents and gifts with both New Life Church as well as the surrounding, un-churched community at large (*Mission*).

Job Description – *How do Life Group Leaders Operate?*

Acting as a *shepherd*, Life Group Leaders:

1. Get to know their group members (see attached “Life Group Member Profile” page).
2. Teach and apply biblical truth to the minds, hearts, and lives of their members.
3. Challenge, encourage, comfort, support, and resource members to follow Christ.
4. Pray for the health, well-being, and special needs of their group and group members.
5. Maintain a roster and stay in contact with each member weekly.
6. Schedule and manage group meetings and activities.

Additional and Optional Responsibilities:

1. Identify and train the following roles *when available and desired*:
 - a. A LGL Apprentice (see “Life Group Members”)
 - b. A Hospitality Host (see “Life Group Members”)
 - c. A Worship Coordinator (see “Life Group Members”)

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2. Prepare for and attend Life Group Leader Meetings; this includes completing a “Group Health Evaluation” (see attached form).

Life Group Members

Definition – *What are Life Group Members?*

Life Group Members are men and women resolutely committed to follow Jesus with their whole lives in the context of a caring Christian community.

Purpose and Goals – *Why are Life Group Members?*

Life Group Members exist to live out the “one another” imperatives found throughout the New Testament (see “One Another”). Their primary purpose is to discover, cultivate, and maintain the spirit-produced community of believers at New Life Church.

Responsibilities and Roles – *How do Life Group Members Operate?*

Life Group Members are expected to:

1. Prepare for, attend, and participate in all of their Group’s regular meetings. In cases of necessary absence, Life Group Members should contact their LGL beforehand.
2. Care for and guard the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of the other group members.
3. Support and submit to the leadership of their LGL.
4. Commit to developing a life of spiritual growth, evangelism, and service (see “Life Groups & Discipleship”).
5. Pray for the health and well-being of the LGL, the group, the other group members, and the conversion of unbelievers.
6. Intentionally build and maintain meaningful relationships with other members extending beyond the weekly meetings.

Roles:

1. LGL Apprentice

LGL Apprentices are essentially LGL’s in training, individuals whom the LGL identifies as able pastor-teachers and trains to either plant a new group or take over the current.

2. Hospitality Host

Hospitality Hosts are responsible for providing and arranging the meeting place, food, transportation, childcare, and other practical needs.

3. Worship Coordinator

Worship Coordinators develop and lead the worship portions of each meeting. This may be done through music, scripture reading, prayer, devotional practices, multimedia, or any other means the group approves of.

Life Group Coordinators

Definition – *What are Life Group Coordinators?*

Life Group Coordinators (LGC) are *shepherds of the shepherds*—spiritually healthy and biblically qualified members of New Life Church passionately committed to the care and maturation of Life Group Leaders (LGL), LGL's groups, and group members. Operating under the oversight of New Life's elders, LGC's equip the LGL's for service, caring for them, giving themselves sacrificially to the work of ministering to LGL's.

Purpose and Goals – *Why are Life Group Coordinators?*

Life Group Coordinators (LGC) exists to care for and equip LGL's. Their primary purpose is to see that LGL's are maturing and are equipped to serve Life Group Members. To this end, LGC's aim to:

1. Draw their Life Group Leaders, corporately and individually, into personal fellowship with God (*Gospel*).
2. Care for and promote the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of their Life Group Leaders (*Relationship*).
3. Train Life Group Leaders to shepherd Life Groups in all their purposes and goals (*Mission*).

Job Description—*How do Life Group Coordinators Operate?*

Acting as a *shepherd of shepherds*, Life Group Coordinators:

1. Maintain an accurate and published schedule of all active Life Groups.
2. Maintain a global roster of all Life Group Members and their Groups.
3. Develop discipleship relationships with LGL's by connecting—via e-mail, phone, or in person—with LGL's at least twice monthly.
4. Meet with LGL's one-on-one every other month using the "Group Evaluation and Projection" document.
5. Schedule, organize, and lead quarterly LGL's Meetings.
6. Equip and resource LGL's to shepherd their group and group members
7. Promote Life Groups through preaching on the topic of Life Groups, announcement, and other means, within the corporate Church body.
8. Pray for the health, well-being, and special needs of LGL's, their families, and their group and group members.
9. Encourage LGL's in their lives (spiritual & emotional) and groups (life group & family).