

WHY I LOVE LIFEGROUPS!

"We believe the small group is the best place for sustained life-change to occur. In a small group, people study God's Word together and are in a safe enough environment to discuss the issues and challenges of life. It's also where they pray, care for one another, and are missed if they don't show up." ~ Andy Stanley

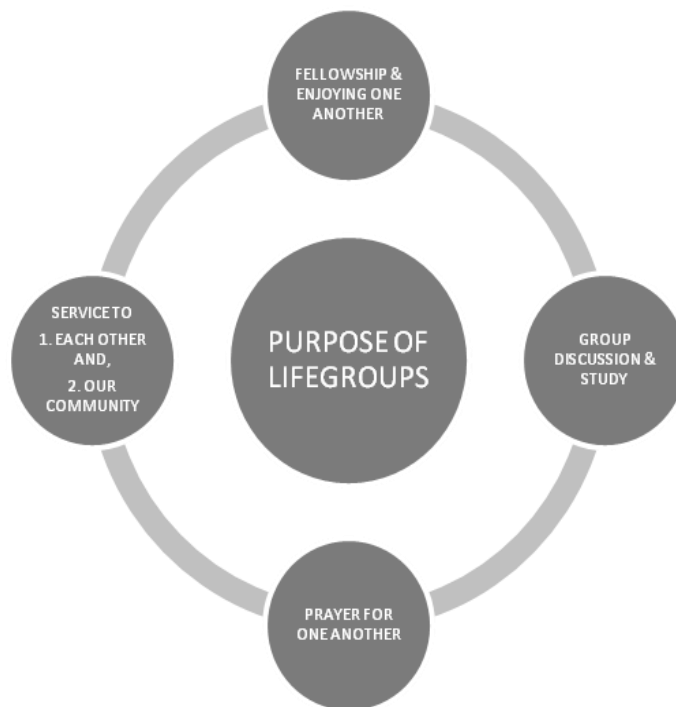
1. **They follow the early church model of meeting in homes.**
2. **They are a tremendous tool for discipleship.** They give people plenty of time to interact and hash out their faith in a safe environment.
3. **They get more people involved using their gifts of hospitality, teaching, exhortation, etc.**
4. **They engage the body of Christ in pastoral care.** Instead of the pastors being the only ones who care for believers, small groups spread the load and utilize gifted lay people.
5. **They build leaders.** Everyone leads somebody!
6. **Done well, they become a tremendous tool of retention.** Universally, people want to be needed and known. Small groups make both possible.
7. **They have unlimited meeting space.** You can't run out of homes, restaurants, apartments, or coffee shops in which to meet.
8. **They have unlimited meeting times.** In today's busy world, once-a-week discipleship opportunities will not work for the majority of your church. Small groups offer unlimited times to meet.
9. **They have changed my life.** Small groups I have been in have been like extended family. God has used them to bless me in untold ways and help formed (and informed) my faith in many positive ways.

Here are the elements that are essential for a great group:

1. **A great group needs a leader.** When everyone is always trying to figure out what we do next, we never do much. A good host makes for a good group and keeps things moving along.
2. **A great group is built around God's word.** Too often, small groups become all about fellowship. While fellowship is always essential, doing life around God's word is what truly makes the difference.
3. **A great group is a safe group.** If people can't discuss openly without fear of judgment, rejection, or gossip, the group is doomed to fail. Be sure to keep all thoughts about issues based on Scripture and not personal opinions or biases.

4. **A great group looks outward.** Serving together is life-changing (and Biblical).
5. **A great group eventually gives birth to new groups.** If a group stays together for too long, they typically grow stale and lose some of their vigor. Healthy things grow! New relationships are formed and growth is exponential as one group has branched into numerous groups. If just one group of 10 multiplies 5 times, the impact has spread from ten people to 50...if those 50 then multiply 5 times; we now have 500 people impacted by just one initial 'planting' group!
6. **A great group takes breaks.** Taking time off give everyone a time to reflect on what they have learned and begin to apply it to their lives in a practical way. Hosts get to work 'on' it and not 'in' in for a few weeks. And we're all busy. The break makes us long to be together and help us to look forward to getting back together. *'Absence makes the heart grow fonder!'*
7. **A great group hurts together.** Often, I learn that something bad has happened to someone. Again and again, people confidently report that when they need a hand, that their Life Group is who they think of first and that they know they would be there for them. God is glorified through such a group!

The FOUR Purposes of LifeGroups: Stay On Track!



“Sheep aren’t attacked when they are in herds; they are attacked individually when they become isolated from the group. Our enemy plays for keeps.” ~ Andy Stanley