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# THE LEADER MANUAL



**LIFEGROUPS**

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# Why Life Groups?

## The Purpose

We believe that we are designed for community. When we intentionally build community with other believers, we experience true discipleship and life change through the power of the Gospel.

**“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another,”**  
**1 John 1:7**

## Our Core Values

### God First

Love for God and His word is the heartbeat of Calvary. Life Groups provide us with an avenue to love the Lord through deeper connection with believers and the study of His word.

**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”**  
**Mark 12:30**

### People are the Priority

Our goal is to make Calvary feel like a small church with a lot of people. This happens when we choose to make others our priority. Life Groups become the avenue to helping people feel needed and known.

**“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body,  
so it is with Christ.”**  
**1 Corinthians 12:12**

# Why Life Groups?

## Healthy Things Grow

Believers are not designed to walk through life alone. We find health and growth as we stay connected with God and other Christians through worship, community, and time together. Although our culture devalues personal relationships, Scripture teaches we are designed for relationships with others.

**"Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble."  
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**

## We Get to Do This

One of the biggest blessings Life Group leaders have is investing into the lives of others. We are given the unique opportunity to demonstrate that the Church is the hope of the world. That happens through serving one another, bearing one another's burdens, speaking the truth in love, and spurring each other towards God's promises. It is a privilege as leaders to serve with God in the life change He wants to do in His people.

**"From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."  
Ephesians 4:16**

## 4 Group Types

We have four categories to help people find a group that is right for them:

- **Community Groups:** Meet in a relaxed setting with food, prayer, discussion, and fellowship
- **Bible Studies:** Groups that are dedicated to specific studies in the Bible
- **Support Groups:** A safe and comfortable meeting space to talk with others going through similar difficult seasons of life
- **Interest Groups:** A group that meets to share a specific activity such as crafting, biking, walking, coffee making, etc.

# Role of a Leader

As a Life Group leader, you have the privilege of leading the way for people to encounter life change. Life Group leaders represent and reflect the heart of Christ and are representatives of Calvary Church and our pastoral team. You stand on the frontlines, cheering on and encouraging your groups through shepherding, relevant content, support, and mentorship.

## A Leader's Job Description

### Qualities of a Leader

- Loves God and is Spirit-led
- Has a passion for the Bible
- Actively involved in the church community
- Lives a life worth imitating
- Cares about people and wants to help them find community
- Can be flexible with change
- Has a positive attitude

### Leader Qualifications

- Have a personal, growing relationship with Jesus
- Recognize the Bible as the final authority for our lives
- Read through and understand the 16 Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God (See full list under Resources)
- Attended Calvary 101 or Vision & Values class
- Have attended a Calvary Life Group for at least one session and have a positive recommendation from your leader
- Be comfortable functioning as a leader
- Have the time, emotional capacity, and spiritual discernment to serve others
- Have the desire to foster community in your group

# Role of a Leader

## A Leader's Job Description (Continued)

### Responsibilities

- Facilitate group meetings, monitor group health, and encourage participation among group members
- Regularly pray with and for the members of your Life Group
- Provide pastoral-like care through prayer, spiritual, and practical support while encouraging other group members to do the same
- Record group attendance and correspond with prospects on Group Vitals
- Lead and facilitate your group through curriculum approved by Life Group Leadership, a RightNow Media series, or sermon discussion questions
- Maintain clear and consistent communication with their group through text, email, or phone calls
- Be open to counsel from your Support Team Leader and provide regular highlights and concerns about your Life Group
- Maintain unity by representing the vision and theology of Calvary Church

### Leader Lifestyle Commitment

As representatives of Calvary Church and Christ, it is imperative that our actions are above reproach in all things. The following lifestyle commitment applies to all Calvary Life Group Leaders. When leaders are not able to adhere to these standards it may result in being asked to temporarily step down or resign from your area of ministry.

- As believers, we commit and maintain a lifestyle of a worshiper surrendered to Christ. (Romans 12:1)
- We commit to living a life above reproach (1 Timothy 3:1-7). As such, we will abstain from illegal substances or activity, sexual promiscuity, immodesty of dress, pornography, tobacco in any form, hallucinogenic drugs and substances, or narcotics not authorized by a physician. and drunkenness.

# Role of a Leader

## Leader Lifestyle Commitment (Continued)

- We maintain respect for those in leadership and for the members of the Calvary Life Group team. (1 Peter 2:13-17)
- We commit to demonstrate, encourage, and seek the attributes of Galatians 5:22-23 (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) in our relationships with one another.
- We refrain from the use of profanity, vulgarity, slander, and gossip both in personal and social media interactions. (Ephesians 4:29)
- As a Life Group Leader, we will commit to daily investment in our walk with the Lord and others. As we do our best to live a lifestyle of holiness, we will abstain from all alcohol use during group meetings and be mindful of our social media presence. We will adhere to each of these to avoid being a stumbling block to those we lead. (1 Corinthians 8:9)

**The standards listed in the Lifestyle Commitment are not exhaustive; rather, they provide a guideline of conduct we believe is in accordance with our beliefs which are based on Biblical standards.**

# Role of a Leader

## A Healthy Leader

Sometimes, leadership is draining. To combat burnout from leading, here are some tips to longevity and joy as a leader:

- **Refuel your soul** - Make the effort to talk with your Support Team Leader, a mentor, or friend on a regular basis. Receiving encouragement and practical wisdom from people around you will do wonders for your soul as you do the same for others.
- **Share responsibilities** - A good Life Group leader will never carry all the responsibilities of the group. There are many things that can be delegated to responsible people. A great co-leader can oversee different things such as emails, refreshments, hosting, and more. This strategy not only helps to give you a break but also helps group members grow.
- **Cultivate your walk with God** - Cultivating your own walk with God puts you on the offense against Satan and increases joy in your life. Make a renewed decision right now to consistently pursue time with God. Don't give Satan a foothold in your heart; there is simply too much at stake.

## Leader Events

Leader events are offered twice yearly in the Spring and Fall. Each leader event will contain new information and training to continuously equip you for leading. We ask that you make it a priority to attend at least **ONE** leader event each year.

# Planning Your Group

No matter what type of group you lead, your goal should always be to connect with God and connect with each other. That is the primary purpose for groups. To assist in that goal you can read through the information below.

## Key Group Components

**Location:** Groups meet in all kinds of spaces. Finding the right place for your group may take a bit of thought and planning. Think through how many people you will host, will you need a space for food, are kids invited, etc. If your own home is not an option, consider inviting someone to join your group who would be willing to host. Other possibilities include:

- Library conference room
- Recreation center or park
- Restaurant or coffee shop

**Day/Time:** When picking a day/time to meet, consider the following:

- Your work schedule
- Times that work for your friends/new group members
- When other groups meet
- How often do you want to meet - weekly, bi-weekly, monthly

**Format:** What do you want your time as a group to include? We encourage all groups to include:

- Spiritual Component (prayer, scripture, testimonies)
- Topic or Activity (Bible study, sermon review, biking, etc)
- Fellowship (have fun!)

**Prayer:** Prayer is vital to each group meeting. Decide on how you would like to structure that prayer time. Some ideas are:

- Each person share one prayer and one praise
- Ask each person to pray for a specific need
- Each person shares one request that directly affects their life.

(See “Prayer” under Helpful Tips for more resources on group prayer.)

# Planning Your Group

## Finding a Co-Leader

Co-leaders are priceless for sharing the load of a group. They can help with member care, preparing for groups, hosting, communication, and group discussion. We recommend every group has a co-leader or co-leading couple. Look for someone who:

- Loves God and is Spirit-led
- Has a passion for the Bible
- Is actively involved in the church community
- Lives a life worth imitating
- Cares about people and wants to help them find community
- Can be flexible with change
- Has a positive attitude

They don't have to have every quality above, but those may spark an idea of who in your life could lead with you! Remember our job as leaders is to help raise up new leaders. Life Group leadership is not for everyone, but it's important to understand that for some, it is what God has wired them to do. Those are the leaders who spiritually flourish when given the opportunity.

## Group Vitals

Group Vitals is the program we use to display, organize, and keep track of the Life Groups at Calvary. It is through Group Vitals that people can search for a group on Calvary's website. It is also where leaders can manage their members and group information, communicate with the Life Group Leadership Team, and contact group members.

# Planning Your Group

## Setting Up Your Group Vitals Account

You will receive an email from the Life Group Leadership Team with an invitation to create your account. This email will contain step-by-step instructions to create your account as well as a training video showing you the basics of Group Vitals. Once you make your account, you can access your group and information at -

**[www.toledocalvary.groupvitals.com](http://www.toledocalvary.groupvitals.com)**

Group Vitals is highly customizable. Once your group has been created, you as the leader can login and update things like:

- Group description, date, time, and location
- Add a photo
- Enable/disable your group visibility on Group Finder
- Edit attendance for your group
- Add/remove group members

The Leadership Team will do updates such as:

- Update group name
- Edit group type
- Archive groups
- Turn on/off attendance

# Planning Your Group

## Recruiting

Although we as a church advertise and encourage people to join Life Groups, adding members to your new group starts with you! Here are some different ways to find group members.

- Start with 2-3 people who are already in your sphere of influence (co-workers, friends, neighbors)
- Finding people around you who are new to the church, new believers, or have shown interest in getting involved
- Praying God will open doors and start conversations with people looking for a place to belong
- Follow-up with prospects who register with your group through Group Vitals

## Communication

Communication with the Life Group Leadership Team and your group is essential to your success as a leader.

### **Communicating with the Leadership Team**

You will receive regular communication from the Leadership Team through your email address listed in Group Vitals. We provide you with weekly discussion guides, a monthly newsletter, information about upcoming events, and other updates that are helpful for you to know.

### **Communicating with your Group**

Find the best way to reach out to your group members consistently, whether it is by phone, text or email. Make a plan to regularly reach out to your group before each meeting, so everyone stays on the same page.

# Planning Your Group

## Questions to Ask Yourself

As you finalize the details of your group, take a moment to ask yourself these questions:

- What is my goal with this group?
- What is my target audience for this group?
- If doing a study, what materials do I want to use?
- How many people do I want in my group?
- Will my group be open to children or have child care?
- How could my group serve together? At church? In the community?

# Launching Your Group

## Preparing for Your First Meeting

- Before your first meeting, start to pray for your members! Prayer invites the Holy Spirit to do what He wants in your group.
- Check your Group Vital roster and contact everyone the week before with a plan for your meeting.
- Create a welcoming environment by having a positive attitude, refreshments, and a clean, inviting meeting area.
- Prepare your discussion materials or group activity ahead of time. This ensures you have what you need so there are no bumps along the way.

## Connecting with Prospects from Group Vitals

A prospective group member is someone who has seen your group on the website and is interested in knowing more. They will fill out an interest form where you will then be notified and given their contact information. Once you receive a prospect, follow these steps:

- Reach out to new prospects within one week of receiving their information
- Introduce yourself and share about your group so they can decide if it's a good fit for them (time, day, structure, etc.)
- Set up a time to meet before they attend your group to get to know each other and help make everyone more comfortable at the first meeting
  - At Calvary's Café or in the Atrium
    - In your New Leader Kit, you will find coupons for a free drink at Calvary's cafe for the purpose of meeting new prospects in between services.
  - At a coffee shop or restaurant
  - A phone call
- If they are a good fit for your group, invite them to the next meeting
  - If they are not a good fit, recommend a different group that may work for them or refer them to the Leadership Team. It's ok if it is not a good fit!
- If you have tried reaching out two or more times without success, you can remove the prospect from your group and let the Leadership Team know they were unresponsive

# Launching Your Group

## Goals for the First Meeting

- Make time for introductions at the beginning of your meeting so you can rekindle relationships and meet new members
- Clarify your group's direction, expectations, and commitments
- If there is time, spend a few minutes talking about the first week's materials, doing a short sermon review, or allow extra time for people to get to know each other
- Pray for the building of relationships and spiritual growth of the group
- Begin to create a culture that encourages group multiplication (See "Multiplying Groups" in Helpful Tips)

## 4 Aspects of your Meeting

- Welcome, Mingle, and Talk
  - Allow time for people to arrive, get situated, and connect with others in the group. This is helpful to allow those running a few minutes late a chance to enter without feeling like they are interrupting.
  - The first seven seconds after arrival are critical for new members. Make a great first impression!
- Group Discussion
  - Consider adding a simple ice breaker to help people connect.
  - Look for ways to apply what was studied to everyday life. Remember that your biggest role is a facilitator!
- Connecting
  - Some groups add in a meal or snack as a way to facilitate time for connection. This can happen at the beginning or end of the meeting.
  - Create a casual time for group members to talk and get to know each other. Never underestimate the significance of this time!
- Prayer
  - Ask for prayer requests from group members and pray at the beginning and/or the end of each group meeting. (See "Prayer" in Helpful Tips for ideas)

# Launching Your Group

## Group Commitment

The following guidelines are an optional tool for your group. The purpose of this commitment is to help you discuss your group's goals and expectations by bringing mutual understanding to every meeting. Some group leaders choose to read this commitment at the beginning of every meeting, quarterly, or send them over to new group members before they join. The choice is yours!

### **Our Commitments:**

- We will always begin and end at \_\_\_\_\_ to honor everyone's time. If you can't make it to the group, or are running late, be sure to communicate with your Life Group leader.
- We will make it a priority to be consistent with our attendance in an effort to build relationships within the group.
- We want to provide space for everyone to participate in the discussion. Let's keep any thoughts we share to 1-2 minutes and remember that what is shared in our group, stays in our group.
- We love to hear thoughts and ideas from different points of view! To maintain respect and care within the group, we will remember to share our thoughts with grace and know that it's okay to agree to disagree.
- When new group members are invited, we will be warm, welcoming, and open to community with them.
- We all experience hardships in various forms. Our goal is to pray, encourage, listen, and challenge one another as we walk through life together. We will do our best to provide support where we can but we understand that serious needs may require professional help.

# Strengthening Your Group

## The Importance of Follow-up

Following up with people outside of weekly meetings - whether by phone, email, text, or over coffee – is one of the most effective ways to help people feel they are an important part of the group. There are three main groups of people you will want to follow up with.

- **First Time Visitors** – When someone visits your group for the first time, try to have someone contact them within a day or two to thank them for being there. This can be a great chance to find out how they felt about the meeting, answer any question they might have, and invite them out for the next gathering. This simple act may be the difference between them deciding to become a part of the group or not.
- **Regulars who are Missing Meetings** – If someone has been a fairly regular attendee, and suddenly misses two or three meetings in a row, it is a good idea to check in to see how they're doing. Even if nothing is wrong, it can mean the world to people to know that they are thought of and missed.
- **People in Crisis** – If someone is connected with your group in any way, and you know they are going through a difficult time, a phone call can be a great way to show you care. Whether they are dealing with the death of a family member, or just preparing for a stressful job interview, let them know they are on your radar during the week.

# Strengthening Your Group

## Caring for People as a Leader

Remember that God will continuously equip those He calls. We learn many of these skills along the way, meaning that we don't need to feel overwhelmed or under qualified. That's why we have a supportive community of leaders.

### **Caring for People as a Group** - hospital visits, births, follow-ups

A primary function of a Life Group is to care for one another. As a leader, your role is to guide your group through this process. You can do things like:

- Visiting group members who are in the hospital
- Make a meal when a baby is born or someone is sick
- Reaching out to members who are distancing themselves from the group
- Call or visit a member to pray with them if they are struggling

### **Caring for People Individually** - in times of joy and sorrow

One of the greatest privileges of leading people is being able to celebrate with those who are celebrating or being available to those who are suffering. Leaders must try to help people find God's goodness in whatever season they find themselves in. Remember that people don't always care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Group leaders should pray for wisdom and discernment when dealing with issues of suffering. It's important to know when to refer to your Life Group Support Team or professionals and when it's appropriate to tackle the issue yourself. New leaders should communicate these issues with their Support Team Leader until growing in confidence to tackle more challenging concerns. Some examples that may require external support from your Support Team Leader would be:

- A person is experiencing a life-altering season - divorce, removing a person from their life, death
- A person has a serious sin-issue you're unsure how to deal with
- A person is dealing with mental health issues beyond your ability to handle

# Strengthening Your Group

## Dealing with a Challenging Group Member

In your role as Life Group Leader, you will likely come across someone who is a challenge to the dynamics of the group. This is part of what happens when we get people together in community, so don't be discouraged! By being prepared and having some strategies and tools, you can minimize disruptions and distractions.

### **All of us can be the Challenging Group Members at Times**

When we talk about challenging group members, we're not just talking about a few "problem" people. All of us at different times or in different contexts can be the challenging group member. It might be something we are doing to get on others' nerves or just a blind spot that keeps us from seeing how we affect group dynamics. Realizing that all of us can fall into these traps keeps us humble as we approach these situations.

### **Take Ownership of the Process**

When someone is disrupting the discussion or causing an unhealthy dynamic in the group, all eyes are on you as the leader to do something. This is the time to step in and take the lead. Don't assume that group dynamic issues will sort themselves out on their own – they usually don't.

### **What is Best for Everyone?**

When we talk about dealing with a challenging group member, we're not talking about techniques for shutting people down. Remember, our ultimate goal is to work towards what is best for them and the group.

# Strengthening Your Group

## Dealing with a Challenging Group Member (Continued)

### Stages in Dealing with Group Disruptions

- **Step 1 – Prevention**

Establish group commitments at the beginning of the year and review them periodically as a group – this can save you a lot of awkwardness later. (See “Group Commitment” in Launching Your Group)

- **Step 2 – Redirection**

When someone begins disrupting the group, try to redirect the conversation on the spot. You can graciously guide them back to the initial question, or stop them and say something like, “Thank you for sharing your thoughts, can we continue that conversation after our group discussion?”

- **Step 3 – Confrontation**

At times it will be necessary to have a one-on-one conversation with the person involved, either before or after the meeting, or during the week. If you feel the issue has reached this level, be sure to involve your Life Group leadership and look through the guidelines below.

### Confronting the Challenging Group Member

- Share the concern with your Life Group leadership team
- Do your “plank-check” (Matthew 18:15-17): take some time to write down the possible root cause of issues within the group
- Consider the person in question:
  - Condition – does the difficulty stem from a medical condition that is causing the issue?
  - Crisis – is the person going through a season of life that is particularly difficult?
  - Character – is this a character issue that needs to be mentored and developed?
- Pray for the person
- Think about a reasonable outcome and plan your conversation to that end

# Strengthening Your Group

## Fostering Community in your Group

Life Groups are not defined by a weekly meeting, but by a network of growing friendships. These relationships are far more important than attendance within the group. Although the group may not start as best friends, Life Group leaders must trust God for deepening relationships and be patient as people take time to understand and trust each other as friends!

Many of the ways your group members will grow closer to God and each other will happen outside the normal meetings. Moving beyond the context of a living room brings out a different side of people and allows them to express their gifts and talents in amazing ways. It is also a great place for unplanned conversations and memorable moments.

## The Social Side

Encourage group members to keep contact during the week by doing events like -

- Potluck dinner
- Super Bowl party
- Pool party
- Bonfire
- Fall hike
- Attend a concert or play
- Group bike ride
- Join a sports league (soccer, volleyball, etc.)
- Bowling night
- Game night
- Attend a sporting event
- Movie night
- Picnic or BBQ in a local park

## Church Life

Suggest and encourage serving opportunities within the life of the church. Anything from serving on a Sunday morning to picking a service to attend together.

# Strengthening Your Group

## Raising Up New Leaders

Our job as leaders is to shepherd and disciple people in their walk with the Lord. A call to leadership is something that grows through this process. As you invest in other's lives you may start to see God's calling for them to lead. Often, new leaders will need help along the way, encouragement to try something new, and a small push to step outside of their comfort zone.

When you see leadership potential in a group member, we encourage assignments before appointments. Start by asking potential leaders to lead a part of a meeting or to host at their house. When you have seen some successful assignments and have a level of confidence, it's time to start the conversation about co-leading with the individual and your Life Group leadership team.

### **Steps To Train New Leaders:**

- I do, you watch – we chat
- I do, you help – we chat
- You do, I help – we chat
- You do, I watch – we chat
- Commission!

# Strengthening Your Group

## Multiplying Groups

Calvary's Core Values reminds us that healthy things grow. Multiplication allows the space for healthy groups to grow and opens the door for new people who do not have community. It also gives new leaders the chance to grow in what God has designed them to do.

### Reasons to Multiply Your Life Group

- To allow space for others to enjoy the community we've experienced in Life Groups
- Helps us to live out our mission to love people
- Gives a chance for new leaders to develop and use their gifts
- When groups reach 15-20 people it becomes hard to connect with and care for each member

### Preparing to Multiplying your Life Group

- Create a multiplication culture in your group by celebrating growth and talking about multiplication from the beginning
- Share roles and responsibilities in the group
- Make multiplication a regular item of prayer in your group

### Methods of Multiplication

There are a number of different ways to multiply your Life Group effectively. Take a look at some of the options below to determine which might be right for your group.

#### 50/50 Model

This is the simplest and most obvious approach. One large Life Group becomes two smaller Life Groups of roughly equal size. The advantage of this approach is that both groups start with a good core group and can build from there. The disadvantage is that it can be a significant strain on group life, and much of the energy and excitement of having a larger group can be lost.

# Strengthening Your Group

## Multiplying Groups (Continued)

### **Planting Model**

In this model, you recruit a team of 2-4 people to head out and plant a new group while the main Life Group remains mostly intact. The main group can carry on without feeling like there has been a huge interruption in group life. Also, it is often easier to find 2-4 people who are willing to plant a new group than to convince the whole Life Group that it's time to multiply.

### **Hybrid Model**

Sometimes a group gets large enough to multiply before there are enough leaders in the group to move to two Life Groups. In this case you might want to consider pulling together a leadership team from two existing Life Groups and launch a third Life Group together. This is similar to the planting model, but draws from two Life Groups instead of one.

# What's Next?

## Group Vitals Set Up

Following the training, you will receive an email invitation to set up your Group Vitals account. Follow the steps mentioned above in the “Group Vitals” section to get your group ready for our session push! All groups will need to be ready to go on Group Vitals one week before the session push begins.

## Session Push

During each session push, there is an influx of prospects that will sign up for groups from the website or receive an invitation from a friend. Be prepared in the weeks following each push to reach out to them.

## Transitions

Every Life Group will go through a transition of some form. Some groups will go on for years, while others may only last for a season. Each transition is different! When you get to a point of transition, notify the Leadership Team so they can walk you and your group through it.

# Helpful Tips

## Hosting

Think of a Life Group meeting you've attended in the past and really enjoyed. What made it encouraging or helpful, so that you were looking forward to the next meeting? Lead a Life Group meeting you'd like to attend!

- **Be hospitable; warmth works!** Group leaders have incredible influence over the temperature of a group. Laughter, hospitality, conversation, interest and good listening go a long way in creating an environment that deepens community.
- **Cultivate a life-giving atmosphere.** You don't need to know all the answers or be the source of all wisdom. Rely on the Holy Spirit to guide you!
- **Manage your time well.** People are busy and many are making a sacrifice to attend Life Group. Make sure you use your time well. This means starting and ending on time, and keeping the evening focused without many tangents.
- **Create the space.** Make sure you have sufficient space and seats in a clean, open area for people to meet. Decide ahead of time where you will have people put their coats, shoes, refreshments, etc.

## The Rule of 3's

Every group will experience a meeting when multiple members cannot join. When faced with these situations, remember these two things:

- **Anytime you meet, there should be at least 3 people present.** Never put yourself in a one-on-one situation with a group member unless you are in a public place, especially with members of the opposite sex.
- **Be aware of other people's level of comfort.** Not everyone will feel comfortable being the only man or woman in a group meeting. If that is the case, it is ok to cancel your group for that week.

Our heart is to provide a safe environment for both group members and group leaders. As leaders, we always want to err on the side of caution and not allow any space for accusations or the appearance of evil.

# Helpful Tips

## Prayer

Prayer is the cornerstone of every Life Group. Without prayer, Life Groups simply become a social event. Through prayer, we invite God to transform and renew our lives as we meet together.

### Tips on Prayer

- Have a place to record requests and answers to look back on God's provision
- Ways to pray in and for your group:
  - To be open to God's voice
  - For ears to hear and a heart to learn
  - To have a heart of gratitude
  - For safety and unity in their homes
  - To be strengthened by each other
  - For their recent prayer requests
- If you need to put a time frame on prayer, you can try:
  - Have each person share only one prayer request that directly affects them
  - Have each person share, then do a general prayer afterwards without repeating each specific request
  - Try praying at the end of your meeting instead of the beginning
  - Ask each person to share their needs in a minute or less
  - Give everyone a 3x5 card to write down prayer requests for the week and have them exchange cards with another member of the group

### Creative Ideas for Group Prayer

- Pray through a Psalm out loud together
- In a couples group, have spouses pray for each other
- Pick a portion of Scripture to pray for one another during the week (Col. 1:9; Eph. 3:14-19)
- If someone is in crisis, stop and pray for them right then
- Do a group study on prayer

# Helpful Tips

## How to be a Great Facilitator

People often think leading a Life Group is being the best theologian, leader, preacher, friend, host and more. This is not the case. Although a good Life Group Leader has godly character and a level of wisdom and leadership, the main role you play is facilitating the contributions of others who are in the group. Here are some tips to help you facilitate each section of your group meetings.

### Connecting

Relational connection is the glue that holds a group together. Help facilitate these connections by setting a tone of relational warmth and creating environments conducive to friendship building (meals, games, fun activities or story sharing).

### Group Conversation

Keys to facilitating a life change conversation

- Set the tone of openness and vulnerability by being authentic and warm
- Use the scripture to find the answer to life's questions
- Acknowledge everyone who speaks during a discussion and listen well to ask more questions that inspire life-changing conversation
- Ensure that you draw out the contributions of the more thoughtful, quieter people
- Instead of answering every question that is asked, allow space for people to offer their Bible-informed and experience-based answers
- Contribution is thwarted when one or two people speak far more than others

### Prayer Time

- Give leadership to prayer times
- Be sure to depend on the Holy Spirit when praying in the group
- Pray in sub-groups - this helps increase contribution and decrease self-consciousness

# Helpful Tips

## Tips for Family Life Groups

Family Life Groups have a unique challenge – what do we do with the kids? The reality is, there are no perfect solutions when it comes to organizing childcare. As a group, you'll need to find what works best for you. There are many options your group can consider. Here are a few:

- Hire a babysitter and have the kids together in another part of the home where you meet
- Take turns having parents in your group watch the kids when you meet
- If group members live close together, have a babysitter with the kids at someone's home who lives nearby where you meet for your study
- Have group members find their own childcare solution, then come together with the kids for one group social per month
- There are some great studies out there that are designed for moms, dads and kids to do together
- Another unique challenge is finding a good time to meet with kids. Consider meeting earlier in the day, on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon or early evening, for example.

# Resources

## Media Resources

Calvary offers a wide range of media resources to use for your group. You can choose from book studies, DVD studies, or RightNow Media series.

- **RightNow Media:** This is an online tool Calvary has provided for any church attendee to access. Simply go to [toledocalvary.org](http://toledocalvary.org), click on the “Media” tab, and choose “RightNow Media.” From there you can create your own account and have access to thousands of biblical teachings and TV series for free.
- **DVD & Book Studies:** If you would like to do a DVD or book study, you can find a list of those resources on-hand at Calvary by heading to [toledocalvary.groupvitals.com](http://toledocalvary.groupvitals.com) and clicking on the “Resource” tab at the top of the page.
- **Weekly Discussion Guide:** Each week on Sunday afternoons, a sermon discussion guide is sent out to leaders to use as their group resource.

**If you want to do a different study, make sure it has been verified and approved by Life Group Leadership before beginning the study.**

## Life Group Support Team

Every Life Group is part of a community that has a Support Group Leader. These leaders oversee a section of Life Groups that have a similar demographic. They exist to provide support, mentorship, prayer, and community. Our hope is to provide more support to you as you lead and shepherd your Life Group.

My Support Group Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info \_\_\_\_\_

# Resources

## Building Use

### Schedule

The building is available for Life Groups on:

- Sundays - During morning services and from 4pm - 8pm
- Monday - Thursday - 9am - 4:30pm
- Tuesday Evenings - 6pm - 9pm
- Friday Mornings - 9am - 12pm

### Building Use Guidelines

If you choose to meet with your group at Calvary, you will be asked to read and sign the following Building Use Agreement.

Calvary Church's campus was provided by God and the generosity of our church members. Therefore, those who are permitted to use the Church are asked to steward the campus by adhering to the following guidelines.

### Rooms

- Group leaders can help by being sure to stay until the last member of their group leaves the building.
- Often other groups or activities are using the building at the same time so please:
  - stick to your assigned room unless given permission to switch
  - stay within your room to prevent disruption of other activities
- Don't forget to leave your room in the state in which you found it.
- Furniture (tables, chairs, etc.) or equipment in the church needs to stay in the building unless you have prior permission of the Life Group leadership.

### Children

- Life Groups are welcome to have children join their group, however the children must remain in the same room as the parents/guardian.
- Responsible adult supervision is always required when on the premises. Allowing older children to supervise young children is not a substitute for adult supervision.
- Toys are not available, but group members may bring their own.

# Resources

## Building Use (Continued)

### Kitchen & Food Use

- The kitchen and the items in the kitchen are not available for use during Life Groups unless previously discussed and approved by Life Group leadership.
- When approved, kitchen items that are damaged will need to be repaired/replaced by the group.
- Food/drinks will be provided by the group leader or group members.
- Food/drinks should stay within your approved room.

### Audio-Visual Equipment

- Computers, sound systems, and microphones are available by request. Please submit requests at least 2 weeks prior to the need.
- Use of audio-visual equipment in any of the Auditoriums requires operation by a member of the audio-visual team from Calvary Church.

### General

- Calvary Church reserves the right to pre-empt any event in cases of emergencies (i.e., funerals). Notice will be given to the leader as early as possible to help assist in any rescheduling that may be needed. Activities that conflict with the beliefs and practices of Calvary Church and the Assemblies of God may not take place on our property.
- The premises may not be used for any unlawful purposes.
- Smoking and non-prescriptive drugs are prohibited in the building.
- Alcoholic beverages are not permitted anywhere on Calvary's campus.

### Incident or Injury

If an incident or injury takes place at Calvary during your group, you are responsible to do the following:

- Contact Leah or Mollie as soon as possible with details of the incident.
  - Submit an official incident report (with signatures of those involved) to the church (located in the HUB).
  - Follow up with the individual the next day to make sure everything is going ok.

Leah Lorann (Life Group Director) – (954) 461-1767

Mollie Maus (Life Group Assistant) – (567) 694-9279

# Resources

## 16 Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God

**1. THE SCRIPTURES INSPIRED:** The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired by God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct.

- 2 Timothy 3:15-17
- 1 Thessalonians 2:13
- 2 Peter 1:21

**2. THE ONE TRUE GOD:** The one true God has revealed Himself as the eternally self-existent "I AM," the Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed Himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- Deuteronomy 6:4
- Isaiah 43:10,11
- Matthew 28:19
- Luke 3:22

**3. THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:** The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. The Scriptures declare:

His virgin birth,

- Matthew 1:23
- Luke 1:31
- Luke 1:35

His sinless life,

- Hebrews 7:26
- 1 Peter 2:22

His miracles,

- Acts 2:22
- Acts 10:38

His substitutionary work on the cross,

- 1 Corinthians 15:3
- 2 Corinthians 5:21

His bodily resurrection from the dead,

- Matthew 28:6
- Luke 24:39
- 1 Corinthians 15:4

# Resources

## 16 Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God (Continued)

His exaltation to the right hand of God.

- Acts 1:9
- Acts 1:11
- Acts 2:33
- Philippians 2:9-11
- Hebrews 1:3

**4. THE FALL OF MAN:** Man was created good and upright; for God said, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." However, man by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God.

- Genesis 1:26,27
- Genesis 2:17
- Genesis 3:6
- Romans 5:12-19

**5. THE SALVATION OF MAN:** Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

1. Conditions to Salvation: salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God, according to the hope of eternal life.

- Luke 24:47
- John 3:3
- Romans 10:13-15
- Ephesians 2:8
- Titus 2:11
- Titus 3:5-7

The Evidence of Salvation: the inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit.

- Romans 8:16

The outward evidence to all men is a life of righteousness and true holiness.

- Ephesians 4:24
- Titus 2:12

# Resources

## 16 Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God (Continued)

### 6. THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

**BAPTISM IN WATER:** The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded by the Scriptures. All who repent and believe in Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized. Thus they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they also have been raised with Him to walk in the newness of life.

- Matthew 28:19
- Mark 16:16
- Acts 10:47,48
- Romans 6:4

**HOLY COMMUNION:** The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements --bread and the fruit of the vine-- is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4), a memorial of his suffering and death (1 Corinthians 11:26), and a prophecy of His second coming (1 Corinthians 11:26), and is enjoined on all believers "till He come!"

**7. THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT:** All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry.

- Luke 24:49
- Acts 1:4
- Acts 1:8
- 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth.

- Acts 8:12-17
- Acts 10:44-46
- Acts 11:14-16
- Acts 15:7-9

With the baptism in the Holy Spirit come such experiences as:

- an overflowing fullness of the Spirit, John 7:37-39, Acts 4:8
- a deepened reverence for God, Acts 2:43, Hebrews 12:28
- an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work, Acts 2:42
- and a more active love for Christ, for His Word and for the lost, Mark 16:20

# Resources

## 16 Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God (Continued)

**8. THE INITIAL PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT:** The baptism of believers in the Holy Spirit is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance.

- Acts 2:4

The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues, but is different in purpose and use.

- 1 Corinthians 12:4-10
- 1 Corinthians 12:28

**9. SANCTIFICATION:** Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God.

- Romans 12:1,2
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- Hebrews 13:12

The Scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."

- Hebrews 12:14

By the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to obey the command: "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

- 1 Peter 1:15,16

Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by the faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit.

- Romans 6:1-11
- Romans 6:13
- Romans 8:1,2
- Romans 8:13
- Galatians 2:20
- Philippians 2:12,13
- 1 Peter 1:5

# Resources

## 16 Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God (Continued)

**10. THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION:** The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven.

- Ephesians 1:22,23
- Ephesians 2:22
- Hebrews 12:23

Since God's purpose concerning man is to seek and to save that which is lost, to be worshiped by man, to build a body of believers in the image of His Son, and to demonstrate His love and compassion for all the world, the priority reason for being of the Assemblies of God as part of the Church is:

To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world.

- Acts 1:8
- Matthew 28:19,20
- Mark 16:15,16

To be a corporate body in which man may worship God.

- 1 Corinthians 12:13

To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son.

- Ephesians 4:11-16
- 1 Corinthians 12:28
- 1 Corinthians 14:12

To be a people who demonstrate God's love and compassion for all the world.

- Psalms 112:9
- Galatians 2:10; 6:10
- James 1:27

The Assemblies of God exists expressly to give continuing emphasis to this reason for being in the New Testament apostolic pattern by teaching and encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This experience:

Enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs.

- Mark 16:15-20
- Acts 4:29-31
- Hebrews 2:3,4

# Resources

## 16 Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God (Continued)

Adds a necessary dimension to a worshipful relationship with God.

- 1 Corinthians 2:10-16
- 1 Corinthians 12
- 1 Corinthians 13
- 1 Corinthians 14

Enables them to respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in expression of fruit and gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the body of Christ and care for the poor and needy of the world.

- Galatians 5:22-26
- Matthew 25:37-40
- Galatians 6:10
- 1 Corinthians 14:12
- Ephesians 4:11,12
- 1 Corinthians 12:28
- Colossians 1:29

**11. THE MINISTRY:** A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the fourfold purpose of leading the Church in:

Evangelization of the world.

- Mark 16:15-20

Worship of God.

- John 4:23,24

Building a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son.

- Ephesians 4:11-16

Meeting human needs with ministries of love and compassion.

- Psalms 112:9
- Galatians 2:10; 6:10
- James 1:27

# Resources

## 16 Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God (Continued)

**12. DIVINE HEALING:** Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers.

- Isaiah 53:4,5
- Matthew 8:16,17
- James 5:14-16

**13. THE BLESSED HOPE:** The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope of the church.

- 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17
- Romans 8:23
- Titus 2:13
- 1 Corinthians 15:51,52

**14. THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST:** The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on earth for one thousand years.

- Zechariah 14:5
- Matthew 24:27
- Matthew 24:30
- Revelation 1:7
- Revelation 19:11-14
- Revelation 20:1-6

This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel,

- Ezekiel 37:21,22
- Zephaniah 3:19,20
- Romans 11:26,27
- and the establishment of universal peace.
- Isaiah 11:6-9
- Psalms 72:3-8
- Micah 4:3,4

# Resources

## 16 Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God (Continued)

**15. THE FINAL JUDGMENT:** There will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, the beast and the false prophet, will be consigned to the everlasting punishment in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

- Matthew 25:46
- Mark 9:43-48
- Revelation 19:20
- Revelation 20:11-15
- Revelation 21:8

**16. THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH:** "We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

- 2 Peter 3:13
- Revelation 21
- Revelation 22

# Life Group Leader Lifestyle Commitment

As representatives of Calvary Church and Christ, it is imperative that our actions are above reproach in all things. The following lifestyle agreements apply to all Calvary Life Group Leaders. When leaders are not able to adhere to these standards it may result in being asked to temporarily step down or resign from your area of ministry.

- As believers, we commit and maintain a lifestyle of a worshiper surrendered to Christ. (Romans 12:1)
- We commit to living a life above reproach (1 Timothy 3:1-7). As such, we will abstain from illegal substances or activity, sexual promiscuity, immodesty of dress, pornography, tobacco in any form, hallucinogenic drugs and substances, narcotics not authorized by a physician, and drunkenness.
- We maintain respect for those in leadership and for the members of the Calvary Life Group team. (1 Peter 2:13-17)
- We commit to demonstrate, encourage, and seek the attributes of Galatians 5:22-23 (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) in our relationships with one another.
- We refrain from the use of profanity, vulgarity, slander, and gossip both in personal and social media interactions. (Ephesians 4:29)
- As a Life Group Leader, we will commit to daily investment in our walk with the Lord and others. As we do our best to live a lifestyle of holiness, we will abstain from all alcohol use during group meetings and be mindful of our social media presence. We will adhere to each of these to avoid being a stumbling block to those we lead. (1 Corinthians 8:9)

The standards listed in the Lifestyle Commitment are not exhaustive; rather, they provide a guideline of conduct we believe is in accordance with our beliefs which are based on Biblical standards.

"I will make a daily effort to continue my spiritual growth and follow Calvary's Life Group Leader Lifestyle Commitment."

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Action Plan

Now that you have the tools you need for your group, take 2-3 minutes to fill out your action plan below!

**Leader Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Co-Leader or Potential Co-Leader Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Brief Group Description:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Where My Group will Meet:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How Often We Will Meet:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date/Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Group:**    Community    Bible Study    Interest-Based    Support

**Demographic of My Group:**    College    Young Adult    Family    Adult  
Women    Men    Online    Empty Nesters/Retirees    Any

**Max Number of People in My Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Media/Resource I Want to Use:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How Long I Want to Lead My Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

**List 2-3 People you want to invite to your group**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_