



Life Group

Blueprint

Life Group Blueprint

Living out God's Story the way Jesus showed us *together*.



Vision

Life Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and the study of God's word so we can live out God's story the way Jesus showed us (Hebrews 10:24-25).

The Purpose of Life Groups

Gather

Each week we'll take time to gather and share what is happening in our lives. To read, pray and build relationships with one another.

Devotion

Each week we'll study God's Word together with the goal of living out God's story the way Jesus showed us.

Support

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms, such as prayer, providing encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.

Serve

We will use the gifts, talents and passions God has given us to extend God's Kingdom and be a blessing to others. Throughout each session, it is our hope you can find different ways to serve each other, the church community, and the community around us.

Five marks of a healthy Life Group

1. Make spiritual growth our number one priority (Romans 8:29)
2. Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
3. Take care of one another (John 13:34)
4. Treat each other with respect (Ephesians 4:25 & 5:2)
5. Keep your commitments to your group (Ecclesiastes 4:9-11)

Life Group Model at Abundant Life Church

Our model at ALC is to invite everyone to join a Life Group or be involved in another similar small group experience. While most groups are a series or sermon-based, some are special interest groups focusing on topics such as parenting, marriage, recovery and Christian basics for following Jesus.

These home gatherings are generally made up of 10-24 people who meet weekly to share, study and support one another. A trained leader will lead each group.

The groups meet for three, 10-week sessions from late September through June, taking a break during the summer months.

Components every Life Group should have

Fellowship

At the beginning and end of every Life Group allow time for group members to fellowship, to talk and get to know one another better. This helps build the chemistry of the group and will enable them to be more comfortable with each other

Discussion

Spend time walking through the material and God's Word allowing for conversations and questions. Try to stay on track with the material but be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, allowing space to linger on a certain topic in the material may require more time for discussion and/or walking through something with another group member.

Prayer

Open in prayer and close in prayer. Make this a priority along with providing an opportunity for group members to share prayer requests everyone can be praying over during the week.

Facilitating your Life Group meeting

Set Expectations

A key to helping people feel comfortable is by letting them know what to expect. Take time to share how the group will flow for each meeting. This can include explaining the group start and stop time, how discussions or a group activity will flow, and how everyone can share prayer requests. This should be done the first night you meet as a group together.

Keep the discussion positive and relative to everyone

If the conversation takes a negative turn, kindly guide it in the right direction. If someone needs to talk about a sensitive, complex issue, you can follow up with them after the group has ended.

Some silence is okay

As leaders, silence can make us feel uncomfortable. However, there can be benefits to giving moments of silence. Two of those are the following.

1. It encourages group members to speak. Sometimes we speak too soon or too quickly. Silence allows group members a moment to process the information and then respond.
2. It allows a moment for what was said to sink in. Communicators will sometimes use pauses to allow an important point to resonate. The same can happen in a group discussion. After you or another group member shares a thought-provoking point, pause a second or two before moving on.

How to navigate disruptive Life Group members

While leading a Life Group you may experience individuals who mean well, but tend to become disruptive. Other times you find individuals who tend to always dodge discussions. Below are a few helpful tips for you as you lead these individuals:

1. The Dominator

This individual has the tendency to unintentionally dominate the conversation. Here are a few ways to help you navigate with the dominator:

- Ask other group members for their input first.
- Kindly ask him or her to hold his or her thoughts so someone who has not shared has an opportunity to do so.
- Meet with them after the group to ask for help in giving others in the group an opportunity to express their thoughts.

2. The Dodger

Opposite of the dominator, the dodger tends to avoid discussion at all costs. Here are a few ways you can help the dodger contribute during the discussion:

- Give them time to warm up to the group. Some individuals need to get more acquainted with the group before they begin to share.
- Ask them if they have anything they would like to share or add to the discussion
- Talk to this person before and after the group to help them feel more comfortable. Some people will **open-up more one-on-one than in a group setting.**

3. The Debater

There will be times where you will have individuals in your group who will want to debate any and every topic. As a leader, you will need to determine if what they are bringing up is relevant to the group. You will also want to make sure the conversation is not going in a controversial direction. Again, it is always okay to kindly steer this individual back on track if needed. You can say “That is an interesting take on that so and so. Let’s talk about that after group so we can stay on topic for now.”

4. The Drainer

A drainer is someone who always seems to drain the life out of the group. No matter what the topic of discussion is about, they turn it into a conversation about themselves and their current struggles. Here are a few ways to navigate the drainer:

- Meet with the person outside of the group to bring this issue to their attention. They may not be aware of how they are coming across.
- Ask group members to write their prayer requests down instead of sharing them out loud. This may eliminate an opportunity for the individual to take over the conversation.
- The level of the person’s need may require professional care that your group is not equipped to handle or offer. If this is the case, bring it to our life group pastor’s attention so we can help with next steps for them.

The Four Q’s

Four key questions to ask when someone comes to you with any issue they are experiencing. Getting the facts and context usually makes the next steps relatively straightforward on how to support them or the kind of help they need.

1. How long have you been dealing with this?

- When did it first occur?

2. Who Else Knows?

- Have you talked to anyone else about this? If so, who? When was the last time you talked to someone about it?

3. Have you received any advice or council on how to deal with this?

- What have those you've talked to said about it? Have you sought any other help or resources regarding this issue?

4. Do you have any plans for your next steps?

- What do you think might be your next steps? Would you like me to check on some other resources? (Don't make the call but give them the referrals, etc..)

Expectations for Life Group leaders

As a Life Group Leader, we ask that you do these three things.

Invest in yourself spiritually

You cannot minister from an empty cup. If you are not continually in the word, attending weekend services, and taking additional steps to grow your walk with the Lord, it will be difficult to lead others spiritually.

Personally invite people to your group

There is power in a personal invitation. We have Life Group promotions and sign-ups, but nothing compares to the personal invite. Pray for God to lead you to people in the church to invite. Find people that are new to the church and invite them to join. I know groups can get full but always be open to the Holy Spirits leading in this area.

Help your group members take next steps

Look for the gifts and talents of those in your group and challenge them to use their gifts. Whether that is leading their own group or serving in other areas of the church. Encourage your group members to disciple others and walk alongside those that need it.

Contact For Life Groups

Pastor Chad: I'm available as a resource for you as a leader. My email is cpartridge@alcpnw.com and my cell is (971) 219-0973.

Lastly, thank you for saying yes to the call and leading a Life Group. What you do makes a difference. As we plant, water and sow seed we can watch how God moves, grows and prunes so we all may be fruitful and live out God's extraordinary story the way Jesus showed us.