

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 will not have any of the highlighted parts.

Leader's Name:

Your Name:

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

Life Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through significant Christian relationships. This happens best through Life Groups 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 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 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: What other forms of caring for one another are there? How do you feel most cared for?

TO GROW | Engage Spiritually

- STUDY
 - Each week, we will study a section from Scripture that relates to the previous week's sermon or a book 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.

TO MOVE | Neighbor Faithfully Through Service

- SERVE

- Being spiritually healthy is not a benefit only for ourselves, but for others too. Throughout the session, it is our hope that you can pursue service as a lifestyle—individually and as a group.
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The Marks of a Healthy Life Group

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

- Hearing from everybody, every time we meet, and keep God's Word in the middle.
- Connecting 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. Advice is given only when it is asked for. We are not here to judge or fix it, unless someone invites us in to share wisdom. On the other hand, that does not mean we can't question what someone said or what they are doing.
 - 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..."
- Engaging 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 our Neighbors Faithfully
 - 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 AND 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 set 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.

Group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children. Nursing newborns are welcome.

If you as the leader or your group comes 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.

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

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

- *New groups launching will study the book **Better Together**, written by the Life Groups Team. If your group has already completed this study, you can choose between Sermon-Based Questions or a topical book study.*
- *Emphasize the importance of preparation and having reading and homework done prior to meeting as a group.*
- *We highly encourage Sermon-Based Questions. If you have new members in your group who have not ever completed **Better Together**, it could be beneficial to have a conversation with them separately to touch base on the content or give them a brief overview.*

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. Prayer can happen at each meeting differently. For example, you can pray as a group, one person can pray, you can partner off, or break up in smaller groups or couples, etc.

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

Joining a Life Group requires a commitment to attend each meeting. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and special events. But coming to group needs to be a priority.

If we cannot come to a meeting, we will call _____.

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**

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.

9. **Safe Place and Confidentiality**

Make this your motto: "What is said here stays here." This is a safe place, but please know that 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 to the issue.

Formal Versus Informal Commitment Form:

As a leader, (whether you lean to the formal or informal version), you should collect verbal commitments from each group member. Don't make them say it right there in front of everyone—give them time to process the Commitment Form and respond to it individually. But it is important to collect some form of commitment from the individuals within a week or so of the initial Commitment Form overview. This will provide a foundation and reference point if anything arises in the future.

- ★ **Informal:** Go through the Commitment Form step-by-step, discussing each part. Ask the folks in your group to think it through and pray it over, then to communicate with you as the leader if this is something they want to be a part of.
- **Formal:** Go through the Commitment Form step-by-step, discussing each part. Have people leave with the forms to pray through and think through the commitment. Then, request they sign the physical Commitment Form or verbally commit to them between the time you went over the forms and the next meeting.