

**Gateway City Church**

# **Life Group Training Manual**

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2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

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All scripture referenced is from the New King James Bible unless otherwise noted.

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# Introduction

Thank you! And congratulations for stepping into one of the most exciting ministry opportunities you'll ever find - caring for and helping others grow to know Jesus Christ.

It's our prayer that as you journey through this training manual you too will catch the heart of our Lord Jesus to love and serve people (Mathew 20:28). And opening a Life Group is one of the greatest examples of service in the Bible. Jesus said where two or more are gathered - "I'm there" (Mathew 18:20). You too can gather two or more into a Life Group community and know that Jesus is in your midst to do what only He can do.

In this training manual, we will introduce you to:

## **1. What it means to be a healthy disciple**

Here at Gateway, we have four goals and outcomes defining what we desire a healthy disciple to become. These four discipleship outcomes form the backbone of all we do in ministry for the Lord.

## **2. How to grow healthy small groups**

Just as there are signs and indicators of a healthy physical body, so there are likewise indicators of a healthy small group.

We will introduce you to what a healthy small group is and does and how you can lead your group to become a growing, thriving, small group community.

Thank you for joining our team and helping to inspire transformed lives!



# Session One

## Catch the Vision

### Introduction

Our prayer for you, as we begin this journey together, is to catch the vision of Jesus Christ and His passion to grow healthy followers of Him.

Our primary goal is to make disciples and create a discipleship culture in all our communities and campuses. It just happens that Life groups are the optimal place for making disciples.

### A. The culture, purpose, and process of our Life Groups

#### 1. Our Culture – Gateway is:

**“A church for all people, inspiring transformed lives, moving forward together”**

- Our small group ministry seeks to live out our culture through inspiring the transformation of our group members and those they influence.

#### 2. Our Purpose

What is it we are trying to accomplish in our church and small groups? Our purpose defines the what and the why. The following are what we refer to as our discipleship goals and outcomes.

- To love and honor God

- To live in wholeness and freedom
- To embrace our God-designed purpose
- To influence our culture and community

The above four purposes define the long-term goals of every group member as they grow into full maturity as disciples.

**Our Life Groups are the optimal place to learn, grow and live out a healthy, balanced life as a follower of Jesus Christ.**

### 3. Our Process

We call our ministry strategy “Gather, Grow, Go.”

#### The “GATHER” Factor

The church is a spiritual family that comes together in celebration services, communities and small groups.



“For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.”

**Matthew 18:20 (NLT)**

“Let us consider how to inspire each other to greater love and to righteous deeds, not forgetting to GATHER as a community, as some have forgotten, but encouraging each other, especially as the day of His return approaches.” **Hebrews 10:24-25**



There are some things that only happen when we gather together.

- Our church family gathers on Sundays to celebrate, honor and worship the Lord Jesus.
- We also gather in our Life Groups so we can experience a community of love and grow into fruitful disciples of Christ who then, in turn, go into the world to share God's love.

### **The "GROW" Factor**

Every believer is called to grow spiritually.

"But GROW in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

**2 Peter 3:18 (ESV)**

"All of us are to be as one in the faith and in knowing the Son of God. We are to be FULL-GROWN CHRISTIANS standing as high and complete as Christ is Himself."

**Ephesians 4:13 (NLV)**

Our small groups provide the best environment to grow fully mature disciples of Christ. It is through the relationships developed in a small group community that one becomes healthy, whole, and balanced.

### **The "GO" Factor**

We reach out to our city and our world through small groups, services, and outreach expressions called GO Teams.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

**Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)**

- It has been proven throughout history and even more so recently, that outreach through a small group is the most effective means of reaching and containing the harvest of lives for Christ.

By understanding our purpose and mission, and becoming involved with GATHER GROW GO on a heart level, you are positioning yourself to be truly used by God. It's like joining a team. Together we do what is not possible only by ourselves.

## **B. Understand how Life Groups fit into our culture, purpose, and strategy**

It is important to fully grasp the value and purpose of our small group ministry as it relates to our overall fulfilling of God's purpose for His church.

So, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church[a] daily those who were being saved.

**Acts 2:46-47**

## 1. The church met in the temple – our Sunday services

The early church met in the temple area for large group gatherings, celebration, worship, and ministry.

## 2. The church met in home – our Life Groups

The early church met mostly in homes in smaller groups as they shared life together, lived in a community, met personal needs and reached out to the lost around them.

- Church historians estimate the church at Jerusalem had around 50,000 members. Scholars estimate the church at Ephesus had around 60,000 members.
- The first known official church building did not exist until the early fourth century.
- The small groups were the reason why the early church experienced such power, growth and explosive invasion of the gospel through the then known world.
- Small groups are the key to a healthy, thriving and growing community of believers as we meet “in the temple” and from “house to house.”

## C. The scriptural priorities for our Life Groups

### 1. To love and worship the Lord

Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. **Matthew 22:37-38**

## **2. To love one another**

And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. **Matthew 22:39**

## **3. To reach the lost and to make disciples**

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Matthew 28:19**

## **4. To live our Christian life in a small group community**

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized, . . . And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. **Acts 2:41ff**

In summary, early church life consisted of the following 12 fundamental life principles

- Water baptism
- Teaching
- Fellowship

- Communion
- Prayer
- Supernatural power
- Community – in the temple and house to house
- Giving and sharing
- Unity
- Worship
- Favor within the community
- Explosive growth

## D. Our Life Group Structure

The following is a sample organizational layout of Gateway’s Life Group leadership structure. The chart is scaled depending on the campus size.



**Campus Pastor** – oversees all leadership and Life Groups at a campus

**Community Pastors** – oversee ministry areas such as men, women, marrieds.

**Community Leader** – serves and leads three to 10 Life Groups

**Life Group Leaders** – oversee their group

## **What did you learn?**

- 1. Summarize in your own words the purpose of Gateway's Life Group Ministry.**

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- 2. Briefly explain Gateway's Gather Grow and Go Strategy.**

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# Session Two

## Growing Healthy Disciples

Jesus Christ gave one commission – “Go make disciples”. He had no plan B, or backup plan. It is essential that all Life Group leaders and members understand the why and how of making disciples. It is upon this one commission that our Life Groups are based and look to for future growth and success.

### A. How Jesus made disciples

Jesus called out to them and said, “Come and follow me, and I will transform you into men who catch people for God.”

**Matthew 4:19 TPT**

Jesus Christ was very specific and intentional when He called people to follow Him as a disciple. His call included three areas which give us insight as to His means of making disciples.

#### 1. The invitation – “Come and follow me”

A disciple is simply a learner, a pupil, or someone who is mentored, trained and follows a teacher. Jesus’ invitation was for others to simply walk along with Him and learn from Him.

#### 2. The transformation – “I will transform you”

Jesus gave specific instructions as to what was going to happen when a person follows Him. Jesus was calling people to follow Him so that He could transform them. His intention was to change, mold, restore and make new those who followed.

### **3. The assignment and goal – “to catch others for God”**

The invitation and transformation was to lead toward a specific purpose and that was to each disciple to help “catch” others for God. The goal of discipleship was to make other disciples.

## **B. What is a disciple of Christ?**

**We need to ask the following questions:**

1. What is a disciple?
2. What should a disciple know, become, and do?
3. What will a disciple look like when fully grown?

There are various way to define and describe discipleship. At Gateway we have carefully considered the New Testament pattern and work of discipleship and have defined discipleship in four basic terms or outcomes. We use the term outcomes to help us describe the end result of what a fully mature believer in Christ will know, become, and do.

### **Gateway’s Four Primary Discipleship Outcomes**

A disciple of Christ is someone who, as they grow, will exhibit the following characteristics and lifestyle.

#### **1. Love and Honor God**

Jesus said we are to:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind”. **Matthew 22:37**

When you love God, you will worship Him, obey His word, pray, honor and seek to please Him in all you do. Further, when you love God, you will love the people of God and those who don't yet know the Lord.

## **2. Live in wholeness & freedom**

Jesus said, "Who the Son sets free is free – indeed."

**John 8:36**

Jesus Christ came to set us free from the dominion of darkness, oppression, past brokenness, unforgiveness, bitterness, and the bondage of sin. One of the characteristics of a disciple is living in the freedom that Jesus purchased for us when He died on a cross.

## **3. Discover their purpose in God**

We are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

**Ephesians 2:10**

Every believer in Christ Jesus needs to know that He has a plan and purpose for their lives. Every believer is here on assignment from Heaven. One of the greatest revelations besides being born again is to discover and begin taking step in their destiny in God. The SHAPE class in Grow Tracks will help a new believer to understand and walk in their purpose.

## **4. Making a difference**

Your lives are like salt among the people. Your lives light up the world. So don't hide your light! Let it shine brightly before others.

**Matthew 5:13, 14**

As believers in Christ, we are called to make a difference in the world around us. And we make a difference by showing

God's love and care to the wounded, broken, and lost by offering prayer and the hope of salvation to those around us. We make a difference by multiplying disciples. A disciple should grow and eventually help disciple others.

## **C. How to grow healthy disciples**

### **1. Love, care for, and connect with new followers of Christ**

- Make sure you follow up right away with anyone who is new to Christ or to your group.
- Make sure the new believer / member knows you deeply love and care for them.
- Offer to pray for, help, and invite them to your Life Group.
- Make sure to stay consistent in following up and have others in your group connect and show the same love and care.

### **2. Help each person learn the essentials of following Christ.**

- Salvation, forgiveness, and the gift of eternal life.
- Live a life of prayer and growing through God's word.
- Fellowship in a local church and a Life Group.
- Get involved in outreach and sharing their faith.

A simple teaching outline can be found in the Gateway New Testament on the above topics.

### **3. Point new believers to their next step**

One of the simplest ways of making a disciple is to help them take their next in following Christ. Using the four discipleship outcomes list above, here are some suggested next steps.

- **Next steps toward Loving God**

Our starting point for all new members at Gateway is Grow Tracks. Make sure the new person is invited to the next Sunday class and better yet, go with them to attend.

Also, offer to walk through the Gateway New Testament or other new believer booklet or mobile app. Teach them how to do devotions, journaling, memorize scripture, and pray.

- **Next steps toward Living in Freedom**

If the new believer or disciple is struggling in certain areas of their life encourage them to attend the Gateway Healing Network or a Freedom Group.

- **Next steps in Discovering Their Purpose**

Encourage everyone to attend Grow Tracks and take the SHAPE class. This is the starting point to discovering one's purpose in God. After the class, review the SHAPE of the new person with them and discuss how God can use their life.

- **Next steps in Make a difference**

Invite the new believer / member to get involved with the Life Group outreach. Also, encourage them to share their new life in Christ with others.

## **In summary**

Each person is unique, has different needs and grows at their own pace as the Holy Spirit works in their life. You as a leader simply pray for them, stay connected in love, and point them to their next step.

- ✓ Develop a daily Bible reading plan.
- ✓ Do simple prayer devotions
- ✓ Attend Sunday service and Life Group
- ✓ Get water baptized
- ✓ Attend Grow Tracks
- ✓ Attend the Gateway Healing Network
- ✓ Get involved in outreach opportunities

## **Additional Discipleship Tools**

Here is short list of other tools available you might find beneficial in helping others grow in Christ.

1. Gateway New Testament
2. YouVersion Bible app & devotions
3. Grow Track notes
4. SHAPE review – (used in Grow Tracks)
5. One2One mobile phone app

## **What did you learn?**

- 1. Summarize in your own words the original purpose of Jesus' invitation to follow Him.**

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- 2. Why is it important for a Life Group Leader and their members to know these four pillars of discipleship?**

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# Session 3

## Growing Healthy Life Groups

### Introduction

This section discusses the fundamentals of growing healthy groups in order to raise up healthy disciples.

The following are principles we encourage all leaders to apply. From the start it is important to know:

#### **1. Implement the principles – not the absolutes**

Every group is unique and will have its personality. That said, we encourage you to learn the principles and apply them over time and in the spirit of grace.

#### **2. It takes time to grow disciples**

It takes lots of time and patience as the Holy Spirit works to draw your group into a relationship with the Lord Jesus and become conformed to His image. So, relax . . . and have fun in the journey in helping others grow as followers of Christ.

#### **A. Know your vision and mission**

Your group is a reflection of Gateway and as such should reflect the vision and mission of our local church.

The very best way to help people get into alignment with our vision is by repeated exposure.

Everyone needs to be moving in the same direction for healthy and growing small groups.

### **1. Do you know the vision and mission of Gateway?**

(review Section One of this manual for a refresher on our culture and purpose).

### **2. Do your group members know the vision and mission?**

What are some ways you can continually keep Gateway vision and purpose in front of your group members?

- Share with the group that the goal is to grow healthy followers of Christ.
- Share with the group the four outcomes of what a healthy follower of Christ should grow into.
  - ✓ Love the Lord
  - ✓ Live in freedom
  - ✓ Discover your purpose
  - ✓ Make a difference.
- Over the coming months repeatedly share the goals and encourage them to know them for themselves.

## **B. Know how to fill and grow your group**

At Gateway we use what is known at the FRANC list for the purpose of reaching out to those who don't know Christ and those we'd like to invite to our Life Groups. FRANC is an acronym spelling out potential relationships with Friends, Relatives, Acquaintances, Neighbors and Co-Workers.

Write the names of the people you know from your own FRANC list and who you would like to invite to your group.

### Identifying your FRANC List

**1. Friends**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Neighbors**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Relatives**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Co-Workers**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Acquaintances**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Others?**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Who else can you invite to your group?**

Think outside the box of limiting groups to church people. We are here to reach the community and small groups are the perfect environment in which to do so.

**2. Choose the day and location where you will meet.**

Is your home the only place to have a group? No, you can have your group at work, a coffee shop, restaurant, community center, someone else's home or your favorite hangout - indoors or outdoors.

### **3. Potential script for inviting someone to your Small Group**

“Hi there, I’m having a small group at \_\_\_\_\_ and would love to have you attend. Feel free to bring someone if you like. You’ll meet some great people and have some fun!” (And describe briefly what your group will be about the focus of the study).

As a host it is your responsibility and privilege to invite people to your group. Sunday church services is the perfect time to invite people to your group. There is nothing like a personal invitation! Remember to invite all in your sphere of influence; even if they don’t attend church.

## **C. Know how to plan and launch your first meeting**

### **1. Pray about your first meeting.**

Ask the Lord for His grace to help launch a healthy, vibrant and yes, fun group where you can help others connect, make friends and sense God’s presence in their lives.

### **2. Plan the first meeting**

- Invite your guests – make a list of those you want to invite. Reach out to them and encourage them to come.
- Prepare yourself: spiritually, mentally, and physically
- Prepare the meeting place (if at a coffee shop, get there early to reserve seats)
- Prepare snack time afterward (*optional*)

### **3. Plan the follow-up**

- After the meeting, gather and make a list of the attendees names, phone numbers and emails.
- Call them and ask them if they need prayer.
- Remind them to come to the next meeting.
- Build relationships between the meetings.

## **D. Use the Sermon Based study guides for discussions**

We have discovered one of the most effective and simplest methods of Bible study in a Life Group is what we call our Sermon Based Ministry Action Plan or (MAP). While there are many other books, DVDs and systems of small group studies we have found this approach is the easiest to use and here's why.

### **1. Based on Sunday sermons**

The Bible says the early disciples, "continued in the apostle teaching" (Acts 2:42).

The Sermon Based MAP uses notes from the previous Sunday teaching and encourages discussion and application in a Life Group during the week. This gives members time to ask questions, relearn, and apply what they heard on Sunday.

### **2. It's easy for a person to launch and host a new group**

Using the Sunday lessons makes it easy for new leaders to start a group. Just review the MAP, gather a few friends and review the lessons. There's no need for in depth Bible study or searching for new material.

### **3. Minimal study time and preparation**

Many of our leaders work long hours and don't have time to come up with a new lesson for every time their group meets. All you need to do as a leader is download the Ministry Action Plan, review the questions and host the meeting.

### **4. A person can join and start at any time**

Many times, a person will come to church on Sunday morning in the middle of a teaching series and then join a group during the week. They will then hear and apply what they heard on Sunday morning and not miss a step in the rhythm of the groups.

### **5. Makes sure our membership is aligned and going in the same direction spiritually**

Much time, prayer and preparation is given to each Sunday sermon or teaching with the motive of seeing God's people equipped, trained, and encouraged on a weekly basis. Our Sermon Based studies continue this incentive throughout the week as we align with what the Lord is wanting to do overall throughout our fellowship.

## **E. How to RAP with the MAP**

We have found the easiest and yet most profound way of hosting a Life Group is to simply RAP during the fellowship using the Ministry Action Plan. RAP stands for Review, Apply and Pray.

Here is a breakdown of how this approach works.

### **1. REVIEW**

Greet your guests and introduce each other. Allow them to fellowship, relax, get caught up and get to know each other.

Some groups have food and refreshments available - this is optional.

- Open the group with prayer followed by the “warm up” questions from the MAP.
- Review the MAP asking the questions highlighted in the TALK ABOUT IT sections.
- Also ask open ended questions to the group such as
  - ✓ What did the Holy Spirit say to you while the pastor was talking?
  - ✓ What did you hear that impacted you the most from this lesson?
  - ✓ What did God show you in the Bible from the sermon?

Remember to try to stay on topic. Many times some group members will bring up topics that get you off the discussion points and what the Lord desires to do in and through the Ministry Action Plan.

## **2. APPLY**

The goal of each meeting is to not simply gain head knowledge but rather learn how to apply the Bible truths discussed. Ask question on how the group members are going to apply the lessons such as:

- What are you going to do with what God has shown you?
- What needs to change in your life today as a result of what you’ve heard?
- What steps will you take this coming week to apply what you’ve heard?

**Tips:**

Allow group members to openly share their struggles, victories, and needs in order to understand how to apply the lesson.

Also, be ready with a few suggestions on how to apply the lesson in a personal way.

**3. PRAY**

- Read through the prayer section of the study and encourage everyone to pray for specific needs in the group.
- Make sure to pray through on the topic of the lesson. It's easy to pray for many things and needs around the world. But stay focused on what the goal of the lesson is about.
- Take note of any urgent prayer needs and follow up with group members during the week to see how they are doing with their specific needs.
- Have each group member create their own FRANC list and pray for those on this list at the end of each meeting.

**Closing the meeting:**

- Close on time, allow people to leave earlier, if necessary.
- Make sure to write down the names, phone numbers and emails of the attendees.
- Encourage people to invite one or two people to the next meeting.
- Remind people of the date of the next meeting.



## **What did you learn?**

- 1. Why is it vital that the Life Group Leader and the group members understand the vision and mission of the group?**

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- 2. Briefly explain the FRANCO list and how you can use this tool in your group.**

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**3. Summarize in your own words how you use the RAP Small Group process in your group.**

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**4. Explain some of the reasons Gateway uses the Sermon Based material for our Life Group studies**

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# Session 4

## Life Group Essentials

It takes time, commitment, and lots of love for people to grow healthy disciples in Life Groups. No two groups are the same because the people are not the same. Each one is unique in its needs, maturity, and the people it reaches. But there are certain foundational principles that stay consistent throughout time, regardless of age, location, and stage of growth.

Use the following essentials as a reference list as the Lord grows your group off into the future. You won't be able to apply all the principles at once. But rather, prayerfully review these principles and seek the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to help you apply them at the right place and time in your life and the life of your group.

### A. Life Group discipleship principles

#### 1. The goal of every group is to produce disciples of Christ

Remember, a disciple is one who loves God, live in freedom, discovers their purpose and makes a difference. (**Matthew 22:37-39, Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:42ff**)

#### 2. The most efficient means for producing disciples is a healthy small group.

You cannot grow as a disciple by yourself. It's in a small group that a person learns to trust and practice the "one another" verses in the Bible. For example:

- Love on another – John 13:34

- Honor one another – Romans 12:10
- Serve one another – Galatians 5:13

(Appendix D lists the 59 one-another verse found in the NT)

**3. Every group should commit to making disciples who make disciples – 2 Timothy 2:2**

Remember what the long-term goal of each group is; growing healthy followers of Christ. And one of the signs of a healthy follower is to reproduce their lives in others by sharing Christ.

**4. You need intentional strategies for connecting people to group life.**

Don't allow your group to go too long without adding new visitors and guests. All too often groups become ingrown and lose focus of the call to reach out to others. What are ways you can continually invite new people to your group?

**5. The best way to raise up future hosts is through shared ownership. – everyone has gifts**

Always be looking for ways to have a team approach to your group. Get others involved in such areas as;

- Taking attendance
- Hosting the meeting
- Serving food,
- Making phone calls or texting
- Leading in prayer
- Leading the RAP discussions
- Using others with their specific gifts of the Holy Spirit

## 6. Leaders learn best on the job – learn by doing/ mentoring

From day one, begin looking for an individual you can mentor into a future leader. Who is someone that can be your apprentice and you can help become a future leader? Allow this person to grow and use their passion and gifts to help you lead.

## 7. Your role is more than a Bible study leader.

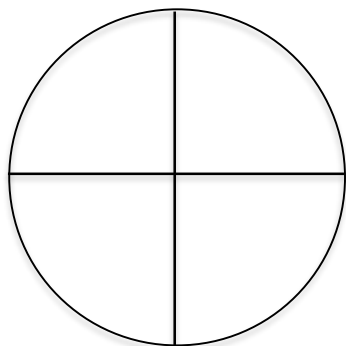
What you do as a leader between the group meetings is more important than the group meeting itself. Remember, discipleship is 24/7, meaning be ready to care for, love, and connect with group members between group meetings to see how they are doing. Offer prayer and support.

## B. Balance of healthy discipleship is the key

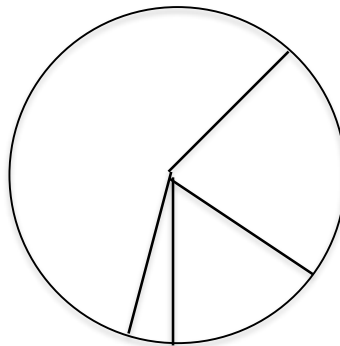
There are many groups that gather just for fellowship or Bible study. These are both needed, but our goal is to see each group live out a healthy balance of:

- Loving God
- Living whole and free
- Every member understanding their purpose and gifts
- Every member reaching out to share Christ.

**Healthy Balanced Group**



**Unhealthy Group**



**Why is it some groups become unhealthy and imbalanced?**

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**Discuss how a group leader can help the group grow, stay balanced and healthy.**

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**Why is it so important that a group maintain health and balance?**

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## C. Know what people are looking for in a small group

### 1. Acceptance – do I fit and belong here?

- Everyone has an essential need to belong, feel loved, and accepted.
- It is important for new group members to feel comfortable and welcomed in a new environment.

What are steps you as a group leader can take to help ensure people feel accepted in your group?

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### 2. Friendship - Does anybody want to know me?

- Relationships are the glue that hold a church together. Friendships are the key to retaining members.
- 75 percent of people who leave church said, "I didn't feel anyone cared whether I was there or not."
- New members who stay in a church make an average of seven new friends, while those who drop out make less than two.

How can we help new church attendees and group members make new friends?

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**3. Valued - Am I needed?**

- People feel valued when they contribute their time, gifts and resources.
- It is vital that a small group leader values their members and helps them discover their purpose and worth.
- The question is not one of only involvement, but also of significance. Are members changing lives or only setting up chairs?

What are some ways you can help people feel valued? How can you assist them in contributing their time, gifts, and talents?

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**4. Benefits – What is the advantage to those joining this group?**

- Why would someone join your group?
- The question everyone asks is “What’s in it for me?”
- Do your members benefit from fellowship, use their gifts, and grow in their faith?

What would be additional benefits received from joining your group?

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**5. Expectations – What can a group member expect from this group?**

A small group leader needs to vocalize the “why” of the group.

Answer this question. “Why should I join your group?”

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## **D. Know the growth steps for each person**

The following are growth steps we encourage all members of Gateway to participate in.

We've created these ministry opportunities so our members and group leaders have clear direction as to what steps to take as they follow Christ.

### **1. Receive Jesus Christ as their Lord**

- Make sure everyone in your group comes to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior
- Use our online tools and other apps to help people walk through what it means to know Christ.
  - Mobile apps – “One 2 One”, “Cru”
- Use the Gateway “Getting Started With Jesus” kit to help walk a new believer through an understanding of their new life in Christ.
- Next steps? Make sure you help new people know what their next steps are.

### **2. Get Water Baptized**

- Encourage everyone in the group to be water baptized.
- When someone is getting water baptized in your group, invite all group members to attend and help celebrate that person's decision to get baptized.

### **3. Attend the Gateway Healing Center**

- Everyone in your group needs a measure of healing and freedom from past hurts, wounds, and strongholds in their life.
- Encourage all members of Gateway and small group participants to attend the “Freedom” monthly ministry at least once.

### **4. Attend Gateway Grow Tracks**

A major resource for your group members is our Gateway Grow Tracks.

Encourage your group members to attend all four levels of Grow Tracks to help them continue to grow.

The Gateway Grow Tracks are:

Grow Track 1 - Connect – to the Lord and others

Grow Track 2 - Freedom – knowing you’re free in Christ

Grow Track 3 - SHAPE – discovering God’s purpose for you.

Grow Track 4 – SERVE – learn where you can serve others

### **5. Join a Life Group**

It is vital that a new believer, or someone returning to the Lord become connected with other believers, make new friends and find a place of support in their Christian walk. All too often people receive Christ but then become isolated and alone and eventually fall away because of a lack of support from other believers. For this reason we highly encourage everyone to get

connected to a Life Group, either in person or online and find others they can trust, pray with and grow together with.

## 6. Find a place to serve

God has gifted all of us for an assignment and a purpose. Our goal at Gateway is to help each person discover their gifts and find a place to serve; either in a Life Group, at Sunday services, or in our community through outreach.

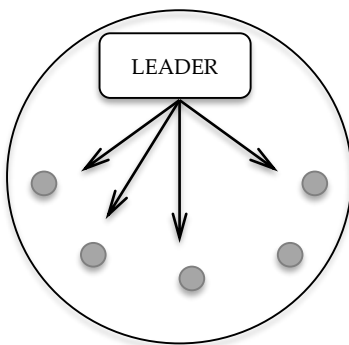
## E. Don't preach – facilitate!

As a group host, you are to help facilitate group discussions as compared to preaching a sermon. All too often the group leader does all the talking and the members don't have a chance to ask questions, or share their concerns and challenges. Remember:

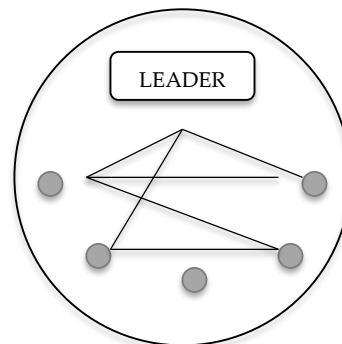
**It's not just about dispensing information, but transformation.**

The following diagram shows two different types of groups. One with a leader who does all the talking and shares only information. While the second group the leader gets the people involved by allowing and encouraging others to share, discuss, and ask questions.

### Dispensing Information



### Facilitating Transformation



When a group first starts people are hesitant at times to open up and share. But over time the groups members will get to know and trust one another and help each other grow.

### **12 Tips for Facilitating a Small Group\***

- 1. Be prepared**
- 2. Don't do all the talking**
- 3. Don't answer your own questions.**
- 4. Get comfortable with silence and quiet.**
- 5. Encourage more than a yes-or-no answer.**
- 6. Ask "Anything else?" "How about?" "Someone else?"**
- 7. Give affirmation whenever you can.**
- 8. Try to involve everyone.**
- 9. Be good listeners – provide support, not quick fixes**
- 10. Be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit**
- 11. Begin and end on time.**
- 12. Focus on helping people grow, not the material**

**\* Steve Gladen – Saddleback Small Group Pastor**

### **F. Principles to help balance out and grow your group**

1. Know that your group's members are at different stages of growth.
2. Know that you don't have to discuss and focus on all the notes at each meeting.
3. Know there are additional resources to help you grow your group such as Grow Tracks and the Healing Center.

4. Ask your leader when you're not sure what to do next for the group.
5. Know that it takes time for grace to work in everyone's life. So relax and allow the Holy Spirit to do what only He can do.
6. Based on the group's overall health, choose a Bible study such as Sunday's teaching series to teach and share.

## **G. Challenge everyone in the group to share serving**

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

**Hebrews 10:24 (NLT)**

- People experience continual and healthy growth when they are serving and taking responsibility.
- Use every opportunity, small or large, to involve group members in serving and participation.

How else can members get involved in serving and helping?

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## **Ideas for total group involvement**

- 1. Take turns facilitating each lesson**
- 2. Everyone ministers to each other**
- 3. Prayer coordinator / partners**
- 4. Outreach representative – “gather” opportunities**
- 5. Calling new group members**
- 6. Worship leader**
- 7. Child-care coordinator**
- 8. Look for future hosts**

**Our Life Group Leaders of tomorrow  
are in your small group today!**

## **H. Get everyone interested in reaching out to others**

All Christians and Life Groups members should have as one of their priorities the desire to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the world around them.

One of our Life Group core values is for each group to reach and connect with the lost.

We call our Life Group outreach efforts the FRANC – BLESS outreach. How does this work? You identify, intercede, and invite.

## **1. Create your FRANC List**

Everyone in the group is encouraged to identify their own personal FRANC list. FRANC stands for;

- Friends
- Relatives
- Acquaintances
- Neighbors
- Co-workers

## **2. BLESS**

BLESS explains how you connect with those on your FRANC list and what steps to take to prayerfully see them come to Christ.

### **BLESS stands for:**

**B** – Begin with prayer to connect with your FRANC list.

**L** - Listen and get to know those on your FRANC list.

**E** - Eat – share a meal or coffee with them.

**S** – Serve – looking to ways to serve those on your list.

**S** - Share – sharing your story of finding Jesus Christ.

The following are general ideas of how a group can connect with their FRANC list and create an opportunity for others to visit your group and eventually come to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.



## **Ideas for connecting with your FRANc list.**

- 1. Host a BBQ dinner**
- 2. Hold a beach party**
- 3. Invite everyone to a pool party**
- 4. Go on a hike**
- 5. Go mountain biking**
- 6. Attend a movie**
- 7. Attend a sports event**
- 8. Host a game night at the group**
- 9. Invite them to coffee / tea**
- 10. Invite them to participate in outreach**
- 11. Whatever else gathers people together**



# Session 5

## Get Ready to Multiply

### A. Cast vision for multiplication and growth

In session three of the manual, we discussed the important of the leader and everyone in the group knowing the vision and mission of the group. It's important that everyone in the group knows the purpose, plan, and future goals of the group. Vision casting takes an intentional effort on the leader's part to share the vision and keep it fresh in the member's minds and souls.

Here are some keys to keep in mind as you cast vision for multiplication and growth.

#### 1. Community follows mission

One of the goals of a Life Group is to create a community of believers who love, care and share life together. But all too often leaders forget that community follows mission.

When everyone understands the mission, the purpose and plan of where the group is going, a strong community is formed where members engage one another for the purpose of fulfilling Jesus' great commission.

#### **Example:**

During WW2, the Band of Brothers was a very tight knit group of men who lived together, fought together, and shared life together for a purpose. Their community was formed around their mission.

If you have community without a purpose you end up with a social club with casual support for one another.

## **2. Consistently share the vision of**

- Making disciples – reminding everyone of Jesus’ one commission – “make disciples” – Matthew 28:19
- Everyone is gifted for the vision. Everyone has gifts which are to help support the mission and each other.
- Everyone has a part to play. Get everyone involved at some level of participating in the vision.
- Everyone is encouraged to disciple others and eventually can split off to lead their own group.

## **3. Be patient**

Remember, everyone grow differently, has specific needs and it takes time to help disciples mature. Never force and become impatient with group members.

Also remember it took Jesus over three years to develop his men to run with the vision.

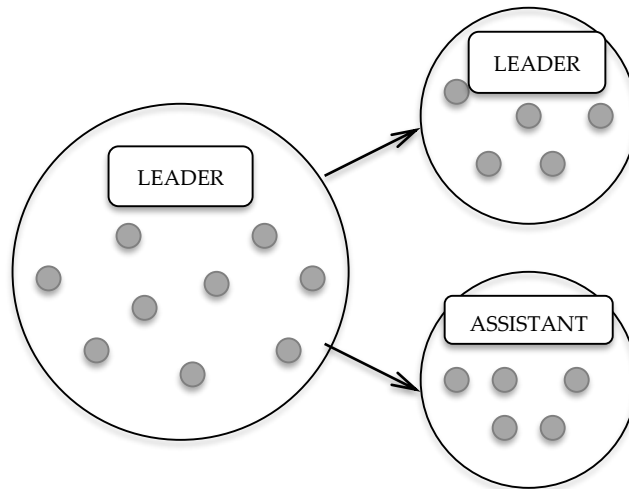
## **B. Subgrouping is key to developing leaders**

Connection, sharing, listening and giving everyone an opportunity to ask questions is essential to group health. Once a group reaches around eight people or more it’s time to starting thinking about sub-grouping to break down the group into more intimate relationships.

Sub-grouping is the answer to groups that become too large!

## Here's how you sub-group a Life Group

1. **Bring everyone together** for opening worship, ice-breaker, and prayer.
2. **During the discussion time** split the group into smaller groups of three to four people.



### 3. Option at the end of the meeting.

At the end of the group meeting, you can bring everyone back together for ministry and closing prayer. Or allow the sub-groups to minister in a smaller setting and then close on their own.

## C. Look for a group apprentice

Every leader should always be looking for future leaders of new groups. It may take a while to develop new leaders, sometimes six months to two years. The following are some practical steps to take that will help.

## **1. Look for the natural leaders**

As you sub-group, look for those individuals who have a natural ability to connect, care for, and facilitate a group. Your leader's gift will make room for them. You don't want to make new leaders too quickly. Let their fruit and heart be proven over time.

## **2. Share leadership with apprentice**

Give future leaders the opportunity to lead, share, and minister. Don't do all the leading yourself. And use those times when others lead as teaching points to help them develop.

Use the following mentoring process in developing a new apprentice.

- I lead you watch – we discuss
- I lead and you assist – we discuss
- You lead and I watch – we discuss
- You lead - we discuss and rejoice together

## **3. Encourage apprentice to connect and disciple a team**

Over time, encourage the potential leader to start discipling others around them. Encourage them to connect with, follow up with, and disciple three to five, or more people. (this way they are indirectly building their own group within your group).

## **4. ICY Mentoring**

ICIY stands for "I See In You". As you see potential leaders develop around you, pull them aside, meet with them, and tell them what you see in them. For example:

- “I see in you God’s grace to love and care for others”
- “I see in you the ability and grace to lead others”.
- “I see in you the potential to host a healthy Life Group”
- “I see in you potential for leadership and ministry”

The goal of this ICIY sharing is to encourage the potential leader and build their confidence and calling. It also helps establish a mentoring relationship where further impartation and sharing can prepare the apprentice to launch their own group in the future.

## **D. Ready set - launch**

New parents, when expecting a baby in 9 months, prepare, plan for, and get ready for the new arrival. Even so, as a group leader, get everyone ready and planning for the new group to birth.

### **1. Get ready to birth a new group**

When an apprentice has a few people they are discipling and connecting with, begin talking and planning for them to launch their own group. For some, this could be a short time-frame. With others, it might be several months of prayer, planning, preparation before the launch.

### **2. Set a date for the launch**

Mark a date on the calendar when the new group will birth. Share it with the current group and let everyone know to pray, prepare and get ready to release the new group into their destiny.

### **3. Celebrate new life!**

Have a going away party! The new group is not literally going away, because there will be time to regather and connect in the future. But celebrate and honor the new group and pray for God's blessing and anointing on their journey ahead.

## **E. Connect the group with a Community Leader**

There are new and ongoing leadership relationships which the new group needs and should be in place.

### **1. Community Leader**

The new group should align under the leadership of a Community Leader. It is the Community Leader's job to coach, connect and stay in touch with the new leader. In the early days of the group the Community Leader should pay special attention to the new group with care and oversight to ensure it's health and stability.

### **2. Parent Group Leader**

The parent group leader should stay in touch with the group it birthed to see how they are doing.

### **3. Reconnection with other groups**

At times the new group will and should reconnect with it's parent group or other groups for larger group activities and fellowship. Many groups reconnect on a quarterly basis or other times of celebration for a larger sense of community and purpose.

## **F. Rinse and repeat starting with step A above**

At the same time as the new group is launching a group leader should always be looking for a new apprentice to raise up.



# Appendix A: Life Group Management & Reporting

As a Life Group leader at Gateway, you have access to various software tools to help manage and grow your group. There are two software applications for you to take note of:

## 1. Gateway Planning Center Group Module

This program is our main church database and is accessible to you as a group leader through logging at <https://login.planningcenter-online.com/login/new>. It is in this program where the groups are set up and managed.

## 2. Gateway ChurchCenter App

The ChurchCenter App is the mobile app connected to our main site and will give you the ability to do a number of group management activities via mobile device. You can download this app from the Apple app store, or Google Play Store. After you download you'll need to enter Gateway San Jose as the church location.

## Software tools summary

There are two instructional PDFs available on our website at [MyGatewayCity.Church/lifegroupleadertools](http://MyGatewayCity.Church/lifegroupleadertools)

1. **Starting a new group** – for those individuals who would like to host a new group and the necessary forms to fill out to get listed on our Group Finder.
2. **Life Group Management**
  - Creating a list of group members
  - Taking group attendance
  - Schedule group events and activities
  - Communication to members via email, text or messaging
  - Adding new members to your group
  - Group dashboard showing growth and status

- Group attendance record over time.

For help with any of the above please email us at [Life.Groups@gatewaycitychurch.org](mailto:Life.Groups@gatewaycitychurch.org)

We encourage all our Life Group Leaders to use these tools to help us grow healthy Life Group Communities. We recommend either the group leaders or someone within the group take ownership of taking and documenting attendance and maintaining a current list of group members.

The Gateway pastoral staff then uses this information to help ensure everyone is cared for with our churches and communities.

## **Appendix B: Child-care in Small Groups**

1. Each family obtains a babysitter on their own.
2. Use the homes of members who live close to each other. Use one for the group meeting and the other for a babysitter or rotating group members to watch children.
3. Commit one room of the house for childcare and bring a babysitter to the meeting. Encourage each family member to share in the cost of the childcare.
4. Rotate the care of children between members on a weekly basis.
5. Allow kids in your family group and let them play during the meeting.
6. Encourage the teen ministry to help out with childcare and allow this to be their ministry opportunity. (Make sure all church policies, and laws are observed)
7. Trade childcare with other small groups. If one group meets on Tuesday, and the other meets on Thursday, then take turns watching each other's children.



## **Appendix C: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What if I need more help getting started?**

If you need help getting started as a HOST or have questions which are not on this list, email us at [Life.Groups@gatewaycitychurch.org](mailto:Life.Groups@gatewaycitychurch.org)

### **What if someone asks a question and I don't know the answer?**

It's okay not to have all the answers! If the question is important enough make it a group effort so everyone does their best to research the answer for the next meeting. Never just throw out your best guess because no one seems to know; someone may take it as gospel.

### **What if we don't get finished with all our discussion questions?**

This is likely to happen quite often. Don't let getting all the questions answered keep you from having meaningful discussions. The point is to do life together. The study guide is a tool to help with connecting to God and each other.

### **How do I get things back on track if someone is taking the discussion off topic?**

Start every group discussion time with this reminder to your group, "stay on topic". Let everyone know in advance that if we begin to get too far off track, the host will gently say "Let's stay on topic" and this will be a cue to move to the next discussion topic.

### **How do I get people to show up on time without being offensive?**

Start on time. Teach people you start on time and do not start over if someone arrives late. They will get into the rhythm.

### **How do I get people to leave without being offensive?**

Let everyone know at the beginning of discussion time what time the study ends. Share that, out of respect for the group's time, you will remind everyone when it is time to dismiss at the appointed hour. (As the host, you may choose to allow the conversations to continue past the appointed dismissal time. If you choose to do this, please give permission for those who must leave to do so.)

### **How do I get people to continue to consistently come?**

Call or text each group member the day before the meeting, encouraging them to come. Be respectful of their time. Starting on time and ending on time is necessary. Be prepared. Review the Small Group study guide before everyone arrives.

### **Where do I find new group members?**

Recruiting new members may be a challenge for hosts, especially new hosts. We encourage you to:

1. Use the FRANC / BLESS system to brainstorm a list of people from your workplace, school, neighborhood, family, and so on. Then pray for them and look for ways to invite them to your group.
2. Be faithful to serve on Sundays to help people get connected wherever you serve.
3. A great place to invite people to your group is by serving at the Welcome Center every other Sunday. Be proactive in serving people and inviting them to your group. Remember, the next person you add just might become an assistant or a friend.

### **What if my group gets to be over 10 members?**

Choose an intern and make plans to multiply. Form a subgroup in another room. Delegate the host responsibilities to your group and share the vision to multiply to reach more people. And be sure to ask your leaders for assistance and strategy.

### **How do I handle childcare needs in my group?**

Childcare needs must be handled very carefully. This is a sensitive issue. We suggest that you seek creative solutions as a group. One common solution is to have the adults and children participate in the group together. If children are mature enough to engage in the conversation, invite them to participate. Children and teens have a lot to add. Or the

adults can meet in the living room and share the cost of a childcare provider (or two) that can be with the kids in another part of the house. **Any childcare providers must have a Gateway background check.**

**What if a same-sex couple wants to join my group?**

Gateway welcomes all people, but we also understand that the Bible teaches that marriage is defined as one man and one woman. (*Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:4-5*). The material used in couples groups is specifically designed for male and female couples. If your group is not a couples group and a same-sex couple wants to join, direct them to a Gateway Women's or Gateway Men's group.

You can use this statement: "Gateway welcomes and accepts all people. This Small Group is using a Biblically based curriculum which teaches that marriage is between a male and a female. May I help you get involved in joining Gateway Women or Gateway Men?" You are always welcome to connect them with our support team at [Life.Groups@gatewaycitychurch.org](mailto:Life.Groups@gatewaycitychurch.org)





## **Appendix D:**

### **The 59 “One Another” Verses of the New Testament**

1. Be at peace with each other. (Mark 9:50)
2. Wash one another's feet. (John 13:14)
3. Love one another... (John 13:34)
4. Love one another... (John 13:34)
5. Love one another... (John 13:35)
6. Love one another... (John 15:12)
7. Love one another (John 15:17)
8. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love... (Romans 12:10)
9. Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)
10. Live in harmony with one another... (Romans 12:16)
11. Love one another... (Romans 13:8)
12. Stop passing judgment on one another. (Romans 14:13)
13. Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
14. Instruct one another. (Romans 15:14)
15. Greet one another with a holy kiss... (Romans 16:16)
16. Wait for each other. (I Cor. 11:33)
17. Have equal concern for each other. (I Corinthians 12:25)
18. Greet one another with a holy kiss. (I Corinthians 16:20)
19. Greet one another with a holy kiss. (II Corinthians 13:12)
20. Serve one another in love. (Galatians 5:13)
21. If you keep on biting and devouring each other (Galatians 5:15)
22. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. (Galatians 5:26)
23. Carry each other's burdens... (Galatians 6:2)
24. Be patient, bearing with one another in love. (Ephesians 4:2)
25. Be kind and compassionate to one another... (Ephesians 4:32)
26. Forgiving each other... (Ephesians 4:32)

27. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. (Ephesians 5:19)
28. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Eph. 5:21)
29. In humility consider others better than yourselves. (Phil. 2:3)
30. Do not lie to each other... (Colossians 3:9)
31. Bear with each other... (Colossians 3:13)
32. Forgive whatever grievances you may have against another. (Col. 3:13)
33. Teach... [one another] (Colossians 3:16)
34. Admonish one another (Colossians 3:16)
35. Make your love increase and overflow for each other. (I Thes 3:12)
36. Love each other. (I Thessalonians 4:9)
37. Encourage each other... (I Thessalonians 4:18)
38. Encourage each other... I Thessalonians 5:11)
39. Build each other up... (I Thessalonians 5:11)
40. Encourage one another daily... Hebrews 3:13)
41. Spur one another on toward love and good deeds. (Hebrews 10:24)
42. Encourage one another. (Hebrews 10:25)
43. Do not slander one another. (James 4:11)
44. Don't grumble against each other... (James 5:9)
45. Confess your sins to each other... (James 5:16)
46. Pray for each other. (James 5:16)
47. Love one another deeply, from the heart. (I Peter 3:8)
48. Live in harmony with one another... (I Peter 3:8)
49. Love each other deeply... (I Peter 4:8)
50. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. (I Peter 4:9)
51. Use whatever gift he has received to serve others... (I Peter 4:10)
52. Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another (I Peter 5:5)
53. Greet one another with a kiss of love. (I Peter 5:14)
54. Love one another. (I John 3:11)
55. Love one another. (I John 3:23)
56. Love one another. (I John 4:7)
57. Love one another. (I John 4:11)
58. Love one another. (I John 4:12)
59. Love one another. (II John 5)

## Appendix E: Life Group Startup Planner

**Now it's your turn. Write down your plan for starting your own Life Group.**

Where will you meet? \_\_\_\_\_

When you will meet? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will you invite?

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### **Prepare for a successful Life Group launch.**

- Have you spent sufficient time in prayer, waiting on God for His direction, leading and guidance?
- Have you connected with Gateway's Life Group administration to get your group registered? If not, email [Life.Groups@gatewaycitychurch.org](mailto:Life.Groups@gatewaycitychurch.org) or connect with your current leader for help.
- Are you on the email list to receive the Life Group MAPS for the week?
- Have you connected with the Campus Pastor or Community Leader asking for their help and guidance?





