



5 Essentials of a Healthy Group

Vulnerability

- “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:1-3
- “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” James 5:16
- “We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.” 2 Corinthians 6:11-13

Setting the Right Environment for Your Life Group

Growth requires vulnerability. As leaders, it is our responsibility to create environments that encourage people to be open and real. Two key principles for creating this kind of environment:

1. **The vulnerability and openness of the leader.** If you aren’t willing to be open and real about who you really are and where you need growth others won’t be either.
2. **An atmosphere of trust and safety.** None of us are willing to be vulnerable if the relationship doesn’t feel safe. Leaders must cultivate acceptance, trust, and confidentiality in order to encourage vulnerability.

People are more likely to open up when they feel comfortable. As leaders we want to promote an environment of hospitality.

- Provide a clean and comfortable meeting space.
- Seek to minimize distractions.
- Offer refreshments.
- Engage everyone in a non-threatening way.
- Some personalities will take longer than others to engage. Be inclusive, but patient.

Encouragement

- “So let’s do it—full of belief, confident that we’re presentable inside and out. Let’s keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps his Word. Let’s see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshiping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big day approaching.” Hebrews 10:22-25
- “So speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you’ll all be together in this, no one left out, no one left behind. I know you’re already doing this; just keep on doing it.” I Thessalonians 5:11

Everyone needs encouragement. Jesus warned us that this life would be difficult (John 16:33). And we know it is. Life Groups should be one place where we leave encouraged, refreshed, and renewed to engage our lives with confidence and peace.

Ways to Encourage Your Group

- Engage every member in a friendly and genuine way. Ask them about their week. Celebrate the high points and support them in the low ones.
- Intentionally celebrate spiritual growth in the group.
- Make the small things big things (Baptism, Salvation, Bible reading, etc.).
- Share in the responsibilities of the group. Create volunteer positions (Snack Organizer, Group Communicator, Lead Icebreaker, etc.).
- Identify a potential leader or leaders. Model, develop, and mentor them. Have them take over some responsibilities or lead various aspects of the Life Group as you watch, assist, correct, and encourage.

Scripture

- “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Romans 10:17
- “There’s nothing like the written Word of God for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God’s way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.” II Timothy 3:16

No matter the type of Life Group you choose to lead, sharing Scripture will always be an essential ingredient. Our purpose for Life Groups at Life Fellowship is to help people GROW in their relationship with Christ. Scripture is the foundational ingredient for spiritual growth.

Infusing Scripture into Your Group

- Consider sharing a passage of scripture each week that is meaningful to you. This works best when it coincides with the topic of the week but can also be used to open or close your meeting time.

- When we speak into people’s lives or offer advice in our group, we always want it founded in scripture. Seek to point group members to the Bible for answers and help. Your coach can help with this, if needed.
- Try a Bible study curriculum for your group. Be sure to choose something you feel comfortable and confident teaching or facilitating.

Prayer

- “Make this your common practice: Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed. The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with.” James 5:13-18
- “Therefore, I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.” 1 Timothy 2:1
- “Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other’s spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.”
Ephesians 6:18

Set aside time during every group meeting to pray together. This can be a time at the beginning of each group to set the tone or at end of each meeting when you ask group members for prayer requests. Prayer invites the presence of God into our groups and God’s presence is the ONLY thing that can radically transform our lives and relationships.

How to Pray For Your Group

- Ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit in your group.
- Pray that God will open people’s hearts to hear His truth.
- Pray for authentic community to develop.
- Pray for wisdom and strength to lead your group well.

Accountability

- “It’s better to have a partner than go it alone. Share the work, share the wealth. And if one falls down, the other helps, but if there’s no one to help, tough! Two in a bed warm each other. Alone, you shiver all night. By yourself you’re unprotected. With a friend you can face the worst. Can you round up a third? A three-stranded rope isn’t easily snapped.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
- “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” Proverbs 27:17
- “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds...” Hebrews 10:24

Growing in our faith always requires taking steps and making decisions. Some of which aren’t easy. Life Groups offer us a support system and a loving nudge to stay the course even when it’s hard. Accountability is an act of love if we truly want to see people’s lives transformed by the power of Jesus.

How to Cultivate Accountability in Your Group

- When appropriate, encourage group members to make specific commitments about their next steps.
- Lovingly ask group members to share the progress they are making on their next step commitments.
- If progress is slow or no action has been taken, seek to help group members remove obstacles and take action.
- Remember your primary goal is not to judge other's progress, but to help them take steps closer to Jesus.