



WAIPUNA

Chapel

Love God • Love Others • Serve The World

GUIDELINES FOR LIFE GROUP MINISTRY

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE PAGES OF SCRIPTURE ABOUT LIFE GROUP MINISTRY?

In the New Testament, there are several references to the church that is in their house (Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 16:19, Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2). When Jesus began his public ministry, one of his first acts was to form a small group (Life Group) Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 6:13). Jesus spent the majority of his time with this group of disciples. He taught the masses, but he also led this group of followers on a much deeper level.

In Acts 2:42-47 you see small groups of people meeting together for teaching, community, prayer, worship, ministry and outreach. “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” Fellowship and community are two purposes of the church that are best seen in a healthy small group.

In Exodus 18, Jethro advised Moses to select capable, trustworthy leaders and appoint them to lead groups of people in the nation. Not only was this more effective, it allowed Moses to focus on hearing from God and representing the people to God.

Hebrews 10:24-25 says, “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Throughout the Bible, there is evidence of community and fellowship, and the Bible presents a solid case for a small group ministry. While it's important to distinguish between what the Bible prescribes and what the Bible describes, it can be said that a small group ministry of some sort is clearly Biblical. For this reason, we have chosen to organize our church into a network of small groups.

At Waipuna Chapel, A Life Group Is A “Little Church.”

This does not mean little impact, because groups can have more discipleship than large gatherings. In this sense, the word “little” simply refers to size. Everything that a church does, a group does on a smaller scale. Every group reflects the core values and participates in the core mission of the church, but with it's own unique personality. The DNA is the same; personality is different. Think of them like colonies of a larger country. Just like our church has a master strategy, every group has the same strategy – just on a smaller scale. We journey with people in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ – By loving God, loving others and serving His world.

Life Groups Help People KNOW The Gospel

Bible Study, discussion, and attention to spiritual discussions are helpful in teaching the gospel. A life group needs to have a Bible component to it...this is not just a fellowship group or support group. Three ladies walking in the park isn't a life group.

Tacking on prayer doesn't turn an activity into a life group.

Life Groups Help People SHARE The Gospel

Inviting, mission, serving, sharing the gospel (all of which include what it means to share the gospel) are some of the core functions of every group. Groups are outward focused, just like our church is outward focused. Groups should invest in people, invite people in the community to church. Group members should live intentionally. Groups should be continually growing in size towards multiplication.

Groups get people to groups. You can't wait for the church staff or some big sign up event to get people to your group. You need to go and invite people to be a part of your group. Group leaders should be proactive in looking to grow the group and group members should always be inviting people to the group.

Groups also participate in community outreach. Serving the community isn't the job of one pastor on staff, and it's not something that we can program. Every group needs to maintain an outward focus. In fact, since our natural tendency is to grow inward, you need to OVEREMPHASIZE sharing the gospel and being outward focus, just to stay balanced. As the church grows, the pool of people you can invite to your group grows. As groups grow, the church-at-large grows. It's a two-way relationship.

Life Groups Help People LIVE The Gospel

Care, prayer, friendship, fellowship are critical components of the Christian life. Christianity is a personal faith, but it is not a private faith. The Bible is clear: we need each other. In a life group, we can live out the "one another" commands in Scripture.

If Life Groups Are "Little Churches" Then Life Group Leaders Are Little Pastors"

Just like churches are led by shepherds, groups are led by shepherds as well. Though the scale is smaller, the impact is larger. Jesus was a shepherd/leader of a small group (the 12 disciples). Group leaders must support the mission and vision of the church. For this reason, they must be official members in good standing. Psalm 23 is a great picture of what a shepherd does: Leadership, protection, and care all come from the Shepherd. At Waipuna Chapel, group leaders are shepherd/leaders. The Bible says that shepherds are to know the condition of their flocks.

FIVE CORE VALUES

#1 Transformation

"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done" John 13:15

Jesus Christ As Head Of His Church Intends His Followers To Become Like Him.

Waipuna Chapel exists to produce spiritual transformation within its members.

This life change can be expressed in the 5G's

- Grace - Personally appropriate and extend the saving work of Jesus Christ.
- Growth - Pursing Christ likeness
- Group - Connecting with others in significant relationships
- Gifts - Serving each other through spiritual giftedness and passion.
- Good Stewardship - Honoring God with the resources that he has given us; treasure, time and talent.

#2 Community

He appointed twelve-designating them apostles- that they might be with Him.” Mark 3:14

A Life Group Provides The Optimal Environment For The Life Change Jesus Intends For Every Believer.

Spiritual growth occurs best in the context of life groups, where relationship can be built and nurtured, individual needs met and Christ like love received and shared. Life group focus can be varied depending on the individual need and passion; disciple-making, service groups, support group, Bible study group, recovery group ect.

#3 Strategic Leadership

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-13

The Most Strategic Person In The Life-Change Process Of The Church Is The Life Group Leader.

Identify, encourage and equip individuals (volunteers) with a passion to see life transformation.

These individuals should be provided with skill training necessary to support group life, reminders of purpose and goals (vision casting) as well encouragement and accountability from an appointed staff member or coach.

The ultimate goal of a small group leader is life change within the individual members of the group.

Leaders must also help their groups grow in size with the aim of eventually birthing new groups.

The leader take responsibility for this growth by recruiting an apprentice leader, attending on going training and planning for the eventual birthing process.

#4 Multiplication

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” 2 Timothy 2:2

Groups Must Expand And Multiply So That Eventually Every Believer Can Be Connected To Others.

A life group does not exist for itself. Life groups must have a viable strategy for growth and reproduction. Apprenticeship fosters new leaders and must be an integral part of group life so that emerging leaders will gain on job training and be ready to lead a new group when the time comes.

The birthing of healthy, thriving new groups to provide the care necessary for life transformation should be the bench mark of a successful leader.

#5 Prayer And Celebration

“And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.” Acts 13:52

Effective Ministry Happens In An Atmosphere Of Prayer And Celebration.

Great ministry follows great praying.

Leaders are to pray as Jesus did; publicly as well as privately, authentically as well as powerfully, specifically as well as continually.

Observe, share, value and celebrate God’s activity. Allow a climate of fun and celebration to permeate gatherings.

Life groups should not be a substitute for the large corporate gathering of God’s people.

What happens at a life group level should transform the large gathering and vice versa.

GETTING PEOPLE TO YOUR GROUP

Group leaders cannot wait around for people to show up to their group, or depend on stage announcements and handouts to bring them people. You must be proactive and look for people to invite. Here are some helpful ways you can grow your group:

Involve Everyone In The Process.

The mission of everyone in the group is to invite new people. Remind your group constantly that they exist to bring others into the group.

Teach Your Group About The Empty Chair.

Remind group members constantly that there are people who are not there that *should* be there. Let a physical chair represent the concept. During every meeting, bring out a red chair and talk about it. Regularly pray for God to fill the open chair. Spend time praying for people who need to be there.

Develop A List Of Potential Group Members.

Pray for these people. Ask for a list from the church of people currently not in a life group. Call and invite people to your group. Ask your neighbor – most people would be more comfortable visiting your home than visiting a church service. Serving on a volunteer ministry team at church is the perfect area to find someone who needs a group. People at this point are usually ready for a group experience, they just need to

be asked. Look at your co-workers. Begin praying now and just ask. In many cases, all it takes is a personal invitation.

Actively Seek To Know People In Church.

When meeting someone new look for them again to begin making a connection. When you come to church on the weekend, keep your “group leader hat” on and be on the lookout for people you can invite.

If You Have Kids, Build Relationships With Their Friend’s Parents.

These networks are great opportunities for inviting. Parents are frequently looking for ways for their children to develop good friendships, and a small group is a great place for this to happen.

The bottom line is that you as the group leader must own the responsibility of getting people to your group. If you will be committed to this task, then you will find ways to make it happen.

BEST LIFE GROUP PRACTICES

1. Play Together

It’s always a good idea to begin your group meeting with some kind of playful icebreaker. Here’s a few ideas.

- Use a question of the week (What was your worst Christmas present ever?).
- Two Truths and a Lie: have the group members share two things true about themselves and then one thing that is not true. The other members have to guess which one is the “lie.”
- The M&M game: dump a handful of M&Ms in a paper bag. The group members reach in and grab one M&M; each color has its own question that the member has to share. (Examples: How old were you when you had your first kiss? Tell the group about your first car. What is your greatest Christmas gift you got as a child?)
- Story Cards- grab this hand resource and use it to initiate conversation

2. Learn Together

Everyone is on a personal faith journey and not everyone starts at the same place so it is important to recognize that everyone will not be at the same level of spiritual maturity as you are. Be patient and be graceful as you study God’s word together

Here are some thoughts:

- Have everyone agree upfront that while personal opinions are welcomed and valued, Biblical authority is critical.
- Be careful not to allow any one person to dominate the discussion. Redirect by asking another group member what their thoughts are on the topic.
- Ask open-ended questions that will stimulate discussion and explanation.
- Search the Scripture together to substantiate or validate a thought or opinion

3. Build Community Together

As a leader, it's your job to foster community with the people in your group. Do something social with every person in your group outside of normal group time. When you are talking to a group member about something that you know another group member could relate to, invite the other group member to join the discussion and then excuse yourself so the group members are primed to have a conversation separate from you.

Take an interest in the lives of your group members. Attend their school or hobby activities to support them. Make sure discussion time is cell phone/blackberry free. It's tough to build community when people have their faces glued to a three-inch screen. Since a group is like a "little church," you will want to look for ways to build community and friendship in the group itself.

Here's some suggestions:

- For couples groups, have each couple bring their wedding album one night to share with the group.
- Have regular game nights (could be board games, video games, etc.)
- Have regular celebration nights where leaders focus on how each person has grown in their faith over the course of the group. Celebrate growth with small gifts that symbolize their growth, books or just handwritten notes
- Get away together. Trips could include the beach, a camping trip, or a marriage retreat. Plan trips in advance – they will bring a sense of community to your group.

4. Serve Together

One of the best ways to build community is to serve alongside other group members. Here are a couple of ideas:

- Early in the group, assign roles for the group (Social Coordinator, Babysitting Coordinator, Meal Planner, Community Outreach Coordinator, etc.)
- Adopt a young couple in the church, assist with childcare, groceries, house and yard work.
- Provide a meal or a week of meals for an elderly person someone knows. • Serve a single mom by group baby sitting, cleaning her house. • Prepare a meal down at the homeless shelter in Wailuku. • Serve together at one of the church organized events.

Get creative have fun as you serve together.

5. Pray Together

Make a commitment to pray regularly for your group members. You could even assign each group member a certain day of the week where everyone in the group focuses their prayers on that person. Prayer is an important part of every life group.

Here's some ways you can make prayer a crucial component of your meeting.

- Start the group with a time of prayer rather than leaving it to the end

- Be creative during prayer time- have everyone pray for the person/couple to their left.
- Break off into men and women to pray separately - it fosters increased vulnerability.
- Lay hands on a group member who is struggling and pray over them.
- Have a prayer and praise book where group members can record their prayer needs.
- Email prayer and praise details to the group members after meeting.
- Prayer time should be about close friends and family, not just acquaintances.
- Share prayer requests on index cards to send home to pray for members throughout the week.

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 2: 42-47



Discussion: "Love One" Who's disciple cycle(s) have you been on? _____

What did you learn? _____

Lecrae Moore: *"I'm out to take the Bible, create disciples, who make disciples, disciple cycles."*

1.) Disciple – "Self-reproducing, fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ"

"To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." - 2 Timothy 1:2, ESV

2.) Disciple Cycle – The life on life process serving as the vehicle by which a mature believer guides and directs a new believer (his disciple) by steering him with God's Word to live His life entirely for Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 1:2)

"Timothy, my dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus. You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others." – 2 Timothy 2:1-2, NLT

3.) Disciple Cycle - The cycle of a disciple becoming mature in his or her relationship with Jesus and getting on the front of the *Disciple Cycle* to disciple a new believer (2 Timothy 2:1-2)

Sources:

George Barna, *Growing True Disciples*, Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2001.

Lecrae Moore, *After the Music Stops*, Irving: Reach Life Music, 2006.

Neil Perry, Element Church, #DiscipleCycles Video - www.oneloveskate.org/leadertraining

One Love Discipleship (1 minute 14 seconds – 3 minutes 38 seconds) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PINmoejI8Do>, 2016



Volunteer Opportunity: Life Group Leader

General Requirements:

A Life Group Leader is someone who likes to do ministry outside of the normal weekend services and has a passion for not only seeing their life group members grow in faith but takes ownership of their group and is committed to the discipleship of each attender individually.

A Life Group Leader at Waipuna Chapel is someone who is

- A Committed followers of Jesus Christ
- Committed to the mission and vision of Waipuna Chapel.
- Committed to a Waipuna Chapel Membership Covenant

Specifics Responsibilities

- Leaders will contact their co- leaders weekly not to just check in but to build a lasting relationship with the individual.
- In talking/meeting with their group they will help them keep with the Waipuna Chapel Life Group philosophy of Gather, Connect, and Serve.
- Throughout the period of one month a life group leader would have met with the Life Group Ministry Pastor individually, seeking feedback and guidance.
- Will attend Life Group Leader meetings and or training
- Will be responsible for continuing education and equipping in the Life Group field as provided by the Life Group Pastor.
- Should show initiative by doing their own research in their related fields and help brainstorm how we can make this ministry better.

Waipuna Chapel's Mission;

To journey with people in a growing relationship with **Jesus Christ** - Loving God, loving others and serving the world.



Volunteer Opportunity: Life Group Apprentice/Co-Leader

The Life Group Co-Leader is a member of a Life Group who will volunteer to assist the Life Group Leader with organizational and administrative tasks.

The next step for this person would be a natural progression to that of a Life Group Leader.

General Requirements:

- Is a committed followers of Jesus Christ
- Is committed to the mission and vision of Waipuna Chapel.
- Agrees with Waipuna Chapel's Statement of Faith and has attended a "Welcome to Waipuna" gathering.
- Has the endorsement of the Life Group Leader.
- Willing to attend Group Leader meetings and or trainings.
- Life Group time and day is a priority in their calendar.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Occasionally facilitates/lead weekly group discussion.
- Assists the group leader with groups' administration tasks (weekly reminder emails, prayer request distribution, event organization etc.)
- Will help Group Leader to plan quarterly outreach/service projects.
- Pray for the groups spiritual growth and physical needs.

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Waipuna Chapel

PRAY

CONNECT

SERVE

LIFE
GROUPS

80 / 20

EMPTY CHAIR

7SEC WAIT TIME

THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Life Group Covenant

We will:

Share Our True Feelings
(authenticity)

Encourage Each Other
(mutuality)

Support Each Other
(sympathy)

Forgive Each Other
(mercy)

Speak the Truth in Love
(honesty)

Admit Our Weaknesses
(humility)

Respect Our Differences
(courtesy)

Not Gossip
(confidentiality)

Make Group a Priority
(frequency)