

2012



Spring
LIFE GROUPS

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Life Group Leader Training Guide

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SECTION ONE - AUTHORITY

Introduction

The most important key to ministry is wrapped up in the word 'relationship'. Everything we do is birthed out of relationship to God first, and relationship to one another secondly. The Bible is filled with injunctions concerning these relationships. In the Scriptures, God set up both an intrinsic and an extrinsic standard for relationship to Himself. Intrinsic, in that He wants you to love Him by choice. He has an extrinsic standard so that there will be an external boundary to keep us in the parameters of His will and power. Such is the case with spiritual authority. It is our submission to authority that keeps us close to God and the enactment of His power.

The word authority means a power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior. The word submission is a military term to be subordinate or to render obedience. Therefore, to submit to authority means to be under another's thought or command. It is a call to obedience. The Greek word for spiritual authority means a delegated competency, mastery, control, jurisdiction, or power. By submitting to God's delegated authority, you then avail yourself to a supernatural spiritual authority or a delegation of God's competency and power to defeat the devil. That is why submission to authority is so important. In essence, it is a call to Lordship.

The Kingdom is Established on Authority

There is only a kingdom when the King rules and reigns. Therefore, submission to authority is the key to the establishment of God's Kingdom.

It is important to understand that all things were created through God's authority. All the physical laws of the universe are maintained by God's authority. (Hebrews 1:3) All authorities of the earth are instituted by God. (Romans 13:1) Romans 13:2 says "Consequently, he who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves." Verse 5 says, "Therefore, it is necessary to submit to authorities...." Therefore, it is necessary not only to submit to God but also to submit to those whom God establishes as His representatives.

Since God has proposed to manifest His authority to the world through the church, obedience to its leadership is essential. Hebrews 13:17 says, "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 word will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you." This points out two key factors: (1) genuine leadership must care for their people and give account on their behalf, and (2) rebellion to their leadership is of no advantage to you. Why? The lack of advantage is evidenced in two ways: (1) alienation from God's leadership and (2) distancing yourself from God by rejecting His provided entity to establish His Kingdom: His leader.

The Bible is filled with such examples of rebellion and its consequences. To rebel against God's authorities is an act and principle of Satan. Satan's fall was steeped in his rebellion. (Isaiah 14:12-15) We can never establish God's authority on the earth until we ourselves are under authority. The examples in Scripture are prolific (see Matthew 8:8).

The failure of delegated authority can be used by God to test obedience. Such was the case of Noah's family (read Genesis 9:20-27). Noah was God's delegated authority. Ham, Noah's son, did not try to cover his father's fault; instead he went out and told his brothers. Noah's failure became a test for his sons, revealing who would do things God's way and who would rebel.

Other more relevant examples include Nahab and Abihu (read Leviticus 10:1-2), the rebelling of Moses' authority by Miriam and Aaron (read Numbers 12:1-16), and the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Numbers 16).

Perhaps the greatest example of understanding submission to authority comes from David's life. Here is a young man who is anointed king of Israel by the prophet Samuel; because God has rejected the present King, Saul. Saul, in rebellion to God became increasingly insane, and in a moment's notice threatened David's life by throwing a spear at him. The soon-to-become king had to flee for his life.

The events that followed were hardly befitting of a king. He found himself living in caves, sharing rocks with coyotes, having to feign insanity among his enemies to save his life, and ultimately having to live among his oppressors. Yet in all of this, David maintained his submission to authority. Twice when David had opportunities to take Saul's life, he did not (see I Samuel 24:26). He was committed not to touch God's anointed. Even though his authority figure was "off," it didn't change his commitment to him. We learn several things from David's understanding of submission to authority.

1. If David became king by rebellion, he would be as useless as Saul. You must always do things God's way.
2. David was willing to wait for God to work. Our impatience can work against God's ultimate plan of redemption.
3. Submission to authority is not simply being subject to a person, but being subject to the anointing upon that person -- the anointing that came when God ordained that person.

How to Receive Spiritual Authority

Once a person has submitted to authority, they then become a candidate to receive spiritual authority or a supernatural delegated mastery, competency, control or power. In other words, our authority releases God's ability. Luke 9:1, 2 tells us, "when Jesus had called the twelve together, He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure disease, and He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick."

In Luke 10:17, He tells us all demons and the power of the enemy are subject to our authority. In Matthew 28:18-20, the Scripture says all authority on heaven and earth has been given to Jesus. Therefore we must go to establish the kingdom. In other words, all authority has been given to Jesus and as we submit to Him, He grants us the spiritual characteristics to establish the kingdom on His behalf.

Just as Jesus established God's kingdom by obeying perfection (see Matthew 26:36-49, Philippians 2:1-11), and permitting God's authority to rule absolutely, so must the church today obey in order that the authority of God may prosper and the kingdom of God might be manifest. James gives us the key to seeing this power manifested in 4:7.

James 4:7 says, "First, submit to God," (and all of His delegated authorities.) This is a military term that means to be subordinate or to render obedience. Then resist the devil. The word resist is not a passive statement, but a military aggressive term to take an active stand (see Ephesians 6:10f). Then the devil will flee in terror.

Lessons Learned

What does this mean to you as a Life Group Leader? Here are some keys to understanding what submission to authority means for you:

1. God is the source of all delegated authorities. He has especially established His church to establish His kingdom. Therefore, you should submit to the pastoral staff of New Covenant Church.
2. God resists those who resist His authority, because they have resisted Him (see Luke 20:9-18).
3. God promotes those who do things His way.

Exceptions and Guidelines

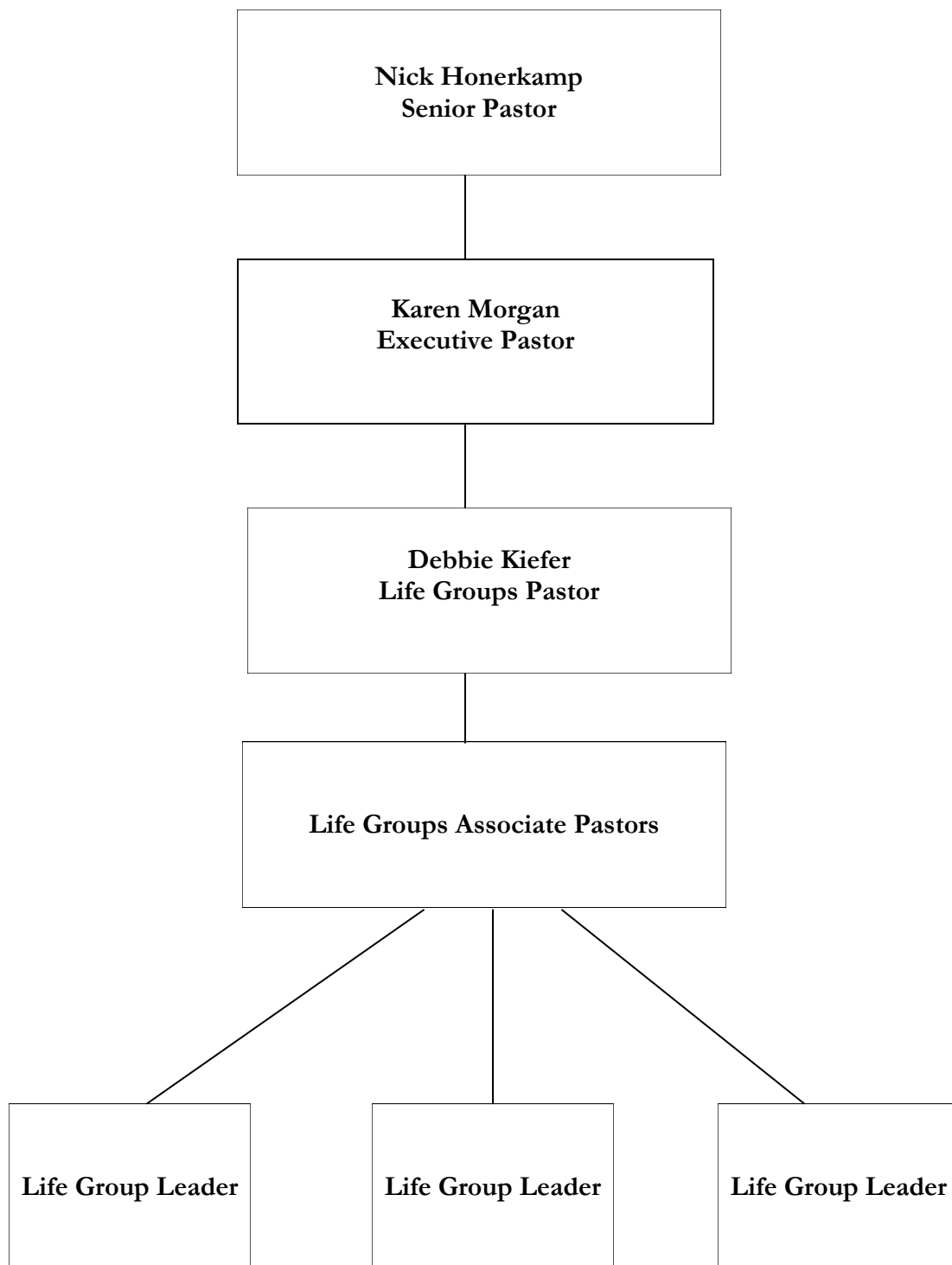
You might be thinking, are there any exceptions to submitting to authority? The answer is, relatively few. There are times when authority figures "get off" from God's standard and ask you to do things that are not keeping with God's Word. Such things would be illegal, unethical, or immoral. Peter gives us the proper guideline, "...we must obey God rather than man."

Even here, God does not respond to rebellion, but towards doing things according to His standard. The Bible says, "If your brother has ought against you...go and be reconciled to your brother." (Matthew 5:23) In doing so, you give your brother a chance to repent or if you are misinformed, to be corrected. Rebellion is never a proper response by God's standards.

Summary

The ultimate example of such coordination is the human body. The brain expresses orders. If the body does not submit, it becomes helpless, powerless, or at least ill coordinated. In the same way, if God's people don't obey its head and its delegated structure, they are uncoordinated at best. But if they allow God to have divine privilege over them (delegated authority), it places them in a position where they can receive spiritual authority (delegated mastery, competency, control and power.)

NEW COVENANT CHURCH LIFE GROUPS MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



SECTION TWO - LEADERSHIP

WHY LIFE GROUPS?

- What does the Bible say about relationships?

Hebrews 10:25

Ephesians 5:21

I John 1:7

- Our culture devalues _____ relationships

“I have strong reason to suspect that Christians sitting dutifully in church congregations, for whom ‘going to church’ means doing a variety of spiritual activities, have been given resources that if released, could powerfully heal broken hearts, overcome the damage done by abusive backgrounds, encourage the depressed to courageously move forward, stimulate the lonely to reach out, revitalize discouraged teens and children with new holy energy, and introduce hope into the lives of countless people.”

Connecting, by Dr. Larry Crabb

- Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- Our Vision: “To raise up people who _____, _____ & _____ God according to the Scriptures.”

- Our Mission: “To promote healthy _____ through _____ which empower people for ministry.”

- The question is—Who will do it?

Ephesians 4:11-13

SEEING YOURSELF AS A LEADER

- Who is a leader?

1. A person who has _____.
2. A person who can _____ others.
3. A person who can _____ others.

- What about the “fear factor”?

1. When you are afraid, you must _____ on God.
2. If we only do what we feel comfortable doing, we don't need _____.

- You are qualified to lead a Life Group if you can:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

- What are the qualifications of a leader?

1. Attend New Covenant Church for a minimum of _____.
2. Tithe to New Covenant Church as your ‘storehouse’.

F _____
A _____
I _____
T _____
H _____

PURPOSE

- “What or who was responsible for you coming to Christ?”

_____ % Special Need

_____ % Walked in

_____ % Pastor

_____ % Visitation

_____ % Sunday School

_____ % Evangelistic crusade

_____ % Church program

_____ % Friend or relative

- The Engle Scale of Conversion Stages

-8 -7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 +6 +7 +8

Pre-Evangelism
Formation

Born Again

Assimilation &
Discipleship

- Primary goal of a Life Group: To move each person in your Life Group _____ step to the right on the Engle Scale.
- In a free-market culture, the keys to people’s hearts:
 1. _____
 2. _____
- The more _____ you use, the more _____ you’ll catch.
- The _____ is not your _____.

SEVEN FEATURES OF NCC LIFE GROUP MINISTRIES

1. “_____ -market” leaders use their _____ with their _____.
2. Built on felt needs & common interests.
3. Meet _____ or _____.
4. Quickly identify an _____.
5. Meet on a _____ calendar.
6. Incorporate _____, _____, _____ &/or _____.
7. Leaders are involved in ongoing leadership _____ & _____.

- Four Do’s of a Life group:

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____

- Four Don’ts of a Life group:

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____

LEADERSHIP: THE CALL, ITS NATURE, ITS FORM

A man is not only what he owes to his parents, friends, and teachers, but a man is also what God has made him by calling him to some particular ministry and by endowing him with appropriate natural and spiritual gifts.

-- John Stott

God created you to lead. The challenge is to discover & develop leadership qualities to their fullest. Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to China, said, "If I wanted to discover if I was a leader, I would look behind me to see who was following!" Leaders are ones whom others follow. I think it would be foolish to assume that this simply happened, that a group of people would automatically just fall in line behind you because they all just "know" you are a leader. We will discover some qualities that are necessary to enhance the ability that God has given you and areas to develop our leadership to its fullest.

The Call

God calls His leaders from the available ones, and from the busy ones. We must first make ourselves available to God and then become busy with what we find and know to do. (Moses and David were shepherding; Daniel and Nehemiah were busy in government; Isaiah was a tutor to kings; Ezekiel was a busy priest; Elisha was plowing; Gideon was threshing grain; the disciples were fishing and working when called by God. Even Paul was busy doing what he thought was right.) Where does leadership begin? By doing heartily all that you know to do. God gives you a longing for service and a direction into that service. (Philippians 2:13) God's calling is accompanied by God's equipping. (II Corinthians 3:5,6)

"Its Nature"

Beyond the "mechanics" of leadership and developing the skills necessary to be an effective leader, it is important to understand the NATURE of a leader. Nature involves image, perception, appearance, how a leader "carries" himself (or herself), and how he responds in certain situations. Scripture paints a quadruplex picture of leadership and of leaders themselves.

The leadership of Israel in the wilderness wanderings was fourfold, consisting of Moses, Aaron, the Levites, and the elders. The encampment of the tribes (Numbers 2) was governed by four main tribes who pictured their banners according to instruction. In the vision that Ezekiel saw by the Chebar River, he described four living creatures having "the appearance of a man." (Ezekiel 1:10) He depicted their faces as of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. The creatures would move forward without turning as they went; yet Ezekiel saw all four faces. Ezekiel seems to describe these creatures again in chapter 10. When John was exiled on the isle of Patmos, he, too, saw a vision of the same living creatures. He describes them as having the "likeness" of an eagle, an ox, a man, and a lion. Three times we see these creatures described in a quadruplex way -- having four distinct facets.

The New Testament points to two other examples of this principle. The first is the Gospels, of which there are four. In each of the four, Christ is depicted in one distinct aspect of His quadruplex nature. Matthew was written to Jews, to present Jesus as their King -- the Messiah. Throughout this book, the authority of Christ is strikingly depicted. Here is Jesus in His lion-like nature. Indeed, Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

Mark's Gospel emphasizes the tireless "servant." Mark seems to take us on a whirlwind tour of the exploits of Christ, not tarrying long at any one point. One gets the idea that Jesus Himself didn't tarry either. Mark would portray the "ox-like" nature of our Lord. Constantly, tirelessly, at all hours of the day or night, people seemed to depend on or demand the strength of this "ox."

Luke reveals the humanity of Jesus. The "Son of Man" is described in detail with His emotions, reactions, feelings, and actions. Luke gives the fullest account of the birth and childhood of Jesus. The stories he chooses to recount are ones that show the Lord's warm interest in people, all people; especially the less fortunate. Luke lets us see "Jesus the Man."

Not until the Gospel of John do we get a high and lofty description of the divinity of Christ. Here He is depicted as the "Son of God." This "eagle" nature is revealed in His life of prayer, ascending into the heavenlies, to gain strength and insight, and then carrying out that task among men. The consistency of His ability to effortlessly enter into the presence of God distinguished Him among men as much as the eagle is distinct and unique among birds.

The second New Testament example of this quadruplex nature expected of God's leaders is found in Ephesians, chapter 4. In describing the order of ministry within the Body of Christ, Paul writes "and He 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..." (Ephesians 4:11,12) This so-called "five-fold ministry" is actually "four-fold" in the original Greek language and nearly all modern translations, the "pastor/teacher" being combined. Another way to state it would be "pastors who are also teachers." (2 Timothy 2:24) Christ's gift to the church upon His ascension into heaven was a four-fold order of leadership for His Church.

As with the Gospels, it is easy to see the correlation between the natures of the apostle, prophet, evangelist and pastor/teacher with the faces that Ezekiel and John saw through their visions. The apostle may very well picture the Lion, establishing, setting in order, speaking boldly and with authority. The prophet has more the nature of the eagle, seeing from a higher perspective, living more in the heavenly realms, ascending to God in prayer. The evangelist is best represented by the tireless and faithful ox. Bent on completing a task, consumed with the burden for the harvest, he trudges on, plowing new ground, opening new fields, "bringing in the sheaves." The pastor/teacher is best exemplified by the man, for he is deeply involved in the daily lives of his congregation, making the Gospel practical, livable, relevant. He feels the emotion of life with his people. He listens to their problems, and shares their joys, and is thus intimately involved in their lives.

The attempt here is not to pull scriptures from here and there, throw it all together, and say, "thus saith the Lord." However, the attempt is to draw comparison between examples of leadership throughout scripture with an emphasis upon the nature of God's leaders and leadership rather than on the individual skills those leaders possessed. The four-fold nature represents the balance of characteristics that God infuses His leaders with. Thus, spiritual leadership becomes much more than the development of certain skills -- it is the process of "the imitation of Christ" and the answer to the call -- "follow me."

The tendency is to limit our leadership by limiting our influence. We do this when we ascribe to the theory that "I am this type person." In relation to the quadruplex nature of God's leaders, we cannot say, "I am only an ox (or a servant)." Serving is to be a part of the life of every Christian. We may gravitate more toward one area than the others, but to limit ourselves and not recognize God's balance of authority, servanthood, relationship and worship, is to severely limit our leadership and our fulfillment from that leadership.

The use of the faces (lion, ox, eagle, and man) or facets is simply a means of identifying those natures God has placed within us. It is not a matter of choosing which we will be or "discovering" which is our gift area; rather, it is learning to flow in a balance of each, knowing what the situation would dictate.

For you as a Life Group Leader, it is not a matter of sizing up your Life Group and deciding whether you should be the lion (authoritative), or the eagle (deeply spiritual), or the ox (servant), or the man (relationship, etc.), for you will be called upon to "be" all these things during the course of a year -- even in the course of a day! You may be organizing a group activity and putting together all the details (ox), and at the same time be praying and studying in preparation for the Life Group Meeting (eagle). The afternoon may find you counseling someone from your Life Group regarding life-style or sin habits (lion); then you may have a couple over for dinner and just have a casual evening of fellowship (man). These are all valuable "tools" for ministry; yet, all are inseparable as natures that God has placed within us as His chosen leaders.

How limited would you be as a Life Group Leader to decide to be just the eagle -- always praying, studying scripture, going to services, listening to tapes, etc. -- and never spending any quality time just talking with the people in your Life Group? How limited to choose to be "really relatable" (man) at the expense of quality time in preparation for you Life Group Meetings, or never taking time to confront someone in love about a wrong relationship. The key is balance. The quadruplex nature of God's leaders should be like the square: equal on all sides.

The example for us is, of course, Christ our Lord. He was characterized as the balance between lion, eagle, ox, and man. He had authority (over evil spirits, nature, etc.), He prayed often (Luke 5:16), He was a tireless servant (Mark 1:29-38 / Matthew 20:28), and He had compassion on man and had the favor of men. Ephesians 5:1 calls us to be "imitators of God...live a life of love, just as Christ Himself loved us...."

We are to develop the same "wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). That is leadership defined. We must be open and available to God's direction and leadership -- only then can we be leaders. A.T. Robertson in his book, *The Glory of the Ministry*, wrote "it must not be forgotten that Jesus chose His disciples from the unschooled artisans and fishermen of Galilee, save Judas the Judean. He passed by the rabbinical, theological seminaries where religious impulse had died and thought had crystallized. He will pass by the schools of today if the teachers and students close their minds to Him."

Paul, the great apostle, never seemed to get over the wonder that God trusted him so much. His ultimate reliance on the promise of the Holy Spirit's assistance, and this sense of wonder at God's trust in Him were the bedrock foundation from which Paul steadily ministered. Beyond his own apprehensions and the derogatory comments of others; beyond beatings, imprisonments and persecution, Paul knew that "we have this ministry through God's mercy, so we don't lose heart..." (2 Corinthians 4:1)

God calls leaders. God equips the leaders He calls. God encourages those He equips. Even the leaders need to be led. "Follow Me."

Its Form

One of the biggest challenges that lie ahead of you as a Life Group Leader is giving proper leadership. Leadership might be best defined in a single word as influence. You can only lead someone to the measure you can influence him. The late President Harry Truman often referred to leaders as people who can get others to do what they want them to do -- and make them like doing it.

A leader, however, is that and much more. In this brief section we want to look at things like motivation, servanthood, meeting needs, preparation, dealing with criticism, discouragement, rumors, and taking charge. We'll deal with these principles in outline brevity. While there are volumes of materials written on leadership, the most magnificent work ever created is the book of Nehemiah, and we will let it serve as our resource. To get started we must understand a leader must be...

A. A Servant

Real leadership never comes from domination, but by relationship and example. To really lead, you must first learn to serve. However, being a servant is not always the easiest thing to do. We are conditioned to think of ourselves first. That is why 97% of us who try out a new pen will write their own name. John Mason says, "God has always called us to serve those whom we lead. Be willing to serve, without trying to reap the benefits. Before looking for a way to get, look for ways to give." He goes on to say, "Being a servant won't make you famous, just rich."

*Nehemiah 1:1,2,11 -- As a cupbearer, Nehemiah was in a position of servant and one of trust.

*Matthew 20:20-28 -- Note the difference between promotion from the secular ranks and God's elevating.

B. A Test of a Competent Leader

1. A leader has clear recognition of needs - Nehemiah 1:4 Nehemiah was not preoccupied; he did not live in a dream world, opposed to reality. He was able to recognize a situation for what it was. Recognizing need is a key for any real leader.
2. A leader is personally concerned - Nehemiah was called to build the wall, but before he built, he wept over the ruins. His response was not who ruined it, who blew it or fouled up, but of compassion over the circumstance. A leader must have compassion, and he gets involved. *Samuel 13:1-13.
3. A leader first goes to God with the problem - Nehemiah 1:5 - What is your first response when a problem comes to your attention? If you're like many people, it is to quickly find someone to blame other than yourself or to run and talk to someone else about it. You must learn to go to God first to find His perception concerning the problem. Remember, it is only He who can really do anything about it.
4. *Nehemiah 1:6,7 Nehemiah was willing to confess his part. In other words, he took responsibility for his failure.
5. A leader must be available to be a part of the answer to his prayer. *Nehemiah 1:11 A leader is marked by his faithfulness; and faithfulness is more than mere passive inclination. He must persevere until the task is at hand.

Not only is it essential to be a servant, but it is also important to...

C. Be Prepared

It is usually too late to get prepared in the midst of the problem. A good leader lives a life of preparedness. He is consistent in his time with God and as a result, he knows how to handle difficult situations. When the tough times come, how do you handle them? i.e. - What happens when people over you seem to be insensitive to God?

- *Proverbs 21:1 -- Hudson Taylor once said, "It is possible to move men by prayer alone."
- *Nehemiah 2:1 -- Waiting is a key element
- *Nehemiah 2:2 -- Look for a sign and respond to opportunity
- *Nehemiah 2:3,4
- *Nehemiah 2:5-9 -- Nehemiah didn't waste his time but he was ready with a plan -- so that when it was an opportune time, he was ready. Faith is not a substitute for careful planning but produces a plan.
- *Nehemiah 2:10 -- If you do something for God, you can expect opposition.

That is why it is important for a leader to be...

D. Motivated

God-inspired motivation must be based on divine revelation. Without such revelation, a leader will waver at every struggle. Therefore, motivation begins in solitude. Look at Nehemiah's life. *Nehemiah 2:12, 16 -- Being extremely busy does not equate itself with spirituality. We need to learn a lesson from Nehemiah. It is not rush and activity that makes a person of God, but calculated, ordered steps by God. What are you like when no one's looking? That will tell you something about your heart.

*Nehemiah 2:13-15 -- The word "inspect" or "examine" means "to look carefully," or probe to see damage. Nehemiah's probing examination was to carefully plan his action according to God's steps.

Once we have God's plan, that becomes our means of motivation. In verse 17, he knows when to move.

There are two kinds of motivation:

- (1) Extrinsic: Motivated by outside stimulus
- (2) Intrinsic: Motivated by internal drive

With motivation comes the inevitable opposition -- Nehemiah 2:20 Nehemiah knew that if he and the people were going to do God's work, he must not listen to anyone actively opposed to what he knew was right. Part of the unwritten job requirement of a leader is the ability to handle criticism. If you are never criticized, chances are you haven't done anything. God's will did not allow walls to be built without opposition -- Nehemiah 4:1-3 Remember critics run with critics -- Psalm 1:1-6.

The common product of criticism that we must learn to overcome is...

E. Discouragement

One of the biggest problems that plagued Nehemiah was discouragement. It is extremely important for us to note the source of Nehemiah's discouragement -- the people -- Nehemiah 4:10-13. Ten times over negativism was heaped on Nehemiah. There are four causes that allow discouragement to set in.

1. A loss of strength. Verses 10, 6 -- Causes the newness to be worn off and a staggering to start
2. A loss of vision. Verse 10 -- "rubble"
3. A loss of confidence. Verse 10 -- "unable"
4. A loss of security. Verse 11

How do we deal with discouragement?

1. Unify your efforts toward your vision. Nehemiah 4:13
Direct your attention toward the Lord. Nehemiah 4:14, Isaiah 26:3, Philippians 4:6,7
2. Determine a rallying point, Nehemiah 4:15-20
*Key - don't fight along
*David and Jonathan
3. Serve others, Nehemiah 4:21,22 -- Serve and assist one another. We need help.
Overcoming discouragement is a key factor in being an effective leader in God's kingdom.

Another key in leadership is learning to deal with...

F. Rumors

As a leader, many people will look to you for answers and will dump rumors into your lap. One key fact about a rumor is the source is rarely quoted. Look at Nehemiah's situation:

*Neh 6:5-7

1. Verse 5 -- No source
2. Verse 6 -- Exaggeration, an inaccuracy
3. Verse 6 -- Rumors lead to personal hurt, misunderstanding
4. Question -- Are there any witnesses? Look at Nehemiah's response: Verse 8 -- Put the blame where it belongs, in love. Verse 9 -- The key for any leader dealing with a rumor is to be sensitive to not be hurt by it. It hurts when you are the product of cutting remarks. You must be able to put the pieces back together again and move on. Your attitude should be: Ephesians 4:29
5. Verse 10 -- It obviously got quite serious.
6. Verse 10,11 -- What remarkable discernment and grasp of the situation. The devil's intent in all of this is to intimidate you.
7. Verse 13 -- The sin would be to yield to the intimidating remark.
8. Verse 15 -- Shows you what happened; the wall was completed.

Look what the final result was: REVIVAL -- Nehemiah 8,9

Recommended Reading

- J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (NavPress)
- Judson Cornwall, *Profiles of a Leader* (Logos)
- Leroy Eims, *Be the Leader You Were Meant to Be* (Victor Books)
- Charles Swindoll, *Hand Me Another Brick*
- Walter A. Heirickson, *Disciples Are Made -- Not Born* (Victor Books)
- J. Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader* (NavPress)

SECTION THREE - CONGREGATIONAL CARE

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR LIFE GROUPS

Definition: A free-market Life Group is three or more persons meeting for a _____ with the objective of meeting a _____.

Of all formats, _____ have the greatest biblical support.

Jesus is our _____ as a life group leader. We should _____ Him.

You serve as human _____ and _____ of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the member's lives.

Some biblical instances of pastoral care:

OT: Exodus 18:5-27. Jethro counsels Moses to delegate duties

NT: Luke 10:25-37. The good Samaritan cares for the injured man

Acts 6:1-7. The deacons are released to do pastoral care

1 Peter 5:2-4. Jesus' admonition to 'Be shepherds of God's flock...'

Life Groups _____ the pastor's ability to care for the flock by creating a _____ atmosphere.

Source: How to Lead Small Groups by Neal F. McBride

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care Mandate:

Ephesians 4:11, 12 tells us "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 _____ God's people for _____, so that the body of Christ may be built up..."

Pastoral care is _____ via the agency of The Holy Spirit by Life Group leaders/members. It could occur in a _____ situation or express itself in _____ acts of encouragement. Ministry is not a _____ but should include each of us.

MODELS OF LIFE GROUP MINISTRY

Traditional Model:

Pastor ministers >> to parishioner going through crisis

Free Market Life Group Model:

Pastor(s) >> equips NCC Leaders who minister to someone or persons in need.

Life Group leaders/members are _____ with God and the five-fold ministry team.

Your capacity to develop _____ will enhance your ability to minister or to receive ministry in _____.

As part of a Life Group leadership team, you may be called upon to minister in any of the following services:

- Counseling
- Home Visits
- Funerals
- Weddings
- Hospital Visits
- Crisis Situations

Note: Men should minister to men and women to women. Couples may minister to a single person. Periodically reviewing the three levels_of ministry will keep you from getting in over your head in any phase of ministry.

You will be an able provider of pastoral care because according to Philippians 4:13, ‘...you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.’”

LIFE COACHING

One function every Life Group Leader will fulfill sometime during the course of a year is counseling in an informal setting or life coaching. The basic counseling that you will be doing will not include giving advice or direction but will be a process of sharing Scripture, prayer and encouragement to those who are facing problems and emotional conflicts. Life coaching helps a person become more truly the person they want to be in Christ, by focusing on Jesus and the Word of God.

Before one is able to even have the opportunity to coach, relationships must be established. Availability, consistency, and a sincere interest must first be communicated. These factors play a major role in developing trust. Trust is the key that will open the doors for life coaching to take place. Once an individual feels safe with another, he or she will begin to open up and share his or her problems and frustrations, thus allowing the "other" to become a life coach. Often, people will get answers to their own problems from the Holy Spirit as a result of honest, open sharing.

As a Life Group Leader, life coaching is on a peer basis and not on a professional level. The greatest part of your role within life coaching is to provide a non-threatening relationship and environment in which your Life Group people can feel free to communicate with you. Within that communication, the effectiveness comes when the person is allowed to begin to resolve their problem with the aid of your listening skills and empathy.

What qualifications does a life coach need?

1. A close relationship with Jesus and the Word of God.
2. A desire to be involved with their people.
3. The ability to accept people where they are.
4. The ability to maintain a level of confidentiality.
5. Effective listening skills:
 - a. Open posture.
 - b. Attentive expressions.
 - c. Good eye contact.
 - d. The ability to empathize; place yourself in the position of the other person.
 - e. Understanding the type and depth of the problem.

There are some basic keys to help anyone to be an effective life coach in this section. We want to take a look at some of these keys.

A. Listening

Listening is the ability to pay attention with empathy. It will alert you to root need in a person's life. One of the most ineffective means of helping a person is to give them the solution before you know what the need is. In fact, Proverbs 18:13 says, "He who answers before listening - that is his folly and his shame." Quick responses as "Are you in the Word enough?" or "Maybe you're not praying like you ought to," are often trite responses to what might be complex problems. Perhaps the reason they are not spending time with God is because they are mad at Him or confused by circumstances.

A good life coach must be prepared not to respond to intellectual content alone, but to feelings that are underlying its expression. A good life coach listens for attitudes, hurts, and emotions that are reflected in the facts. In other words, a person may say they love God (and they do), but they may reflect an attitude of resentment toward Him. That may be an indicator of past hurts (parentally, by an authority, circumstances, etc.) that need to be resolved.

B. Listening by the Spirit

A second form of listening is by revelation or by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Not only do you listen to the person, but also to the Holy Spirit, who is the revealer of all truth. Remember, the Holy Spirit is the best life coach of all. (John 14:16, 16:7)

Here are four keys that will help you to listen to the Holy Spirit:

1. Consultation. This is the process to help you get in touch with the person's needs; to get off your agenda, and on their agenda. Jesus often practiced active listening with a pointed question. Example: Matthew 20:29-34 (note verse 32)

There are two levels of listening. There is the natural level that includes such things as behavior, body language, and vernacular. There is also a supernatural level that listens according to the revelation of God. One is observational; the other is inspirational insight into a person's dilemma.

It is helpful when listening to a person's real need to ask an open-ended question, not questions that can be responded to by a yes or a no. An open-ended question might be "When did you start feeling this way?" or "Why do you think you reacted in this manner?"

Once a person opens up to you, now is your opportunity to practice reflective listening (both natural and supernatural). This is often done by interacting reflectively. Now you're probing for how a person feels and what is the root of the need. Such reflections may include thoughts as: "It sounds to me like you're wondering why God hasn't healed you?" "It sounds like it hurts a lot!" If you're inaccurate, they'll tell you so. If not, they'll begin to open things up. Example: Mark 9:14-29 (note verse 21)

2. Identification. It is your attempt to diagnose the root need. There are two basic cause channels. One, a natural cause, as some physical ailment, or, two, a supernatural need, as emotional psycho-spiritual (hurts that influence the Spirit) or demonic areas. Doctors estimate 80% of our physical ailments are psychosomatic. That's not to say they are imagined, but it originates from psycho-emotional roots.

There are five basic areas of need in people's lives:

- a. social (problem with people, usually this is symptomatic of a deeper need)
- b. sin (unforgiveness, voluntary and involuntary sin)
- c. spiritual
- d. emotional
- e. demonic. Often these needs will manifest physical symptoms of pain, arthritis, headaches, etc. It is important to diagnose the correct area of need.

3. Ministry. Now it's time for ministering to a person's need. Let's look at some possible basic ministry to the outline of needs.

a. **Social problems.** If there is not a deeper root, there are two keys here. The first one is to be a friend to the person in need. As a Life Group Leader, you will have the respect of your peers and your time means something to the person in need. Secondly, they may simply need an orientation to friendships, or New Covenant Church life.

b. **Sin.** The healing process for this is obvious -- repentance. Proverbs 28:13 says, "He who conceals his sin does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy." John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The word, "repent" means to turn around or to change your thinking. It is what opens the kingdom of God to us. See Matthew 3:2.

c. **Spiritual.** This is man's innate need to reorient his life according to the Word. Romans 12:1,2

d. **Emotional.** This is by far the majority of the need you will face. This area is vast and includes: low self-esteem, depression, pressure, suicide, eating disorders, marriage and/or family problems, and sexuality to name a few. Some of these areas may spill over into the other identification areas of ministry, but most are rooted in emotional disturbances.

Perhaps the biggest help in ministering to emotional needs is confession. (James 5:14, Psalm 32:3-5) They are usually the result of unresolved wounds in a person's life. Often a person who confesses sin, hurt, or anger does so without any real emotion, and often that results in only a partial healing. They do so because it's too painful to deal with, and they want to repress it. Don't take a person further or faster than they want to go. We must avoid the charismatic tendency to put a quick band-aid on deep wounds. Many things are a process and it will take time.

e. **Demonic.** This takes real spiritual authority to deal with. Even if you're experienced in this area, we recommend that you contact the Pastoral Staff and appropriate their assistance. However, if someone begins to manifest demons during one of your Life Group meetings, it is important to deal with it. This will be covered further in the training sessions.

C. Other problems you might encounter are:

1. **Depression.** Depression can be caused by a number of different things including family problems, trouble within a relationship, physiological imbalance or frustrations with work. (Someone who is depressed will withdraw from others because of fear or rejection). This brings on loneliness and reinforces feelings of worthlessness. The thought process is often slowed because the mind is busy with the inner anguish of insecurity and paranoid-like feelings. A general feeling of hopelessness and despair can pervade the life of one suffering from depression.

The best thing you can do is to be a friend. Allow talk to be free with little or no interruptions. Concentrate on the emotions and feelings being expressed. If you sense a problem other than what is conveyed, try to direct the discovery of the "real problem."

Reasons for depression are sometimes hard to pinpoint. The most important thing you can give is ENCOURAGEMENT!! Encourage persistence in jobs, pursuits and studies. These give a sense of accomplishment that is important to maintain. Don't allow over-dependency upon you, but be a light in which Jesus can be more clearly seen and realized as the One to be dependent upon. This boundary needs to be set the first time that you meet with a person for counseling. Lastly, encourage focusing on other people. Reaching out to help others is a key to being renewed in our own spirits.

2. **Suicide.** People give suicidal suggestions for one of two reasons:

- a. they really mean it or,
- b. they are crying for help and attention.

Do not take chances. Take seriously all suicidal statements. The basic stages in suicide are ideation, impulse, contemplation, planning, action talked and suicide attempt.

Some facts concerning suicide are:

- a. 80% of completed suicides gave definite warning first.
- b. 12% of those not successful the first time make a successful second attempt.
- c. Many suicides occur within 90 days of apparent improvement in the clinical picture.

There are two basic types of suicidal persons. Those presenting immediate danger are usually reacting to a specific, recent event. This is definitely time-limited and physical presence with the person during agitated states is important. The slow-simmer type is a longer range, more serious risk. It usually includes chronic depression, internal conflicts, and once a decision for suicide is made, a calm apathy. "Putting things in order" is characteristic with these people. What should you do? With any direct statement or strong indirect statement with behavioral confirmation, notify and work closely with the Associate Pastors. If you are in doubt concerning suicidal possibilities, ask simple direct questions as to the degree of depression. If strong depression is indicated, ask, "Have you ever thought about suicide?"

After someone is referred to a qualified counselor, you are still a key person. Be very aware of their moods, activities, actions, and attitudes. Continue working with the Associate Pastor and keep them informed. Once again, you can pray for them and support them even though you're not professionally trained to counsel them.

D. Follow-up Directives

This is advice to help the person stay whole or healed after ministry has taken place. Satan will most assuredly attempt to replay and rehearse the old offense until sufficient guilt brings the person back to the old bondage.

II Corinthians 10:3-5 forms a solid basis to help someone to stay free from hurt and bondage.

Here Paul gives us three steps to help people have continued victory.

1. Casting down imagination. The idea here is to destroy the reasoning or thoughts of the old way of life. A person must die (fall out of correspondence with) the old process of life. This is a reorientation to God's standard of life.

2. Pretense. This has to do with the idea of attitudes that are not in keeping with God's Word. This is the vehicle that the devil wants to bring a person back into bondage or sickness. If he can again rehearse the bitterness, anger, guilt, fear, etc., he can reclaim lost territory. A good life coach alerts their person in healing and channels them to the appropriation of the proper fruit of the Spirit and the knowledge of Scripture.

3. Thought. This is the intellect, Paul says, that needs to be brought into captivity or made a prisoner of war. The old thinking process must give way to the new. (Romans 12:1,2) Real freedom entails making situations line up with a new standard of living according to God's Word. You must replace the problem with the promises and provisions of God.

THE THREE LEVELS OF MINISTRY

Life Group Ministry brings all of us to a call of ministering to others. There are many different kinds of situations and problems that our Life Group leaders will have to face.

Some leaders may deal with extremely intense issues such as sexual abuse and divorce. Others may handle simple things like cooking meals for a new mom or helping a group member move to a new location down the street. This section will help to differentiate between the really serious needs and the normal, more common types of ministry.

The purpose for this structure is two-fold.

- 1) To make sure that those doing the ministry don't get in over their heads.
- 2) In order to funnel the more serious situations to those who have the most training and experience.

A. Importance of One on One Ministry

- Ezekiel 34
- Matthew 25:31-46
- Gospel of John – Woman at the Well: Jesus knew how reaching one would reach many others.

B. What Is Counseling?

- Example: John the Baptist pointed people to Jesus.
- Counseling does not mean having all of the answers.

MINISTRY LEVEL ONE

(Approximately 75% of ministry happens at this level.)

LIFE GROUP LEADERS AND ASSISTANT LEADERS DO THE MINISTRY AT THIS LEVEL.

MAJOR MINISTRY FUNCTIONS:

1. Prayer

- a. Pray regularly for the members of your Life Group. Ask God to cause them to hunger and thirst after righteousness. Also pray for the prosperity of their family and business.
- b. Pray Scriptural prayers. i.e. “Father, in the Name of Jesus, I ask You to meet my brother’s need according to Philippians 4:19 where it is written, “And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”
- c. Have times of group prayer as well as times when you form pairs and triplets to pray for specific needs. i.e. for salvation to come to the neighborhood in which you are meeting.
- d. Be available and prepared to pray for physical healing and spiritual deliverance.
- e. Make books such as “Prayers That Avail Much” available to help motivate and train your Life Group members to pray.
- f. Have times in your Life Group when you take turns reading the Word and then praying the Word.

2. Sharing the Word of God

- a. Study the great prayers of the Bible and learn verses that apply to areas of common need.
i.e. When praying for a believer who is worried, together look up and pray through 1 Peter 5:7, Philippians 4:6-7, John 14:1 and Isaiah 41:10. Encourage them to ponder these truths daily. This will help them build their faith in this area.
- b. Give the person portions of Scripture to read and pray through before the next Life Group meeting. This will help to point them to Jesus, reveal their motivation level and will free you from becoming “the Bible answer man.”
- c. Suggest they read a book dealing with the area they are struggling with.

3. Encouragement

- a. Teach them to pray daily (perhaps using the “Our Father” as an outline.)
- b. Exhort them to read at least one chapter of the Bible daily. i.e. One chapter in Proverbs per day takes them through the entire book each month.
- c. Inspire them to faithfully attend a service and a Life Group.
- d. Motivate them to discover their spiritual gifts from God and begin to use them. There are several surveys available to help you to discover your giftings. Ask an Associate Pastor about availability.

EXAMPLES OF LEVEL ONE MINISTRY

- Pray with a Life Group member who has a financial need.
- Share some verses of Scripture with a couple who are considering a job change.
- Meet with a man who has just received the Lord to disciple him in marriage and family issues.
- Visit the mother of a Life Group member who is shut-in and give her communion.
- Go to the hospital to visit and pray with a Life Group member who is having surgery.

MINISTRY LEVEL TWO

(Situations are usually more serious than Level One)
ASSOCIATE PASTORS DO THE MINISTRY AT THIS LEVEL.

MAJOR MINISTRY FUNCTIONS:

1. Be available to consult with your Life Group Leaders on ministry situations that could potentially become Level two or Level three.
2. Practice Proactive Solution-Focused Ministry. Help people find biblical solutions to the issues they face.
3. Handle individual and family counseling situations that arise in your section.
4. Conduct marriage counseling.
5. Take couples through our five to six session pre-marital program.

EXAMPLES OF LEVEL TWO MINISTRY

- Consult and coach a Life Group Leader who is ministering to a young married couple in his Life Group
- Help the Life Group Leader to disciple the young couple and be prepared to offer counseling if the situation doesn't improve.
- One of your Life Group Leaders calls you and asks you to meet with a man who is at the first stage of considering leaving his wife. Meet him for coffee weekly and discuss the biblical approach to dealing with this issue.
- Meet with a couple who have been married fourteen years and take them through a counseling program to help them communicate more effectively.
- Take a young couple through pre-marital counseling to help them count the cost and prepare for their wedding.

MINISTRY LEVEL THREE

ASSOCIATE PASTORS & PASTORS DO THE MINISTRY AT THIS LEVEL

MAJOR MINISTRY FUNCTIONS:

1. Most of the very serious issues will funnel up through the different levels and come to you. Be spiritually sharp and prepared to handle these with wisdom and integrity.
2. You will get calls on various kinds of ministry needs. Try to consult with and coach the leaders on how to handle it if at all possible. If an issue is clearly Level three, you should get involved immediately.
3. Crisis situations are to be handled at this level. Follow procedures of crisis intervention.
4. Perform weddings for couples (if licensed.)
5. Perform memorial services for people.

EXAMPLES OF LEVEL THREE MINISTRY

- Meet with a couple that are seriously considering divorce.
- One of your Life Group Leaders calls you with the report that a teen in his Life Group has been beat harshly by her father. Follow crisis intervention procedures.
- Meet with a family at the funeral home and plan a memorial service for a loved one.
- A severely depressed woman is threatening to take her own life. Call the police to do a Health and Safety Check on the woman; you and your wife go over immediately to provide support and assess the situation.

CONSULTATION

One of the most important practices in successful Life Group ministry is consultation with other leaders and the Associate Pastor. This is a very effective way to make sure that people are receiving the best possible ministry. As leaders and the Associate Pastor pray together over a situation, the Holy Spirit consistently brings discernment and enlightenment to the issue at hand. Then the leader is able to implement the strategy decided upon with confidence and clarity. Scripture reminds us, “in the multitude of counselors there is wisdom and safety.”

When Life Group Leaders should consult:

- If the situation is clearly a crisis.
- If the group member calls every day with the same problem.
- If you have repeatedly given Scriptures, books, etc. and they have taken no action.
- If you perceive that the group member is not making the issue a high priority.
- If you have done “all you can” to no avail.

If the Life Group Leader sees one or more of these cues, they need to call their Associate Pastor and talk over the situation without giving names. Together they can decide whether or not to form a new strategy or delegate to the next level.

If the Life Group Leader faces a situation that is clearly not on Level One they will consult with their Associate Pastor about the issue. If both agree that it is something that should be handled at Level Two, then they will communicate with the person they are ministering to that they are recommending a referral.

The Life Group Leader will continue to stay involved with the matter through prayer and encouragement. It is important that the group members continue to get love and support through their Life Group. (i.e. If a Life Group Leader is approached by a couple in their Life Group needing serious marriage counseling, they will say something like this: “My Associate Pastor is better trained to help you with your marriage; do I have your permission to talk to them about your situation and put them in touch with you?)

Remember:

Life Group Leaders who become aware of any Level three crisis situation need to report it immediately to their Associate Pastor. Anyone counseling at Level two or higher must make some written record of the meeting times and the contents of the meetings.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFIDENCE GUIDELINES

Empowering Life Groups to Serve More Effectively

New Covenant Church believes in the importance of promoting accountability among believers and confidential relationships in which individuals and couples can explore God's will for their lives. Close Christ-centered relationships enable members to see God work in each other's lives. This increases faith. There is no way to verify the work of God's grace in us if we are independent of one another; nor is there any way to demonstrate godliness to others unless we interact with them.

Accordingly, New Covenant Church encourages members, as part of the discipline of faith, to engage in healthy, supportive relationships with other members through Life Groups. Life Groups are an essential extension of the Church's ministry.

Confidentiality Policy

To ensure the growth and effectiveness of Life Groups, New Covenant Church adopts this confidentiality policy concerning communications between Life Group members and their leaders. Unless indicated otherwise, communications within Life Groups are confidential. Life Group leaders minister to the individuals they lead. They will not divulge the confidences of the group or its members except to confer, as needed, with other church leaders who will respect the confidentiality of such communications and, in rare circumstances, to protect children and others at risk of serious harm. The Church commits itself to preserve and protect the confidentiality of Life Group communications because confidentiality allows individuals to explore their failures, their aspirations, and God's love.

The Church's Confidentiality Policy is subject to its Sexual Misconduct Policy, which requires certain individuals identified as "mandatory reporters" under the law to report knowledge or reasonable suspicion of child abuse. Persons required to report such abuse, neglect, or circumstances include: Physician or surgeon (includes "in-training"); Child health associate; Medical examiner or coroner; Dentist; Osteopath; Optometrist; Chiropractor; Chiropodist or podiatrist; Registered Nurse or Licensed Practical Nurse; Hospital personnel engaged in admission, care, or treatment of patients; Christian science practitioner; Public or private school official or employee; Social worker or worker in a family child care home, foster care home, or child care center; Mental health professional; Dental hygienist; Psychologist; Physical therapist; Veterinarian; Peace officer; Pharmacist; Commercial film and photographic print processor; Firefighter; Victim's Advocate. If you have questions concerning possible child abuse, ask your next level Life Group leader. If he or she is unable to answer the question, the Church will identify someone who can. The Church's Sexual Misconduct Policy also requires individuals to report sexual misconduct and harassment by employees, volunteers and agents of the Church.

Please review the Church Sexual Misconduct Policy for additional details.

Ministry Guidelines

Life Group leaders always have the option of discussing with their Associate Pastor, situations which they feel unqualified to address. While maintaining the confidence of the communication, the Church may decide to seek professional pastoral or other assistance in these circumstances. A few of the instances in which Life Group leaders should always communicate with their Associate Pastor include the following:

1. Child abuse;
2. Credible threats of harm to others and self;
3. Serious mental health problems including severe depression;
4. Illegal substance abuse; and
5. Demonic possession.

Life Group leaders and members should generally avoid communication with members of the opposite sex without another person present. If this type of one-on-one communication is essential, Church staff should be contacted.

POLICY TITLE:
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY

God gifted humans with gender and sexuality. God made humans male and female and saw that this was good. Gn. 1:27; 2:21-23; 5:1-2. The Bible teaches that any good gift from God can become twisted or corrupted and that such disorder causes injury, shame, and humiliation. Gen. 3:8-13 and II Sam. 11:1-12:15.

The Scriptures call New Covenant Church to minister to all of God's people and to show special tenderness and care for those who are vulnerable, including children and seniors, and those experiencing illness, loss, and brokenness.

New Covenant Church's ministries cannot succeed unless the Church has taken care to ensure that they are safe for all.

Prohibition. Sexual misconduct is contrary to Biblical principles. It is beyond the scope of the duties, engagement or employment of all employees and volunteers and is forbidden. Church employees and volunteers must comply with the requirements which follow.

Distribution of Policy. The Church office shall distribute this policy to all present and future Church employees and unpaid staff.

Background Information. All present and prospective Church employees and unpaid staff shall complete a background questionnaire or an employment application containing similar questions. The appropriate Pastor or his or her designee will review every completed background questionnaire or application, and such documents shall remain in the employees' personnel files and in the confidential files of unpaid staff.

Obligation to Report. There are two types of reporting described by this policy: internal and external. Internal reporting provides notice to Church officials of suspected instances of sexual misconduct. External reporting provides notice to local law enforcement of child abuse or neglect.

A. **Internal Reporting of Instances of Sexual Misconduct.** Employees and unpaid staff who reasonably suspect an incident of sexual misconduct or who believe that they are victims of sexual misconduct shall immediately provide a detailed report of the same to the Executive Pastor, the Life Group Pastor, or to the Pastoral Care Pastor for Women. Upon request of the investigation team, the individual making the report shall also provide a detailed written report.

B. **External Reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect.** The Church will report every allegation of sexual abuse of a person who is a minor to local law enforcement. In addition, North Carolina law requires that when a mandated reporter has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or is being subjected to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, he or she must immediately report to local law enforcement, both by phone and in writing.

POLICY TITLE:
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY (Continued)

“Mandated reporters” include clergy, school employees, medical personnel, mental health professionals, and others. Even when employees and unpaid staff are not mandated reporters, they should report to local law enforcement in accordance with their ethical obligations.

Child abuse or neglect includes more than sexual misconduct against a minor as defined by this policy. In addition to sexual misconduct against a minor, it includes physical injury of a child which is not reasonably explained or not likely to be accidental. It includes malnutrition, failure to thrive, and inadequate parental provision of food, clothing, shelter, or medical care. It also includes emotional abuse resulting in impairment of a child’s intellectual or psychological functioning.

Any questions regarding external reporting obligations or procedures may be discussed with the Executive Pastor, the Life Group Pastor, with the Pastoral Care Pastor for Women, or with Church legal counsel. Generally, the Executive Pastor receives reports involving family situations while the police take reports regarding non-family situations. Employees and unpaid staff must provide a written report to the Executive Pastor.

To the extent possible, written reports to local law enforcement should include the following:

- The name, address, age, gender, and race of the child;
- The name and address of the alleged perpetrator, or the person or persons responsible for the suspected abuse or neglect;
- The nature and extent of the abuse, neglect, or injury of the child;
- The family composition;
- The source of the report and the name, address, and occupation of the person making the report;
- Any action taken by the reporting source; and
- Any additional helpful information.

In every circumstance of such a report, the written report shall also be given to the Executive Pastor.

Subject to certain exceptions, North Carolina law states that any person who participates “in good faith in making [such] a report . . . shall be immune from any liability, civil, or criminal, or termination of employment that otherwise might result by reason of such” reporting.

POLICY TITLE:
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY (Continued)

Investigation of Incident Reports. Whenever a facially credible allegation of sexual misconduct is received, the individual receiving the report shall immediately consult with the Church legal counsel and promptly form an investigation team appropriate for the circumstances. The investigation team will undertake its investigation with a high level of concern for the alleged victim, the family of the alleged victim, the person reporting the incident, the alleged perpetrator, and others potentially affected by such circumstances.

A. Upon receipt of a facially credible allegation that the alleged perpetrator may represent a risk to the alleged victim or others, the alleged perpetrator will be relieved of responsibilities to the Church and placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation. Such leave shall be with or without pay and benefits as the Executive Pastor or his designee decides.

B. When accusations of sexual misconduct are made, a member of the investigation team should promptly contact the alleged victim. The investigation team should interview the alleged victim, other witnesses, and the alleged perpetrator as appropriate for the purposes of determining the facts and offering assistance.

C. The Church shall designate an individual, who may be a member of the investigation team, to serve as a communications liaison to the alleged victim.

Media Contact. Any media contact regarding an incident of sexual misconduct must be directed to the Senior Pastor or his or her designee.

Action Where Guilt Determined. Any Church employee or Church volunteer who admits to, does not contest, or is found guilty of an incident of sexual misconduct shall be immediately disciplined or terminated from employment or any position of responsibility with the Church.

Whenever an employee or unpaid staff member is confirmed to have sexually abused a minor, the Church will remove the individual from his or her position, appointment, or assignment with the Church. Anyone who admits to, does not contest, or is found guilty of an incident of youth peer sexual harassment shall be immediately disciplined and reported to his or her parents.

1 "Sexual Misconduct" is any sexual conduct which arises from the work of the Church; involves a Church employee or Church volunteer and another person; and constitutes either unlawful activity; sexual harassment; or activity contrary to the moral instructions or doctrines of the Bible as interpreted by the elder board of the Church. Sexual misconduct also includes youth peer sexual harassment.

POLICY TITLE:
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY (Continued)

" Sexual harassment" is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a condition of an individual's employment;
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or
- c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

" Youth peer sexual harassment" is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a minor or between minors which has the purpose or effect of intimidating, embarrassing, or humiliating the other person.

2 "Unpaid Staff" means volunteers serving as Leaders and Life Group Leaders.

LEADER RESPONSES TO CRISIS

Meal Teams - Only Pastors are authorized to activate the meal teams.
Jennifer Espinosa at 550-4808

Benevolence/Alms

Contact Church office with requests at 627-9000.

Individual Financial Counseling

Contact Church office to arrange appointment with financial counselors

Financial Life Groups

Crown Financial Class

Contact Mike Jones 452-2157

Dave Ramsey Financial Peace

Janis & Reid Pressley 648-7349

Marriage & Family

Professional Counseling—The Life Center

Dr. Jim & Susan Marks 627-5433

Healing Ministry

Transforming U - Janice Ford 627-9000

General Pastoral Counseling

NCC Pastoral Staff-call church office at 627-9000.

Dr. Jim Marks—appointments available at the church from 1-4 pm on Fridays. Call church office to make an appointment.

Crisis/P.O.C.— PASTOR ON CALL

For hospitalizations, deaths, sickness, extreme prayer requests, call the POC phone at 734-3788. Please be sure to pray for these situations yourself and follow up with the person to check status of situation.

Legal Authorities

Anytime you are aware first hand of any physical, sexual, or mental abuse of a child or minor, you must contact the Haywood County Sheriff's Department @ 452-6666 ASAP NO EXCEPTIONS! If you are aware of any neglect of a child or minor please contact the Department of Social Services @ 452-6620 ASAP NO EXCEPTIONS!

ANSWER KEY

WHY LIFE GROUPS?

- What does the Bible say about relationships?

Hebrews 10:25

Ephesians 5:21

I John 1:7

- Our culture devalues PERSONAL relationships

“I have strong reason to suspect that Christians sitting dutifully in church congregations, for whom ‘going to church’ means doing a variety of spiritual activities, have been given resources that if released, could powerfully heal broken hearts, overcome the damage done by abusive backgrounds, encourage the depressed to courageously move forward, stimulate the lonely to reach out, revitalize discouraged teens and children with new holy energy, and introduce hope into the lives of countless people.”

Connecting, by Dr.

Larry Crabb

- Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- Our Vision: “To raise up people who **KNOW, WORSHIP & OBEY** God according to the Scriptures.”

- Our Mission: “To promote healthy **RELATIONSHIPS** through **LIFE GROUPS** which empower people for ministry.”

- The question is—Who will do it?

Ephesians 4:11-13

SEEING YOURSELF AS A LEADER

- Who is a leader?
 1. A person who has **FOLLOWERS**.
 2. A person who can **INFLUENCE** others.
 3. A person who can **SERVE** others.
 - What about the “fear factor”?
 1. When you are afraid, you must **RELY** on God.
 2. If we only do what we feel comfortable doing, we don’t need **GOD**.
 - You are qualified to lead a Life Group if you can:
 1. **ENCOURAGE OTHERS**
 2. **SHARE SCRIPTURE WITH OTHERS**
 3. **PRAY WITH OTHERS**
 - What are the qualifications of a leader?
 1. Attend New Covenant Church for minimum of **6 MONTHS**.
 2. Tithe to New Covenant Church as your ‘storehouse’.
- F **FAITHFUL**
A **AVAILABLE**
I **INFLUENTIAL**
T **TEACHABLE**
H **HONEST**

PURPOSE

- “What or who was responsible for you coming to Christ?”
 - 1%** Special Need
 - 2-3%** Walked in
 - 5-6%** Pastor
 - 1-2%** Visitation
 - 4-5%** Sunday School
 - .5%** Evangelistic crusade
 - 2-3%** Church program
 - 75-90%** Friend or relative

- The Engle Scale of Conversion Stages

-8 -7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 +6 +7 +8

Pre-Evangelism
Formation

Born Again

Assimilation &
Discipleship

- Primary goal of a Life Group: To move each person in your Life Group **ONE** step to the right on the Engle Scale.
- In a free-market culture, the keys to people’s hearts:
 1. **FELT NEEDS** 2. **COMMON INTERESTS**
- The more **HOOKS** you use, the more **FISH** you’ll catch.
- The **HOOK** is not your **PURPOSE**.

SEVEN FEATURES OF A NCC LIFE GROUP

1. “**FREE**-market” leaders use their **GIFTS** with their **PASSION**.
 2. Built on felt needs & common interests.
 3. Meet **WEEKLY** or **TWICE MONTHLY**.
 4. Quickly identify an **ASSISTANT LEADER**.
 5. Meet on a **SEMESTER** calendar.
 6. Incorporate **BIBLE STUDY**, **PRAYER**, **WORSHIP** &/or **TESTIMONIES**.
 7. Leaders are involved in ongoing leadership **TRAINING** & **RELATIONSHIP**.
- Four Do’s of a Life group:
 - 1 **BIBLE STUDY** 2 **PRAYER** 3 **WORSHIP** 4 **TESTIMONIES**

- Four Don’ts of a Life group:
 - 1 **BUSINESS** 2 **OFFERINGS** 3 **UNAPPROVED SPEAKERS** 4 **MAKE CONTACTS**
ON BEHALF OF NCC

Biblical Basis for Life Groups

Definition: A free-market Life Group is three or more persons meeting for a **SET PERIOD OF TIME** with the objective of meeting a **FELT NEED**.

Of all formats, **LIFE GROUPS** have the greatest biblical support.

Jesus is our **MODEL** as a Life Group leader. We should **IMITATE** Him.

You serve as human **CO-LABORER** and **INSTRUMENT** of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the member's lives.

Some biblical instances of pastoral care:

OT: Exodus 18:5-27. Jethro counsels Moses to delegate duties

NT: Luke 10:25-37. The good Samaritan cares for the injured man

Acts 6:1-7. The deacons are released to do pastoral care

1 Peter 5:2-4. Jesus' admonition to 'Be shepherds of God's flock...'

Life Groups **ENHANCE** the pastor's ability to care for the flock by creating a **TEAMWORK** atmosphere.

Source: How to Lead Small Groups by Neal F. McBride

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care Mandate:

Ephesians 4:11, 12 tells us "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..."

Pastoral care is **TAKING CARE OF PEOPLE** via the agency of The Holy Spirit by Life Group leaders/members. It could occur in a **CRISIS** situation or express itself in **DAY-TO-DAY** acts of encouragement.

Ministry is not a **SPECTATOR SPORT** but should include each of us.

Models of Life Group Ministry

Traditional Model:

Pastor ministers >> to parishioner going through crisis

Free Market Life Group Model:

Pastor(s) >> equips NCC Leaders who minister to someone or persons in need.

Life Group leaders/members are **CO-LABORERS** with God and the five-fold ministry team.

Your capacity to develop **HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS** will enhance your ability to minister or to receive ministry in **TIMES OF NEED**.