

What about

LIFE GROUPS



The early church was simply a group of new Christians, who met in homes and meeting places, such as the temple courts. In Romans 16, Paul concludes his letter by greeting specific individuals from such groups.

Just as the early church was organised into small groups, we believe that small group activities should still be a fundamental part of church life today. It is far too easy to think only of Sunday morning as 'church' when in fact 'church' is the people, not meetings or buildings. Sunday morning is definitely an important part of church life when we can all gather together, but meeting one another in smaller groups is the place where discipleship really takes place. It happens through the building of strong relationships in which we both give and receive support, encouragement and prayer.

Jesus is our role model and we want our lives to follow his example of 'Up Out' and 'In'.

Simply put: **Up** is all about our worship and love of God
Out is where we recognise that Jesus went out and sends us out.

(In other words, we are all on mission - wherever we are and whatever we are doing!)

In is all about loving and building up the family of God
- the church family.

These three themes are key features of our Life Groups. Sharing our 'Up - Out - In' means that together we look for opportunities to learn and develop in worship and to build one another up so we can follow Jesus in thought word and action. As a result, we increasingly recognise our individual call to mission in and through ordinary daily life.

Organisation of Life Groups

UP

Small groups should be places where we come to listen to God and to help one another to hear from Him. A Life Group is small number of people who meet regularly to worship, break bread, study the bible, pray and share life together.

It is sometimes likely to be challenging because as relationships grow, individuals begin to feel accountable to, and for each other, but it is also the place where we can begin to see ourselves change and grow in line with God's plan.

It may not always be comfortable, but what a group to be part of!
It is one where we can make mistakes, get support as well as honest feedback and learn in a safe environment.

OUT

The group is about the people and not the meeting, so a Life Group socialises together and with others - not all the time, but as friends would normally do, eating together, meeting for coffee etc... Sharing life together...

This extends beyond 'the group' to those around us; neighbours, family members and the people we meet through activities we engage in outside of church circles. We are 'church' when we meet in large and small groups but also when we are on our own at work, at home, or out and about. We see the value of sharing, supporting and praying for one another through our TTT (This Time Tomorrow) because we are interested in where God has placed each one of us. These are the places where He can use us if we let Him!

IN

If a group is about sharing life together, members will meet, know what each person is doing, when people are unwell or need prayer and share in the happier moments of life too. Whether face to face, via the phone or social media, it is important that we are connected and that we feel part of the church family. We know that Jesus is willing us on to succeed for Him and it is good to know that those in our Life Groups are praying for us too.

Life Groups are places where we expect to find encouragement - not condemnation or pressure. We support and help one another to seek God and grow into whatever and wherever He is leading. Information shared is confidential which doesn't mean that the groups are independent and secret, but rather that the small groups can be places where we feel safe and able to be open with one another.

In Acts 2 v 41 we read about members of the early church selling their goods and giving to those in need. We don't suggest that everyone should sell all their possessions, but rather that Life Groups should be places where members can turn when they are in need. We must of course, be prepared to take and accept responsibility for our own lives but sometimes friends can help. The key point is that the Life Group should be a place we can turn to... where we may receive some practical assistance and where our friends will help point us to God, to listen and hear what He is saying.

So, Life Groups are more than a mid week meeting. They are about building relationships and sharing 'life' together.

LIFE GROUPS



Don't miss out! Joining a Life Group is not about signing up for yet more meetings which will fill your already busy lives! Joining a Life Group is about becoming and staying connected - a real part of the church family.

We encourage you to make those links...

... Yes, it may mean you have to open your life a little more to other people, but that is the Jesus model of how we should live. Living in Life Groups should be a part of living a life for God.

Please contact Tim and Gill Merriman for more information.

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