Life Group Vision and Values

The vision of Life Groups at Fellowship Olathe is to see a growing number of Christ-followers create communities which are marked by relational, intentional, and missional living for the Kingdom of God. Disciples of Jesus sharing the love and salvation of Christ with our neighbors, community, and world.

The word for "disciple" in scripture is mathētḗs (μαθητής), a learner who follows a master teacher. In contrast to our current Western era, learning in Jesus' time was very relational and holistic. Discipleship meant much more than just the transfer of information or knowledge . . . it referred to imitating the teacher's life, understanding his values, and reproducing his teachings. Therefore, Christian discipleship signifies a relationship with Jesus Christ as a master teacher, following Him, and adhering to His way of life and letting it shape our own belief pattern and way of living.

JESUS MODELED HIS LIFE & MINISTRY FOR US TO FOLLOW

Jesus' expectation for His followers was clear: to become more and more like Himself (Luke 6:40). When Jesus said, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19), Jesus was demonstrating that discipleship is:

- **RELATIONAL** (follow me)
- **INTENTIONAL** (I will make you)
- **MISSIONAL** (fishers of people)

Being a disciple of Jesus requires following Him relationally, intentionally, and missionally. In John 8:12 after Jesus speaks to the Pharisees saying, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life."* Many began to question who He was, but some Jews began to believe He was who He claimed to be, the Son of God.

In John 8:31, "Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, *"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

If the pattern of discipleship is relational, intentional, and missional, the means of discipleship is abiding in the Word of God, understanding the truth, and being set free.

"Discipleship is the process of moving from unbelief to belief, in the gospel, as it applies to all areas of life."

Healthy Life Group Values

1) **We value having a good balance of Relational, Intentional, and Missional focus in our Life Groups.** We have limited time on Sunday mornings with our groups, and we want to make the best use of it.

    - **10-15 Minutes of Relational Discussion** (High/Low/Overflow, sharing & praying for one another)
    - **30-35 Minutes of Intentional Discussion** concerning God's Word (How did everyone H.E.A.R. from the Lord this week reading, studying, meditating, and memorizing)

- **10-15 Minutes of Missional Discussion** (Who are you sharing this truth with? How are you living it out and applying it in daily life? Who are people of peace your building relationships with? Who are you discipling?)

2) **Have a mindset of OBEDIENCE-BASED DISCIPLESHIP**, instead of knowledge-based discipleship. Knowledge-based groups turn into "holy-huddles" within the "church walls" limited to a few. Obedience based groups develop active followers of Christ obediently seeing all of life as a training ground for the Kingdom of God. This keeps the focus on being everyday missionaries, building a rhythm of not just "doing" church but "being" the church in everyday life.

3) **Have a mindset of DISCOVERY-BASED LEARNING**, instead of lecture-based teaching. The downside to lecture based groups is they can lead to passive learning, limited engagement, and lack of opportunities for discussion. As you facilitate your group come prepared for the Holy Spirit to guide discussion. Help each person engage in personal discovery and growth in God's grace and truth.

4) **Have a TEAM mindset**, don't go it alone. Each Sunday there should be at least 2-3 people helping lead the group and helping others develop in using their gifts in the following areas.

    - **Connection & Cares** (taking attendance, helping with prayer requests or specific care needs for the group, following up with those who have been out)
    - **Facilitating Discussion & Growth** (leading the Bible study time and discussing as group the observation, interpretation, and application of the passage)
    - **Building Community** (Helping build community through "supper for six" gatherings, etc. and encouraging ways of "doing life together". Helping folks build relationships within our community and workspaces? Looking for ways to live on mission and serve our community?)

Healthy Life Group Leaders

Healthy groups must start with healthy leaders. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus about the necessary qualities of a healthy leader. The healthy leader qualities listed by the Apostle Paul are 90% character and have little to do with skill or ability. Therefore, it is important to recognize that healthy groups do not require a perfect leader, but one desiring continual development and spiritual growth in humility and servant leadership. To lead a healthy Life Group, we value each leader be dedicated to the following:

- Spend time preparing to lead and facilitate group discussion by studying the passage and lesson ahead of time. (Use provided resources to help comprehend, interpret, & apply the text correctly)
- During group time read the passage out loud for everyone to hear (or have the group share reading through the passage).
- Discuss the passage as to what it would mean to the original listener and then to us today.
- Write out principles we can glean from this passage for today. (A principle is a truth that will stand the test of time)
- Discuss different applications and help group members personalize them into action steps.
- Be dedicated to the multiplication process of 1-2-1 discipleship with your Life Group.

Note: if you aren't able to prepare ahead of time, "life happens", do not come in "winging it" let another leader know who can step in for you and can help facilitate that Sunday or swap Sundays with you.

Defining Success

In order for any organization to be successful, it must possess a clear and compelling definition of success. With that in mind, we have attempted to define success for our Life Group members and leaders.

1) **For the Member**

   The member of a Life Group is successful if he or she is personally experiencing authentic community and spiritual growth. Specifically, the member should ask:

   - Am I growing in authentic community with members/other believers?
   - Am I spending intentional, undistracted time with God each day?
   - Am I becoming more aware of the Holy Spirits guidance in my daily decisions?
   - Am I growing in my influence and eternal impact with unbelievers?
   - Am I growing in my understanding and utilization of my spiritual gift(s)?
   - Am I moving from unbelief to belief in the Gospel as it applies to all areas of life?

2) **For the Leader**

   The leader of a Life Group is successful if he or she is facilitating authentic community and spiritual growth in their group. Specifically, the leader should ask:

   - Am I becoming more like Jesus? In other words, am I applying what I am encouraging others to apply?
   - Am I multiplying myself into other leaders?
   - Are members prioritizing our Life Groups in their schedules?
   - Are members experiencing accountability, a sense of belonging and love?
   - Are members' priorities becoming more aligned with Scripture?
   - Are the members sharing Christ and pointing others to Christ more and more?
   - Are members finding ways to use their spiritual gifts?

3) **Wins for the Life Group**

   What does a win look like? We win when our values are fulfilled:

   - Life Groups **engage** people relationally to know Jesus.
   - Life Groups **equip** people intentionally to grow in God's Word.
   - Life Groups **empower** people missionally to serve God is all areas of life.

Key Things to Expect from the FO Ministry Team (pastors, deacons, and staff)

- To regularly pray for our Life Groups.
- To maintain open lines of communication.
- To provide meaningful training, resources, and supplies on a regular basis.
- To provide a list of contact information and updated rosters for guests & members of your group.
- To supply doctrinally sound material via curriculum, Life Group resources, Men's and Women's Bible studies, and Fellowship Groups.
- To be supported during times of pastoral care to the members and guests of the group, including hospital visitation and counseling.