

Life Group Leader Handbook



LifeSpring Church
Bellevue, NE

LifeGroup Leader Handbook

LifeSpring Church

Church Purpose: Make Disciples

The purpose of LSC is to lead un-churched people to become fully trained followers of Jesus Christ. In other words we bring glory to God by living and teaching the truth of God's Word, in His power, in order to take people from where they are spiritually and develop them to become fully trained followers of Jesus Christ.

Disciple making is not complicated. It is merely a relational process of helping people to follow Jesus Christ and imitating His character, principles, priorities, and values in every aspect of life. The church glorifies God by doing the work He gave for us to do (John 17:4). This strategic process of multiplication recognizes that people are at different stages of spiritual development, and we must relate to them appropriately, just like in our physical lives we must relate to infants, children, youth, young adults and mature adults differently. While it is an individual pursuit, disciple making is also a church-focused ministry that does the same. In the mandate to "make disciples", we must consider the process (make) and the end product (disciples).

While it is not complicated, producing disciples is a life-long process of becoming like Jesus and helping others do the same (Romans 8:29). Because we seek to become like Him and pursue walking as Jesus walked, rather than just go through a set curriculum, it is an ever deepening process. This process involves a solid theology, purpose, values, and a lifestyle of godly disciplines. The more we abide in Him, love Him, obey Him, and bear fruit for Him, the more we will become like Him (John 15:1-5; 14:21). Ultimately, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is and we will all be changed when He appears (1 John 3:2). That is the blessed hope of the one who comes to believe in Him.

Clearly at the end of His ministry, in various ways, Jesus said "do what I have done" (John 14:12), "walk as I have walked" (1 John 2:6), and follow my example (John 13:15). To the degree we follow the pattern of Jesus Christ is the degree we will see a movement of multiplying disciples.

Disciple

The term "disciple" means learner. The product of the efforts of the church is a fully-trained disciple/learner/Christ-follower. This is someone who learns of Jesus and from Jesus. When Jesus called His first disciples, in Matthew 4:19, He commanded them: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men". A follower is someone who recognizes the authority of Jesus as their Lord, Shepherd, and leader, and will follow Him where He leads with faith and joy. So, a disciple is a learner and a "Christ-follower", who eventually will intentionally reach out to others to encourage them to become believers/Christ-followers, too. It is not enough to lead people to a salvation experience. It is required by Christ that we also develop people to become fully-trained followers. It is foreign to the Scriptures to consider that somebody can be saved from the penalty of their sins (a Christian) and not be a Christ-follower. They are the same, yet we recognize that people are at different stages of their understanding and following. At the core of this "following" is obedience to the commandments of Christ (Matt 28:18-20; John 14:23-24), and bearing fruit (John 15:1-5). Being a Christ-follower means to mimic Jesus (1 Cor 11:1).

John made it clear that if anyone claims to be live in Jesus Christ , he must "walk as He walked", which means to live like He lived. Christ emphasized that being a disciple is not easy, and involves personal

surrender, sacrifice, and submission (Matt 16:24-26). Of course, becoming a disciple is a life-long process (Phil 3:12-14), and God is the One who is at work in us to transform us to be like Jesus (Rom 8:29). Eventually, the discipleship process will be complete when Jesus returns, when we become like Him, because we will see Him as He is (1 John 2:28-3:3)

So, we will use as a definition of a fully trained disciple: *Someone who is “Walking as Jesus Walked”*

The expanded definition: *A fully-trained disciple is someone who trusts in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, recognizes His authority in his life, and lives according to the principles, priorities, values and character of Christ, and intentionally reproduces these in the lives of others.*

Discipleship Strategy

Our mandate from the Lord to make disciples is clear (Matt 28:18-20). He modeled the strategy, which the apostles mimicked. Four phrases that summarize His strategy are:

[Reach the Lost](#) (1 Cor 9:19), [Build Up Believers](#) (Col 2:6-7), [Equip Workers](#) (Eph 4:12), [Develop Leaders](#) (2 Tim 2:2).

The Lord not only lived a perfect life, but He also modeled a perfect strategy. From the time He called His first disciples until the time He ascended, Jesus spent most of His time with His disciples. He lived out His life and His ministry with purpose and an intentional strategy. In John 17:4, He told His Father in heaven that He finished the work the Father had given Him to do; and that was before He went to the cross. That work was to fully train & develop disciples who could train disciples who could train disciples. He set in motion a strategy of multiplication that would continue on earth until He comes again. Jesus led with authority under the direction of the Father and the power of the Holy Spirit, and He carried out His strategy in ways that should characterize our strategy too: Jesus is our strategy model.

He was intentional in every sense, including selecting His leaders, places, times, target audience, etc. Intentionality understands that everyone develops at a different pace and each person is at a different developmental phase. Jesus understood the needs of those who were lost and those who believed; between being an infant and a fully trained disciple, and then related to each one appropriately. Of course, His intentionality was marked by integrity.

He created a relational environment for growth in which to train disciples. Without true relationship, discipleship is not possible. As a disciple maker, He spent most of His time with His followers, understood them and taught in a variety of ways so the life lessons could be caught. He related to them as a teacher, model, and shepherd. The disciples were trained together by Jesus as they walked, followed and learned. That close relationship with each other provided support, encouragement, transparency, guided practice and accountability for each other. And He modeled how to produce change in others' lives and how to become fully trained followers. They saw this and were then able to do the same. To the church at Thessalonica, Paul described himself as a nursing mother and a training father. Peter described himself as an elder and under-shepherd. In Acts, Christ-followers met in the temple (large group) and from house to house (small group). The LifeGroup is the ideal relational environment for this strategy to be carried out. The LifeGroup Leader needs to foster an environment of love and acceptance that will be ideal for real discipleship to take place.

He implemented a process that can be learned and repeated. By His example, He set in motion a strategy and process that could be learned and repeated by all disciples in all cultures throughout history. By doing so, the process could easily be passed on from one generation to the next. No wonder He prayed for those who would believe as a result of the work of the disciples (John 17). The key to this process continuing across the street, across the world or across generations is that each disciple eventually

understands and learns the strategy, becomes intentional to own the strategy and to intentionally pass it on through spiritual reproduction.

At the core of the strategy: the character, priorities, values and principles of Christ.

Reach the Lost / Evangelize

Discipleship involves a mind-set and the activities of Spirit-led outreach that leads individuals into a relationship with Jesus Christ, which is based on God's grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This involves being intentional in building relationships ("while going") with our friends, relatives, associates and neighbors and clearly sharing the gospel with individuals in our sphere of influence. This approach understands that some plant, some water, and God causes the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). God is the original "seeker", as the Son of Man came to seek and to save those who are lost (Luke 19:10). God is drawing men to Himself (John 6:44), and in response, they become true "seekers" of Him. His disciples are witnesses, ambassadors, and ministers of reconciliation who proclaim their testimony and the truth of the gospel. The church aids the disciples in carrying out their evangelistic efforts by providing "outreach events". These events provide "come see" opportunities. Disciples are encouraged to invite their peers to come to an event, at which the gospel is clearly presented in a tasteful and relevant manner that offers an opportunity for response. Following an event like this, the disciple is provided a clear opportunity to enter into a discussion about the gospel and seek to make it clear, answer questions, and ask their peer to trust Jesus Christ alone for salvation and receive God's gracious gift of eternal life.

Life Group Leaders must model outreach in their personal life, be supportive of outreach events, and encourage those in their LifeGroups to also have an outreach focus. The LifeGroup Leader should also lead the LifeGroup to host outreach events and participate in church-sponsored outreach events.

Build up Believers

After a person trusts in Jesus Christ alone as Savior, there is a need to not remain as an infant in Christ, but to grow up into Him (Christ), and along with other members of the body, be built up in Him until we actively build up others toward maturity. (Ephesians 4:12-16) This maturity can be measured by "unity in the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, and attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13), in other words Christ-likeness. So the product of building up a disciple is that they become like Jesus Christ in every aspect of life. While the believer grows up (active) he is built up (passive) by others. It is incumbent upon more mature believers to actively and intentionally build up others. Jesus' strategy for building up his disciples is clear in His teaching and modeling the truth of God's Word. The strategy step of Building up Believers is clear in the participial phrases of the Great Commandment: "baptizing them, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you". In a practical way, a disciple of Christ does not live an isolated life, but is incorporated into a local assembly of believers. Discipleship also involves encouraging believers to obey Christ and incorporating individuals into the church community by encouraging believers to regularly gather together for worship, be baptized, become members, join a LifeGroup, get involved in men's or women's ministry, be equipped for service, give regularly, and then find a place to use his/her spiritual gifts to build up the Body of Christ. To claim to be a disciple/Christ-follower and yet not be

connected to a community of believers to enjoy nurture, community, fellowship, and service is foreign to the New Testament.

LifeGroup Leaders must be supportive of the church's focus: Gather together; Grow together; Go and Serve. They will teach the Word of God, and find creative ways to teach the Bible and apply it to daily life, so people will obey the commandments of Christ. Christ-likeness is the measure of growth and maturity. It is important that LifeGroup Leaders teach the importance of their members to be baptized the way Jesus was (by immersion) and to become members of LSC, and find a way to serve the Body of Christ.

Equip Workers

Discipleship involves birth, growth, and reproduction. Nature teaches us that whatever is alive, healthy, and growing will reproduce. That is also true of disciples. Jesus' desire is that we would bear much fruit and that our fruit should remain. (John 15:16). In fact, He ordained it. In our process of growth, He has good works for us to do that He ordained in advance that we should accomplish (Eph 2:10). These good works are ways that we serve. Jesus modeled service for his disciples; for even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). He also demonstrated equipping as a strategy by training and sending out the 12 (Luke 9:1-13), the 72 (Luke 10: 1-17) and then they reported back to the Master. Of course, He spent 40 days with them after His resurrection and then gave them the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20).

The mark of a true disciple is that he serves others. However, it is necessary for disciples to be trained. Discipleship includes equipping workers to serve in a way to please God. This equipping is primarily done by mature believers, who are gifted for this special task. Since the office of apostles and prophets has ceased, this equipping in the church today is by those who have the spiritual gift of evangelist and pastor-teacher. (Ephesians 4:12) These gifted equippers teach, prepare, encourage, and challenge each believer to serve the body of Christ with the works of service that God prepared for them to accomplish. The goal of service is maturity and Christ-likeness. At salvation, each believer has received at least one spiritual gift, which is a supernatural ability to serve under the Holy Spirit's power which results in divine results, for the building up of the body (1 Cor. 12). Each disciple is equipped and encouraged to speak or serve in love with the words and strength that God provides (1 Peter 4: 8-11).

This equipping takes place in Worship services, LifeGroups, Life Classes, other training events, and through on line and produced media resources. LifeGroup leaders should encourage LifeGroup members to regularly attend worship services. They also need hold people accountable for regularly coming to LifeGroup. The leader must model and encourage his LifeGroup members to serve others in the LifeGroup in practical ways, and be exposed to other training. They need to be encouraged to participate in Life Classes, take the online spiritual gifts test, and get involved in serving in some capacity or ministry at LifeSpring Church.

Develop Leaders

Jesus not only modeled a strategy of multiplication, He also commanded it. While the masses followed Him because of His miracles and the food He provided, He spent most of His time developing a small group of dedicated followers that would eventually be agents of change and

would carry out His strategy of multiplication. He commanded them :”Follow me and I will make to become fishers of men” (Matt 4:19). Jesus focused on developing leaders. He led by example and commanded that the disciples follow Him. He was Lord, yet he was a servant (Mark 10:45). Before He ascended into heaven, He entrusted His multiplication strategy into the hands of 11 imperfect men. He had trained the 12 (Luke 9:1-13), the 72 (Luke 10: 1-17), and spent significant time with the inner three, Peter, James and John. His intentional strategy was to develop them into fully trained disciples (Luke 6:40), who would serve Him with all their hearts. When the time came for them to fulfill the everyday commission “As the Father sent me, I am sending you” (John 2:21), in great faith, they depended on the training they received and the Holy Spirit within them. And Christ continued to build His church. Barnabas encouraged Paul, Paul mentored Timothy, Titus, and others who taught others. Christ is still doing the same thing today. Paul told the Corinthians that they should mimic him as he mimicked Christ (1 Cor 11:1). Christ never intended to develop hundreds of leaders during His ministry on earth. His strategy is one of multiplication. When He ascended to heaven, His whole strategy of reaching the world (approximately 170 million people) with the gospel, and building His church was placed into the hands of an 11-man band of imperfect yet commissioned disciples (Because of Judas’ death, the number was reduced to 11, and soon after Jesus’ ascension, the number was 12 again). Every person in every tribe, tongue and nation on the earth from the time Jesus ascended to heaven and until the time He comes again for his church is relying on His strategy of leadership development. He knew the strategy would work because these apostles would be indwelt by the triune God and gifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) He trained only a few, He infused His presence, power and divine resources, and the church was born, and He continues to build it. The whole strategy of discipleship is that we will make disciples, who can make disciples, who can make disciples..... Leaders develop leaders, who develop leaders, who develop leaders.... And we have the same God present in us, the same commission entrusted to us, the same Holy Spirit empowering us, and the same divine resources available to us.

As it was for Jesus, this development of leaders will take place in both formal and informal settings. With the help of the LifeGroup Shepherd, the LifeGroup Leader should prayerfully identify and begin development of the apprentice in the laboratory of the LifeGroup. He is also encouraged to bring the apprentice to LifeGroup Leader meetings and training sessions.

Jesus chose His leaders from among those who were following Him. When discipleship is intentional, spiritual growth takes place. As we imitate the life and strategy of Jesus, potential leaders who are gifted and motivated by the Spirit, will naturally and supernaturally be detected by current leaders.

Christ’s Priorities

Throughout history, God has clearly expressed His priorities in His work of relating to His creation, including men and angels. These are: Glorify God, Build His Kingdom, Build His Church, and Build (transform) individual lives.

Glorify God: God does not share His glory with another. From the beginning of creation and forever more, God’s priority has been and will be to glorify Himself. The glory of God is the existence of and the demonstration of God’s eternal, intrinsic attributes (Rosenthal). When Jesus became man, the incarnate Son of God, the disciples saw the glory of God, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). God’s desire for us is to glorify Him in everything (1 Corinthians 10:31). We do that by reflecting the character of God in our thoughts, motives, and actions.

Build His Kingdom: From Adam until Christ, God's priority was to build the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. This was demonstrated through Noah, the patriarchs, Joshua, the Judges, the Kings, and Jesus, the promised Messiah came as the King of Glory. His command is for man to seek the Kingdom of God (Matt 6:33). After the church age, He will continue to build His kingdom on earth and Jesus will return as the King and reign for 1,000 years, and we will reign with Him. And of course, He will turn over the kingdom to His father, and His kingdom will last forever and ever in a new heaven and new earth.

Build His Church: Jesus promised His disciples that He would build His church upon the solid rock of His character and position (Matt 16:18). We are in the church age now. Christ's priority is to build His universal church, and He does this through local churches around the globe. The main aspects of this Church building of Christ as He carried out His strategy are the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. There is no need to expound on these in this document. But the summary is that the Great Commandment is Jesus' command to passionately love God and to actively love our neighbors. The Great Commission is Jesus' command for His disciples throughout the ages to continue His strategy to make disciples of all nations.

Build Lives: Since the fall of man, Christ's pre-carnate and incarnate priority has always been to initiate a relationship with men, and provide the sacrifice necessary to secure that relationship. His desire is for men to love Him, worship Him, obey Him and serve Him. Of course, this only happens by God changing depraved, sinful and condemned men to a position and lifestyle of His righteousness that comes through faith. In Romans 8:29, it is described as God conforming us into the image of Christ. Romans 12:1 also describes this transformational (metamorphosis) process that takes place through worship. Since these are the priorities of Christ, they must also be the priorities of the church and its discipleship efforts, including LifeGroups and LifeGroup Leaders.

Christ's Principles

The principles of Christ are the many specific doctrines, commands, life lessons, and principles for living that He taught and modeled for His followers. These flow out of His Character, Priorities and Values. These were recorded through inspiration, by the apostles and their associates, years after Christ ascended to heaven. Just as the apostles did, LifeGroup leaders are expected to learn, model and teach these principles, which are a demonstration of wisdom (parable of wise man and foolish man...the one who hears Christ's words and obeys Him is wise Matt 7:24-28).

Christ's Values

The values of Christ are the major goals, truths, and absolutes that Jesus proclaimed and exemplified as having eternal worth. These values permeated every aspect of Jesus' life, ministry, strategy, principles and process. They flowed out of His perfect character and direction from the Father. These values are like the facets of a gem. Just as the many facets of a diamond define the reality and nature of the beautiful gem, in the same way, the values of Jesus define the reality and nature of His life and ministry strategy. These values were observed and caught by the apostles, and therefore also became the core of the ministry of the apostles. These values are listed below. Each LifeGroup and LifeGroup Leader should make it a priority to grow in his/her understanding of them and accept, teach, promote and model these values.

Christ's Character

The character of Christ is the core of who He is as a person and member of the Trinity. He is equal with God the Father in every attribute. However, He laid aside the independent use of those attributes when He became man. He never ceased being God when He became man, but He never used His supernatural attributes to make life more convenient for Himself. He is totally God and totally man, depending totally upon the Father and the Holy Spirit for His life and ministry, just as God commands us to do. While His character is equal to the Father and the Spirit, His role personality, roles and responsibilities are unique to the Son.

Purpose of LifeGroups

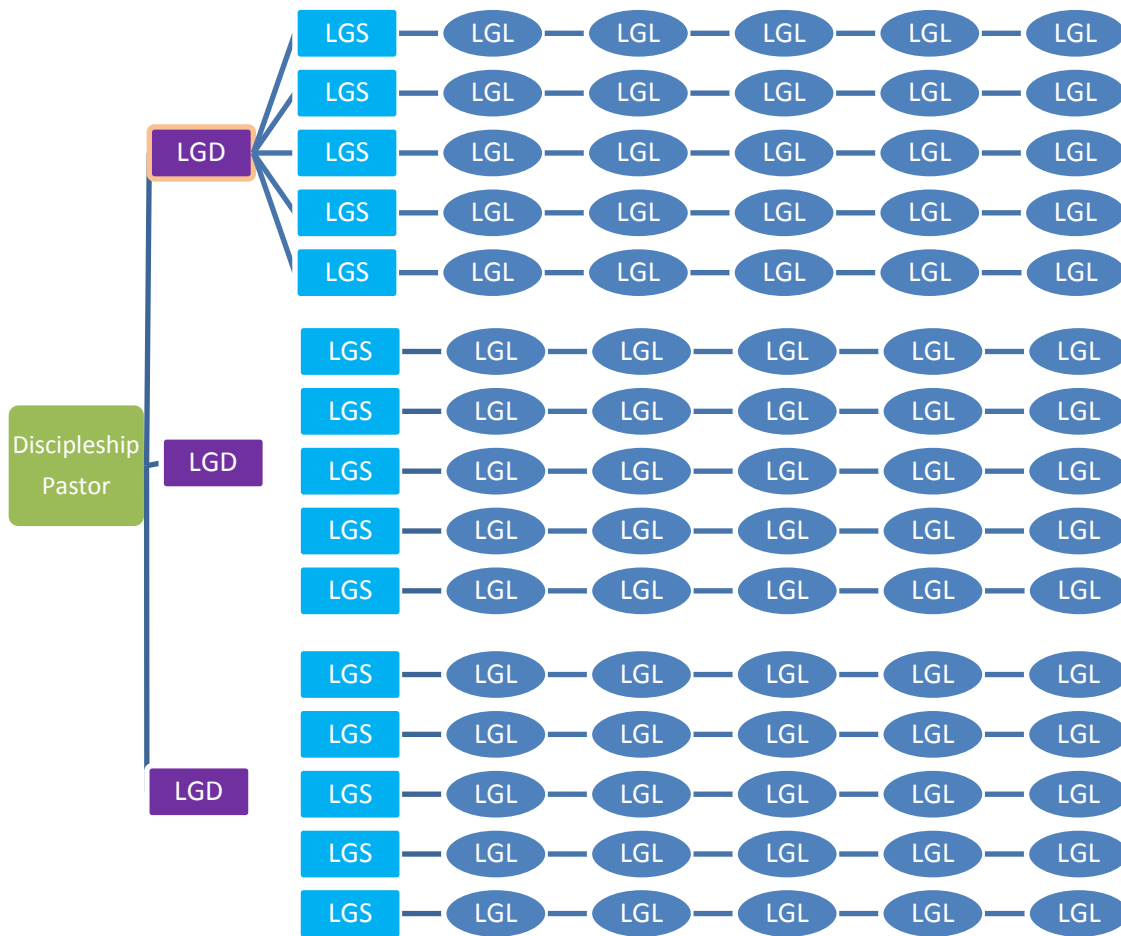
The purpose of LifeGroups is to provide an on-going small group environment where participants (normally 3-12) will be built up and have the opportunity to experience spiritual growth and authentic community, with the character, priorities, and values of Christ, revealed in the Word of God, at the core of life and teaching. A key objective of LifeGroups is to divine resources to meet human needs through loving channels for the glory of God (Wiersbe). There will be a variety of LifeGroups which will be defined by age, gender, marital status, location, affinity, or a combination of these. The ultimate purpose of LifeGroups is to glorify God by carrying out the mandate to produce fully trained disciples of Jesus Christ. Our purpose is produce disciples, who can produce disciples, who can..... The LifeGroup Leaders will carry out the Discipleship Strategy. LifeGroups truly are the heartbeat of LSC, and the aim is that every adult will participate in a LifeGroup.

Structure of LifeGroups

The structure of LifeGroups will be dynamic, changing as the size of the LifeGroup Ministry grows. Each LifeGroup Leader is encouraged to have an apprentice, with the goal of reproducing new LifeGroups. If outreach and in-reach is a reality in the LifeGroup, it will grow and reproduce to the point where starting a new group will be necessary.

LifeGroup Leaders (LGL) will be led by a LifeGroup Shepherd (LGS). Each LifeGroup Shepherd will oversee and develop approximately 5 LifeGroup Leaders. The Discipleship Pastor will oversee and meet with the LifeGroup Shepherds. When the number of LifeGroups grows, the Discipleship Pastor (DP) will appoint, oversee, and meet with LifeGroup Director(s) (LGD). Then, the LifeGroup Directors will oversee and meet with the LifeGroup Shepherds (LGS). This structure will provide flexibility and freedom for training, accountability, and growth. To qualify as a LifeGroup Shepherd, the person must be a LifeGroup leader for at least one year. To qualify as a LifeGroup Director, the person must be a LifeGroup Shepherd for at least one year. Exceptions may be made together by the Discipleship Pastor and Lead Pastor. A woman may be a LG Shepherd if all the LifeGroup Leaders under her care are women. See the next page for a graphic display of this structure.

Making Disciples LifeGroups



LifeGroup Leader

This individual is ultimately responsible for the leadership, direction, and discipleship of those in the LifeGroup. The LG Leader will do the majority of the leading and teaching. With the help of the LG Shepherd, the LG Leader will decide which curriculum or topic the group will study. Each LifeGroup will study the same material at the same time, if encouraged to do so by the Discipleship Pastor and/or Lead Pastor. In addition, the LG Leader may divide responsibilities with others in his/her group. Some suggestions are:

Co-Leader/Apprentice

This person would help evaluate the overall spiritual growth of the group. They help ask questions about how people are growing in their relationship with God and Christ-likeness. The Co-Leader is aware of the resources available to the group and usually is one who shares some of the teaching responsibilities of the LifeGroup. This person could be an apprentice who is being trained to lead his/her own group. Or this person may have a permanent role as a Co-Leader, and he/she understands that the LG Leader is the main teacher and leader.

Connection Coordinator

This individual helps to evaluate the health of the group. Their responsibility is not to individually meet all the needs of each member, but to lead the group in meeting each other's needs. He will help make new people feel welcome and connected, while also reaching out to those group members who may have ceased attending regularly. This person is responsible for maintaining accurate records for the LifeGroup and reporting attendance and changes to the church office.

Community Coordinator

This person leads the LifeGroup to make a difference in the community. They are responsible for coordinating social and service opportunities for the group. They plan with the LG Leader and coordinate with the church office when appropriate.

Desires for LifeGroups

1. To see an increase each year in the number of individuals building relationships with the lost, sharing the good news and people saved as a direct result of LifeGroups. Our desire is to have 10% growth in our church which would come as a result of people being saved (ie conversion growth)
2. To see an increase in the number of guests and church attendees being baptized, becoming members of LSC, and becoming participants of LifeGroups. To see 85% of LSC attendees and members participate in a LifeGroup.
3. To see an annual increase in the average attendance in each LifeGroup and then an increase in the number of LifeGroups, with each LifeGroup working toward giving birth to a new LifeGroup every two years.
4. To have each LG Leader participate in monthly and quarterly training meetings.
5. To have every member of a LifeGroup involved in serving in some capacity at LSC.
6. To see LifeGroup members demonstrating growth in biblical understanding, transforming obedience, and Christ-like maturity.
7. To see each LG Leader have an apprentice, being trained to be a LG Leader.
8. To see an increase in the number of trained Life Group Shepherds.
9. To see an increase in LifeGroup Leaders encouraging people to participate in Life Classes.
10. To see an increase in Life Class teachers encouraging people to participate in LifeGroups.

Resources for LifeGroups

The church has a responsibility for helping LG Leaders fulfill their discipleship efforts by providing direction, accountability, materials, and other resources. LSC will:

1. Provide training, materials, encouragement and events to LG Leaders concerning Evangelism.
2. Provide contact information to each LG Leader and/or LG Shepherd concerning those who express a desire to participate in a LifeGroup. LG Leaders will inform his LG Shepherd and Discipleship Pastor of his/her desire to add more people to the group. If that happens and information is provided, the LG leader and/or LG Shepherd agrees to follow up with the prospect and then give feedback to the Discipleship Pastor, LG Shepherd or church office.
3. Make an effort to connect individuals to a LifeGroup which meet their needs,

interests, and comfort level. (Same process as #2)

4. Provide training and materials to help LG Leaders be more creative in lesson preparation, teaching, and activities. We believe that both the church and the LG Leaders have a responsibility for investing in the ministry. For the most part, individual participants of LifeGroups and LG Leaders will purchase books/study guides. However, if there is a financial hardship, the church may provide the necessary materials on a reasonable basis with the approval of the Discipleship Pastor.
5. Provide opportunities and encouragement for feedback among leaders on what does and does not work as best practices.
6. Provide resources for each LG Leader to help them in the mentoring process.
7. Provide LG Leader with "Ministry Opportunities" list which can be used to encourage group members to participate in ministry.
8. Provide a LifeGroup Discussion Guide, based upon the pastors' sermons, when that is deemed appropriate by the Lead Pastor and/or the Discipleship Pastor.
9. Provide a list of online resources for study and resource.
10. Provide encouragement and prayer support on an on-going basis.
11. Provide counseling and/or direction for difficult situations that arise within the LifeGroup or issues that concern a participant of the LifeGroup.

LifeGroup Values

Since LifeGroups are to make disciples of Jesus Christ, the values we see in the Life of Christ are the same values that should be lived out in our LifeGroups. This means that the LifeGroup meeting will be more than a teaching time. The leader will foster an atmosphere and create activities to exercise spiritual disciplines that are necessary to build up believers to become like Christ and help them become fully trained disciples.

Christ-Likeness

Jesus' clear call is "Follow Me". Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. 11:1 is clear that we mimic spiritual leaders as they mimic Christ. He is our model and life pattern. LifeGroup leaders follow Christ and then lead others into Christ-likeness by example, living a life of holiness and obedience. They should model Christ-likeness, Spirit-control and spiritual disciplines in their own life. So, their message would be consistent with their life.

Spirit-Filled Life

The expectation for the LifeGroup Leader and each member is that all will have the desire and commitment to be filled by the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit leads, then the teaching, direction, and focus of the group will be divinely powerful. Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit beginning with His baptism. This is truly the Son-Life principle. In His humbled state as a man, He laid aside the independent use of His divine attributes. The work and miracles He performed were due to the power of the Holy Spirit working through Him. Just as Jesus depended on the Spirit to do the will of the Father and to accomplish His work, so we must depend on Him as well. We yield to His control and depend on Him for wisdom, strength, help, direction, and power to serve the body of Christ with gifts that He gave.

Communication of God's Word

The Bible is the “text book” for all classes or groups. While the use of other resources may be used, the basis for each lesson should be the Bible. The goal is for group members to learn to apply the Biblical principles, priorities and values of Christ to their daily lives. The LifeGroup leader is to teach them to know and obey God's word. In addition, the LG Leader is expected to model and teach the spiritual disciplines associated with the Word of God: Hear (gather together); Read (daily habit of reading); Study (studying by observation, interpretation, application); Memorize (using memory as a tool to gain victory, witness, worship, resist temptation, etc.); Meditate (musing in order to apply it to our lives, Psalm 1). Jesus' life and teaching were solidly founded on the truth of God's Word. In fact, He is the Word and the Truth (Jon 1:1; 14:6). In Acts 2, we see that the church valued the teaching of the apostles. The Word of God is our final authority, also. The LifeGroup Leader is to be prepared to teach. If he/she does not understand the meaning of a scripture passage, after personal study, he/she should consult with the LifeGroup Shepherd or a pastor. The leader should also encourage the spiritual disciplines by providing an environment of accountability. As 1 Peter 4:11 says, the teacher should teach as if it were the utterances of God. He can do that as he diligently prays and yields to the Holy Spirit. The LifeGroup teacher is to teach the word. (A word of caution: the LifeGroup is not to become a counseling session. Our LifeGroup leaders are not trained counselors. While we want our groups to be open and transparent, if an issue becomes too personal or complex, the person(s) should be referred to a pastor who may then refer the individual(s) to a trained counselor).

Glorify God the Father

Everything that the LifeGroup does should bring glory to the Father (1 Cor. 10:31). The LifeGroup does not exist for its own existence or satisfaction. Rather, it exists for the purpose of worshipping God, reflecting the character of God and making His name shine both in the LifeGroup gatherings and in the lives of the LifeGroup participants. Jesus demonstrated His love for the Father, praised and thanked the Father, prayed to the Father, worshipped in the synagogue and Temple, and sang to the Father. Just as Jesus lived to bring glory to the Father, so that must be our ambition as well (John 17:1-4)

Community of Love

While Bible study is an important part of the group experience, LifeGroups should also prioritize connecting relationally at each meeting and throughout the week. The driving force behind each LifeGroup should be the building of relationships. Each group should seek to help its members grow in their intimacy with God, their connections with other members, and their influence with the community. Jesus demonstrated and taught the concept of grace, community, and unconditional love (John 13:34-35; Acts 2:42-47). It was because of this love that people came to trust in Christ, and people were added to the church daily. So, the LifeGroup is where the “one-another” commands of the New Testament are lived out. The LifeGroup Leader should set the tone by modeling a life of love in his relationships, beginning with loving God. Living out and teaching the Great Commandment should be significant. To promote community and fellowship, the leader should provide time during the meeting for some social interaction. He should work with the host(s) and the members to plan for appropriate food and drink items to be served. In addition, the leader should plan or delegate the planning of social events for the

group. Among other things, this emphasis of love will highlight Confidentiality, Respect, Forgiveness and Availability.

Confidentiality: Members must be able to trust that issues discussed with a LifeGroup will not be shared outside of the group.

Respect: Group Members should never say anything that will embarrass either their spouses or members of the group. Of course, gossip should not be permitted under any circumstance. The principle of living above reproach should be taught, and certainly believers need to be aware that there are people of different maturity levels in the LifeGroup and should be careful not to be a stumbling block for others. All activities should conform to Biblical teaching, and items such as alcohol, tobacco, and drugs should not be served at any LifeGroup functions.

Forgiveness: Wherever there are close relationships, people typically do or say something that cause hurt feelings from time to time. We need to forgive each other as God has forgiven us (Eph 4:32)

Availability: A primary responsibility of loving community is to prioritize their lives for relationships. This requires a willingness to be available to meet each other's needs. In Acts 2, people weren't too busy for each other but gave devoted themselves to fellowship.

Worship

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, we clearly see the value of worship. Worship is the response of all that man is to all that God is. We see Jesus spending time in worshipping the Father, teaching about worship (John 4), protecting worship (Matt 21:12ff), and leading His disciples in worship (Matt 26:17ff). The apostles learned how to worship from Him and taught the church (Acts 2, Col 3). We see in Revelation, that worship will be our eternal occupation. Of course worship is expressed in many ways, including:

Living (Romans 12:1,2)

Singing

Praying

Serving

Teaching, Preaching, Evangelism

Giving

Ordinances (Baptism, Lord's supper)

The LifeGroup leader will teach worship by example, verbal expression, and will promote worship for the individuals in the LifeGroup and in the corporate church meetings. The LG Leader will support our value of "gathering together" for worship (Heb 10:24) on a weekly basis. The LifeGroup leader, as a member and leader will uphold and teach the different aspects of our church covenant, some of which deal with worship.

Prayerful Dependence

In order to have discipleship ministry that transforms lives, it must be empowered by God through prayer. Each group meeting should provide time for prayer, and members should be encouraged to pray for each other throughout the week. The LifeGroup Leader should model prayer in his personal life as a habit and spiritual discipline as well, as an expression of worship, confession, thanksgiving and dependence on God to meet needs and accomplish His will. Acts 2:42 teaches that the New Testament church was devoted to prayer. The apostles learned this

from the life of Christ. Even a slight look at the Savior's life on earth shows that He spent many hours in prayer, in which He communed with God, gained insight direction and daily power for living (Matt. 6: 5-15; 7:7; 9:38; 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 3:21; 6:12-16; 18:1; 22:39-45; John 14:32; 17:1-26).

Faith in God and his Promises

The LifeGroup leader and the members should be growing in their faith. We are to walk by faith not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). God has made remarkable promises in His Word that are true and are to be believed. Paul teaches us "just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him..." (Col. 2:6). How did we receive Him? By grace through faith. How are we to live in Him? By grace through faith. Galatians 2:20 teaches us that since we have been crucified with Christ, the life we live in the flesh we should live by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself up for us. Hebrews 11:6 teaches that without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Authenticity & Obedience

The atmosphere of a LifeGroup should encourage openness and transparency among the members. This is an environment where people should feel free to be themselves. True authenticity is a result of accountability, belonging, and acceptance within each group. At the heart of authenticity is the desire and reality of obedience of the commandments of Christ. The LifeGroup leader should model and teach the commandments of Christ and the apostles. Jesus' commission was that we make disciples by teaching and expecting others to change their lives so in order to obey His commandments. This is repentance. He said that those who love Him will keep His commandments. Jesus clearly lived an authentic life, and there was no fault found in Him. And regarding His obedience, in the Garden of Gethsemane He made it clear that He was more interested in doing the Father's will than pursuing His own desires: "Not my will, but your will be done"

Outreach / Evangelism

If a LifeGroup is not focused on outreach it will become ingrown and eventually will die. Reaching out to the lost is fundamental to discipleship. Every believer has Christ in his/her life because of the very fact that someone reached out to them. The LifeGroup Leader should model and teach the passion of reaching the lost by praying and living a life to be an intentional witness and ambassador to peers. If the LifeGroup Leader may ask a LifeGroup Shepherd or Discipleship pastor to come to his LifeGroup in order to teach how to share the good news and be effective in outreach. The LifeGroup Leaders should encourage the LifeGroup members to participate in LifeGroup and Church outreach events in order to reach out their lost peers. Jesus and His apostles placed a high priority on reaching out to the lost and were passionate about preaching the gospel to the lost. The Lord told His disciples that if they would follow Him, He would make them fishers of men. He encouraged them to look at the harvest and recognize that it was white and ready for harvest. And he asked to pray to the Father that He would send more laborers into the harvest field because there are few workers. His concern reached across the globe. He commanded that the gospel be preached to every creature. Jesus showed His commitment best by paying the price so that all men might be saved. He died for our sins. He said "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost (Luke 19:10).

Equipping for Service / Serving Others

Healthy individuals and groups have a purpose beyond themselves. Getting groups to look outward instead of inward, to humbly serve instead of consume, helps make them healthy and exalts Christ. Members of LifeGroups are to be encouraged to serve one another from the heart serve others, and serve together during service projects. The LifeGroup Leader should encourage LG members to take the spiritual gifts survey, which is found on our website, and use their spiritual gifts actively and consistently to serve the church, in order that the church will be built up (1 Cor 12, Rom 12, Eph 4). The LifeGroup Leader should model service as a part of his/her lifestyle and teach others to do the same. The leader should also lead his group to actively take on service projects as a group and to serve in some main events of the church (i.e. Project Go; Church Picnic; Family Fest; Fall Festival; Setting up Chairs, etc.) as they are physically able. Equipping for service is done through the practical teaching of the Word of God by the LifeGroup Leader, the preaching pastor(s), Life Classes, and individual training. The LifeGroup leader should teach with a view to equip, and he should encourage his LifeGroup members to regularly gather for worship and attend Life Classes that will equip them. If there is an individual need, a LifeGroup Shepherd or pastor should be consulted. Jesus' life was a life of service, which was an expression of love (Great Commandment). Philippians 2 describes Him as having the mindset of a humble servant. The gospels showed Him feeding, forgiving, and healing people everywhere He went. In His own words in Mark 10:45, He claimed: "even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many".

Development of Servant-Leaders

Each LifeGroup Leader and LifeGroup should have the desire and goal to see new LifeGroup leaders developed and new groups started. This means that the LifeGroup should be a training ground for potential LifeGroup Leaders. LifeGroup Leaders (servant-leaders), with the help of the LifeGroup Shepherd will identify potential LifeGroup leaders. Then the LifeGroup leader will give the trainee/apprentice opportunities to teach and lead. The LifeGroup Leader will meet with the apprentice to review teaching, discuss strategy, pray, and to develop the person into a LifeGroup Leader. The LifeGroup Leader should coach the LifeGroup into accepting it as a norm to have trainees doing part of the teaching and leading.

Multiplication

Group members should be taught to recognize that one of the goals of their group is to start a new group.

There are several reasons why we feel that each group should reproduce itself.

1. *Better Communication.* The larger a group becomes, the less likely individuals are to express their discoveries, victories, or share about the challenging circumstances in their lives. Smaller groups help solve this problem.
2. *More Connections.* Whenever a new group is formed, its members are more likely to invite new people to attend with them. In short, when new groups are formed, new people come.
3. *Development of new leaders.* For every new group that is formed, a new leader must step up to lead it. This gives individuals the opportunity to discover and develop their spiritual gifts.

As servant-leaders, we must all recognize and appreciate both aspects of that phrase. We are both servants and leaders. We serve the Lord and people. We serve by leading, and we lead by serving. Leadership also means taking on responsibility and completing it. Whenever we give responsibility, we also give freedom and authority to fulfill it. Therefore, we must also recognize that in order to maintain order and unity in our church and LifeGroups, God has set up a leadership-authority structure for the church. Christ is the head of the church. Man is the head of woman. And God is the head of Christ (1 Cor 11:3). God has given the oversight responsibilities of the church to the elders (overseers 1 Tim 3; Titus 2). In our church, the pastors have this privilege and responsibility of serving and shepherding. Christ is the chief shepherd (1 Peter 5:1-5). The Discipleship Pastor is responsible for overseeing the adult discipleship strategy (not a program), which means overseeing several ministries (Men of Honor, Women of Excellence) Life Classes and their teachers, and LifeGroups, including serving and leading LifeGroup Directors, LifeGroup Shepherds, and LifeGroup Leaders and apprentices. As servant-leaders, we all use our spiritual gifts to work together as a team to carry out the discipleship strategy of Christ.

Family as the base unit of society

The LifeGroup is a support system for families. The teaching of LifeGroups will be pro- family and support the Biblical model for the family found in the Scriptures: that of marriage between one man and one woman for life. The LifeGroup leader will model and teach purity, love and respect in marriage, the roles of husbands and wives as they relate to one another and the sound parenting principles taught in Scripture. The leader will also agree and teach that cohabitation before marriage, adultery, and homosexuality are not acceptable behaviors for Christ-followers. If a leader has questions about any family or living situation, or senses that members of his group need counseling, he/she should consult the LifeGroup Shepherd or Pastor. LifeGroups will be supportive of widowed and single individuals with comfort, encouragement, and service as is appropriate. LifeGroups may be built around the gender, marriage status, and life-stage of people. In His teaching, Jesus clearly supported the original design for marriage and condemned sexual relationships outside of marriage.

The LifeGroup Leader

The LifeGroup Leader is responsible for providing his/her group with vision, direction and support. The Group Leader will report to a LifeGroup Shepherd.

Qualifications

The LifeGroup Leader is to:

1. Be a LSC member for at least six months (This may be shorter if the person is a returning member)
2. Must complete a LifeGroup Leader Application
3. Be interviewed by the Discipleship Pastor or a LifeGroup Director
4. Be willing to participate in initial and regular leadership training

5. **Must** be able to answer that there are no problems in the following areas:

- Leader has no current habitual struggles or moral issues (drugs, alcohol, pornography, cohabitation, etc.) that would bring shame on the name of Jesus Christ or on LifeSpring Church.
- Leader has no current major marital struggles (infidelity, separation, and divorce in process, etc.)
- Leader must support LifeSpring Church's Statements of Faith and direction
- Leader must contact the discipleship pastor to inform him if there is a change of status in any of these.

Expectations

The qualified LifeGroup leader:

1. Is a member for at least 6 months and affirms LSC Statements of Faith & Purpose and LifeGroup Purpose and Values
2. Has been a member of a LifeGroup for at least 6 months
3. Completes the initial training
4. Shepherds the group by leading the group meeting and monitoring the spiritual growth of the LifeGroup
5. Guides decisions according to the membership covenant, LifeGroup Leader Handbook, and Pastoral Leadership.
6. Attends the LifeGroup Leaders meetings at least six times a year
7. Meets with the LifeGroup Shepherd on a regular basis
8. Identifies and develops a qualified apprentice under the direction of the LifeGroup Shepherd
9. Ensures attendance and group data are current with the church office
10. Leads the LifeGroup to conduct in service projects (according to physical abilities):
 - Setting up chairs in the Worship Center
 - Participating in Project Go and other Church Wide service projects
10. Lives out the values and associated expectations (above) and agrees to abide by other expectations and guidelines in this handbook and application.

The LifeGroup Meeting

The LifeGroup Leader will ensure that the meeting will reflect the principles, priorities, and values of Christ. It must be understood that the LifeGroup meeting is not just a Bible Study. It is an environment of love in which disciples are made and leaders are reproduced. So, the different aspects of discipleship and the disciplines of discipleship are to be exercised. While there may not be time to cover everything in every meeting, over different intervals throughout the year, the LifeGroup Leader should be able to determine whether or not he is making disciples or not. (Are the participants becoming like Christ, living out His principles, priorities, and values, and developing the spiritual disciplines that reflect them). LG Shepherds and the Discipleship Pastor may come to a LifeGroup meeting.

The meetings should include:

Community: Give people an opportunity to get acquainted and share life together during the meeting. Serve food and drinks. Your host will do this or organize people taking turns. Also

discuss and plan social events. Take turns. Be sure to teach your group how to respectfully treat the host's home and to thank them.

Prayer: Give time to listening to prayer requests and pray for each other

Word of God

- Teaching: Take time to creatively teach the Word with discovering learning (not lecture; real dialogue about life and God)
- Personal quiet time: Teach people how to read and study on their own. Give them opportunity to express what they have been learning and hold them accountable.
- Bible memory: Lead the group in memorizing key verses or passages together. Give them opportunity to quote these and hold them accountable (break up into 2s or 3s)
- Inform and promote the growth events hosted by the church, Men of Honor, and Women of Excellence

Outreach: Encourage, model and challenge people to pray for the lost (each to have an impact list), share the gospel and give them opportunity to share their witnessing experiences, and hold them accountable. Inform and promote the outreach events hosted by the church, Men of Honor, and Women of Excellence.

Worship: Encourage and hold accountable for corporate worship. Yes ask them. Encourage people to be baptized if they have not been baptized. Encourage people to attend membership classes and become members if they are not members. Teach and encourage them to give financially. Yes, hold them accountable.

Service: Spend time praying about and discussing service projects (Setting up chairs, filling chairs with cards and envelopes, stuffing bulletins, cleaning the church, service projects for members of your group, Project Go, Church picnic, Family Fest, Fall Festival, Men of Honor, Women of Excellence, etc) Take up offerings to help with some needs in your group and service projects. Encourage and expect others to use their gifts in the body by serving in some way. Give everyone an opportunity to share how they are doing it.

Equipping for Service: Apply God's word to how we serve. Also, take time to inform and appropriately promote Life Classes and other equipping events hosted by the church, Men of Honor, and Women of Excellence.

Family: Apply God's word to marriage, parenting, and other family relationships. Encourage people to appropriately discuss their family issues.

A good way to think of this and to have balance in the LG meeting is to consider that as we "walk as Jesus walked", we need to take STEPS: Study, Training, Evaluation (Accountability)Prayer, Serve.

Miscellaneous Guidelines

1. If a LifeGroup meets any other time other than 9:30 & 11:00 Sunday morning, it is responsible for planning, providing, and paying for its own childcare. Each group can always opt to expect each family to be responsible for making their own childcare arrangements. For the benefit of all group attendees, children over the age of 3 months should not be with their parents in attendance for the group. LifeSpring Church takes seriously the safety of all children, volunteers, and the reputation of our Lord and His Church. We ask that careful consideration be made to provide a positive experience for ALL by thinking through the safety of children, the protection of volunteers, and the safeguard of the congregation from any poor experience or event.

2. LifeGroup meetings, fellowships, and activities are to uphold the basic Biblical standards for Christian conduct. Conduct should not occur which can be a stumbling-block to other believers or can be interpreted as inconsistent with the Christian life. One outworking of this guideline is the prohibition of alcohol and/or drugs during LifeGroup meetings or functions.
3. Each LifeGroup Leader is to actively lead his or her group to avoid all gossip.
4. LifeGroup leaders are expected to work with the LifeGroup Host. The LifeGroup Leader is to lead the group to be respectful of the real and personal property of the host(s). The leader and the host should also take into account that there will be times when the host may not be able to make the home available. At such times, the group should cancel or move the meeting to a different location. The host(s) should be courteous to the LifeGroup leader by informing him/her and the group when the home will not be available. At least 2 weeks' notice is a normal expectation.
5. The church building is available for LifeGroup meetings at the following times. Sunday Mornings; When the time of day is such that it is not appropriate to meet in a home (i.e. 6:30 am); When the topic is not appropriate to discuss in mixed company or in the presence of children (i.e. Men's Accountability Group) .The Discipleship Pastor will help the LifeGroup Shepherd or LifeGroup Leader determine if is appropriate to use the church building.
6. In attempting to balance the cultural setting of Scripture with Biblical principles, the practice of LifeSpring Church is that men teach all adult men and coed classes and LifeGroups.
7. If any injury happens to any person during a LifeGroup event, the LifeGroup Leader should communicate detailed information to the owner/renter of the property and the church office no later than noon the next day. If it is on a week-end contact the Discipleship / Admin Pastor.

Duration

The duration of service for a LifeGroup Leader is dependent on the leader and the group. While the general guideline is that we ask each leader to serve for at least one year, circumstances can often prevent that. Likewise, circumstances within the group, such as changing schedules or families moving, may prevent the group from lasting for one year. So, in understanding the many factors which affect one's service, we ask that a LifeGroup Leader serve as long as he/she and the group are able to meet together. If circumstances do not change, yet God is directing the leader to serve in another capacity, he/she is encouraged to follow the Holy Spirit's leading. The LifeGroup Leader and group may meet year-round, take breaks as needed, and even break over the summer.

The LifeGroup Shepherd

The LifeGroup Shepherd is responsible for providing his/her group of LifeGroup Leaders with vision, direction, training and support. The LifeGroup Shepherd will report to a LifeGroup Director or the Discipleship Pastor. The Qualifications are the same as that of a LifeGroup Leader and will have been a LifeGroup Leader for at least one year. In addition, the LifeGroup

Shepherd will need to meet the qualifications of an elder and adhere to the same social behavior guidelines as the pastors of LSC.

The LifeGroup Director

The LifeGroup Director is responsible for providing his/her group of LifeGroup Shepherds with vision, direction, training and support. The LifeGroup Director will report to the Discipleship Pastor. The Qualifications are the same as that of a LifeGroup Leader and LifeGroup Shepherd and he will have been a LifeGroup Shepherd for at least one year. The LifeGroup Director will need to meet the qualifications of an elder and adhere to the same social behavior guidelines as the pastors of LSC.

LifeGroup Leadership Exceptions

The qualifications for time of membership or service for any leadership position may be waived after careful consideration and joint decision by the Discipleship Pastor and the Lead Pastor.

LifeGroup Leader Training

Initial Training

While an individual may have experience in teaching the Bible or in leadership, being a leader of a LifeGroup at LSC presents challenges and opportunities for which the leader must be prepared. Therefore, the LifeGroup leader must successfully complete the required LifeGroup Training before taking on the responsibility of leading a LifeGroup. This training will be a combination of reading and “class room” setting. The core training subjects are below: (These may vary depending on the experience of the Leader)

- Understanding Discipleship

 - Walking as Jesus Walked

 - Values and Priorities of Jesus

- Understanding Leadership

- Understanding the Bible and how to communicate its principles

 - Bible Interpretation Principles and Tools

- Understanding Adults

 - Young Adults, Median and Older and Adults

- Understanding our Church

 - Vision, Mission, Culture, Leadership Structure, LifeGroup Handbook

- Understanding LifeGroup Dynamics

- Understanding the LifeGroup Leader Commitment

On-going Training & Accountability

We will provide on-going opportunities for training, accountability, and encouragement. LifeGroup Shepherds will meet with their group of LifeGroup leaders in a variety of ways. These will normally take place once per month.

We will also have all the LifeGroup Leaders gather together for quarterly meetings for training, encouragement, and to communicate important details related to our ministry. In the event that the LifeGroup Leader cannot attend the meeting, he/she should take the initiative to

contact the LifeGroup Shepherd or Discipleship Pastor to schedule a time to visit about what he/she missed.

While we ask that LifeGroup Leaders attend at least 6 of all these meetings, we would prefer that the Leader had an attitude of wanting to be an encouragement to other LifeGroup leaders and attend as many as possible (This is the Service value)

If a LifeGroup Leader habitually does not participate in the large group meetings or in the small group meetings with the LifeGroup Shepherd, the LifeGroup Shepherd has a responsibility of discussing this with the LifeGroup Leader, reporting that to the LG Director or Discipleship Pastor, and he/she may be asked to step down from the LifeGroup Leader role by the Discipleship Pastor or LifeGroup Director. We believe that if participation in these meetings is not a priority, then the LifeGroup leader is either too busy to do a quality job as a leader, or he/she is not ready to accept this responsibility. When he/she is ready to make the commitment to attend the meetings, he/she may apply again and will be considered to become a LifeGroup Leader.

LSC Statements of Faith (taken from membership manual)

GOD

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three personalities: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and exist together as one God.

JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus was virgin born, lived a sinless human life, and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to heaven's glory and will return again someday to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians we seek to live under His daily control.

THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error.

HUMAN BEINGS

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are

the supreme object of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin." This attitude separates people from God and causes many problems in life.

SALVATION

Salvation is God's free gift to us but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our sinful life and turn to Jesus in faith we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his/her life by faith.

ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

We believe that every Christian should live for Christ and not for himself. By obedience to the Word and daily yielding to the Spirit, every believer should mature and become conformed to the image of Christ.

ABOUT ETERNAL SECURITY

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. If you have been genuinely saved, you cannot "lose" your salvation. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the efforts of the Christian. It is the grace and preserving power of God that gives us this security.

ABOUT ETERNITY

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God, through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

ABOUT THE CHURCH

We believe that the church is the body of Christ of which Jesus Christ is the Head. The members are those who have trusted by faith the finished work of Christ. The purpose of the church is to glorify God by loving Him and by making Him known to a lost world.

LSC Membership Covenant (taken from membership manual)

Each LifeGroup Leader must be a member of LSC, and to become a member, each person must agree with and sign the LSC Membership Covenant. We don't expect anyone to do anything that is not commanded by the Word of God. These truths and principles should be taught and lived out in the context of the LifeGroup. See the LifeSpring Church Membership Covenant on page 22-23.

Resources

Some resources that were used for this LG Leader Handbook

SonLife Ministries website and Live 2:6 materials

Real Life Discipleship by James Putman

LSC Membership Handbook

Study by Pastor Steve Hicks

THE LIFESPING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior, having been baptized, and being in agreement with LifeSpring Church's statements, strategy, and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the LSC church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to strive to do the following:

1. I will protect the unity of my church by...

acting in love toward other members. refusing to gossip. upholding the elected and/or appointed leaders. Praying for each other faithfully.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." Ephesians 4:29

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you." Hebrews 13:17

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints." Ephesians 6:18

2. I will share the responsibility of my church by...

praying for the fulfillment of the Great Commission. inviting the un-churched to attend. readily receiving those who visit. seeking ways to share my faith.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

"Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find" Matt 22:9

"He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me." Matthew 10:40

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..." 1 Peter 3:15

3. I will serve in ministry as led by God by...

Discovering my spiritual gifts. Developing my gifts through training. Using my gifts in a ministry, serving those whom God places in my daily path.

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:4

"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God..." 2 Timothy 1:6

"This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God." 2 Corinthians 9:12

"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning..." Luke 12:35

4. I will uphold the integrity of my church by...

attending faithfully. living a godly life. giving regularly. honoring God in my home, family, and marriage.

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another...” Hebrews 10:25

“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.” Philippians 1:27

“...—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” 2 Corinthians 8:7

“...But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.” Joshua 24:15

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Need	What we expect them to Know	Believe	Do
Lost / Seekers	That all have sinned That the wages of sin is death That God loves them That God became man and Jesus is God That Christ died for our sins That Christ rose again That God offers the gift of eternal life That this gift is given by Grace alone That this gift is received by faith alone	That they a sinner That Christ died for them, rose again, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to gain forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life.	Trust in Christ alone for eternal life. Ok to express this faith in a prayer, understanding that saying a prayer does not save them, but faith in Christ alone
Infant Believers Teach <u>Doctrine</u> Build up by grounding Build Up	They have eternal life God loves them and He wants them to depend on Him for everything. Doctrinal Basics That God wants them to grow That God wants them to develop new disciplines That God wants them to be baptized That God wants them to be connected to a local church	Believe they have assurance of: Salvation Answered Prayer Forgiveness of sin Victory Direction God's Word is true God's Spirit is in them	Begin to Develop the disciplines Be Baptized Bible Reading Prayer Obedience Church attendance Giving Attending a LifeGroup
Growing Believers Teach and model <u>Discipline</u> Build up	Principles, Priorities, and Values of Christ and the Apostles. Doctrine The culture of our local church	God desires their worship, obedience, and service, and that they are a significant part of the body That God wants them to build up others	Master Disciplines Become members & follow covenant Be involved in outreach events and witnessing Discover spiritual gifts
Mature Believers Workers Equip for <u>Duty</u> Christ Likeness	God wants them to continue to Grow and serve Him. Know that the Focus should be on others Know how ministries in the church work together	They are being used by God to build up others and faithfulness will be rewarded	Serve with their gifts Intentionally witness to peers
Leaders <u>Develop</u> to reproduce	Leadership skills Discipleship process	That God will develop and use them to build up their group and start new groups	Lead LifeGroups or Life Classes
Shepherds <u>Give Direction</u> to multiply	Shepherding Skills Discipleship Resources	That God will encourage, multiply, and direct leaders through them	Lead and train LifeGroup Leaders

Doctrine, Discipline, Duty, Development, Direction