

LIFE GROUP COMMITMENT FORM

The purpose of **Life Groups Ministry** is **To Gather** by connecting relationally, **To Grow** by engaging spiritually, and **To Move** by serving local and global neighbor's faithfully.

Leader's Guide: Highlighted notes indicate additional information for leader's. The group member version does not have any highlighted parts. Remember, use this Commitment Form as a guide, or guardrails, to direct group conversation.

LIFE GROUPS: The Purpose, the Heart, and What to Expect

Life Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through significant Christian relationships. Discipleship relationships happen best through Life Groups. Life Groups has a foundation of 3 Pillars: To Gather, To Grow, and To Move. (Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:16-24, Hebrews 10:23-25, Acts 2:42-47)

Life Groups healthily thrive on participation and investment. The purpose of the Life Group Commitment Form is to help discuss and clarify the group's goals, expectations, and commitments. Start by reading the verses above together and praying. This Commitment Form lays groundwork for the future, whatever issues arise or otherwise.

TO GATHER | Connect Relationally

- **SHARE:** Each week, we will take time to share what is happening in our lives. There will be some get-to-know-you questions, intentional questions focused on personal and spiritual growth, and we will spend time reading Scripture and praying together.
 - The target for each time the group meets is to hear from everybody, every time you meet, and keep God's Word in the middle.
- **SUPPORT:** Each week, we will learn how to care for one another as Christ commands. This kind of care can take many forms such as: prayer, encouragement, listening, and challenging one another. (Scripture: John 15:9-13)
 - Read the verse above together.
 - Group Discussion Question: What other forms of caring for one another are there? How do you feel most cared for?

TO GROW | Grow Spiritually

- **STUDY:** Each week, we will study a section from Scripture that relates to the weekly message or a topical study.
 - The weekly priority during the study is to keep God's Word at the center of our conversation.
 - The goal is to interact personally on the topic and discuss how we can practically follow Christ. This may be a good place to define "interacting personally". Encourage your group to be quick to listen; this creates a safe environment for people to share honestly. Do not give specific advice or ways to "fix it" unless specifically asked. Address dominators.
- **PRAY:** Each week, we will spend time praying with and for one another.
 - Prayer is the glue that holds groups together. Be intentional with prayer requests and praises.

TO MOVE | Neighbor Faithfully Through Service

- **SERVICE:** Being spiritually healthy is not a benefit for ourselves, but for others. Throughout the session, it is our hope that we can pursue service as a lifestyle—individually and as a group.
 - The Local Serve Board is available as a Life Group resource with simple step-in opportunities into service.
 - See needs and fill needs within your group and with each other—then move to neighbors, locally and globally.

Informal Commitment Form Recommendation:

★ The discussion of the Commitment Form should happen in the context of relationship.

As a leader, you should collect verbal commitments from each group member or should hypothetically “stack hands” on the Commitment Form. Rather than making them commit in front of everyone—give them time to process the Commitment Form and respond to it individually. However, it is important to collect some form of commitment. This will provide a foundation and reference point if/when issues arise in the future.

- *Hint: Go through the Commitment Form step-by-step as a group, discussing each part and having your group speak into all aspects. Creating a group with ownership and buy in starts from the beginning!*

The Marks of a Healthy Life Group

For this Life Group to be healthy and thrive, we commit to:

- Hearing from everybody, every time we meet, and keep God’s Word in the middle.
- Connect Relationally by:
 - Accepting one another. (*Scripture: Romans 15:7*)
 - We all connect differently with different people; embrace people’s differences.
 - Treating one another with respect. (*Scripture: Ephesians 4:25-5:2*)
 - Be quick to listen and slow to speak.
 - The goal is to listen, not to give specific advice or counsel. Advice is given only when it is asked for. We are not here to judge or fix, unless we are invited to share wisdom. On the other hand, that does not mean we can’t question what someone said or what they are doing in love.
 - Some of us have the “gift of gab”, also known as a dominator. Be careful. As the leader, I may have to help guide you or remind you to be slower to speak. (Address the dominators early on to support and combat any future issues.)
 - Be careful of gossip prayers. For example, “We need to pray for (someone’s name) because they are doing...”. The same rings true for political prayers.
- Grow Spiritually by:
 - Making spiritual growth a priority. (*Scripture: 2 Peter 1:8*)
 - Tangents are okay sometimes, but we may need to be refocused. We need to keep spiritual growth a focus and stay on topic with discussion.
- Serving Neighbors Faithfully by:
 - Taking care of one another. (*Scripture: John 13:34, Acts 20:35*)
 - When a crisis happens, we will commit to supporting, encouraging, listening, praying, bringing meals, etc.
 - Serving is an overflow of our hearts from being in relationship with Christ. Serving individually and as a group shouldn’t be just an item on a checklist, but rather, a posture of our hearts. As a group, we can pursue service together and help keep each other accountable in being the hands and feet of Jesus to our neighbors.
 - Start serving and meeting needs in your group, then expand from there.

COMMITMENT + GUIDELINES

Leaders, we encourage you to have this portion mostly nailed down prior to going through it with your group. Some things, your group may need to weigh in on. Inviting your group members in to help make decisions will cause them to be more invested because they have a say and ownership; however, some things should already be decided on by you as the leader. Use your discretion.

1. **Dates** Fill in the blanks.

We will meet on _____ for ____ weeks. Our final meeting of this session will be on _____.

2. **Time** Fill in the blanks.

We will arrive between _____ and _____ and officially begin at _____ and end at _____.

You can clarify to your group if it is okay for them to show up early or linger after the group ends; if you want that as a leader.

3. **Kids** Fill in the blanks.

Life Groups are for adults; group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children. Nursing newborns are welcome.

If you as the leader or your group come up with a different plan for childcare, discuss that here. Even though kids are great, boundaries must be created to prioritize adult connection; adults are the focus and priority.

4. **Study and Homework** Fill in the blanks.

We will study _____ and will do the required homework or reading ahead of time.

- Emphasize the importance of preparation and having reading and homework done prior to meeting as a group.
- Decide on studying Sermon-Based Questions, RightNow Media, or a topical study.

5. **Prayer**

We will pray for and with one another regularly.

Remember, being forced to pray in a group, or just the idea of it, can cause people anxiety or to not want to come. If you have new people in your group, you might want to say something like, "It's exciting to see how God works in our lives through prayer. Praying out loud can be new or intimidating. Know that you will never be forced to pray." Prayer should not be gossip or political. Prayer can happen at each gathering differently, but it should happen.

6. **Attendance** Fill in the blanks.

Joining a Life Group requires a commitment to attend each gathering. Obviously, life happens, but coming to group needs to be a priority and a commitment. If we cannot come to a meeting, we will let _____ know.

Commitment is key to a healthy group. Make sure everyone stacks hands on this because this creates ground to stand on down the road. Ask something like, "Is this what we want to pursue? Do we agree to being committed?"

7. **Food, Drinks, and Dessert**

Do not allow all the food, drinks, and desserts to fall on the leader or the host every time. Have people sign up to bring things to help out—people want to be involved.

8. **Service**

The Local Serve Board is a great place for simple service step-in opportunities. Emphasize the importance of serving individually and as a group, have some ideas as to how you can serve as a group, chat about how individuals are already serving. Remember, start with the folks in your group. Servanthood is always right in front of us.

9. **Safe Place and Confidentiality**

"What is said here, stays here."

Make that your motto! The group is a safe place, but also communicate to the group, "If something is shared that might be harmful to yourself or someone else, as the leader, I will seek counsel from Heights staff as to how to respond."