

## Small Group Leaders Training

True Life's philosophy of ministry is that we are a church of small groups. They truly are an integral part of our ministry. God did not design the Christian life to be lived alone. We need each other. The following is some basic information about our small group ministry. We really encourage you to check out one of our groups. You can contact our small groups pastor, Rusty Arwood, at [rusty@thetruelifechurch.com](mailto:rusty@thetruelifechurch.com) if you have questions, would like more information, or if you would like him to guide you toward a group or give you contact info for a group leader.

The Bible says in Acts 5:42 that "daily in the temple, *and in every house*, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ." In Acts 20:20, Paul said that he "kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly *and from house to house*." The Bible pictures large gatherings of believers and small, intimate gatherings as well. Both are necessary. In fact, we believe that a church should always be growing larger and smaller at the same time. It should be growing larger through evangelism as more and more people come to Christ, but it should be growing smaller as people are plugged into small groups where relationships can be developed. Each of us desperately needs to be connected to others as we journey through what is often a fragmented and difficult world. We believe that life change can most easily occur in the context of a small group of believers. All the ministry of a church (evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, worship, and ministry) can take place in a small group. Pastoral care can be done through these groups as believers care for one another. People who are not yet Christians can come and learn about Jesus Christ in a non-threatening environment. **Ultimately, we believe God's plan is for believers to build a loving and united community within to reach the community without in order to share in an eternal community with Him.**

## Small Group Ministry Core Values

- 1. Following The Biblical Pattern:** Small groups follow the biblical pattern presented in the book of Acts of the church having large gatherings and meetings of small groups.
- 2. People Are Our Priority:** People, not programs, are our priority. Therefore, we will focus on building relationships through small groups.
- 3. Relating Properly To "One Another:"** Small groups are a great way to accomplish the "one another" statements of Scripture.
- 4. Experiencing Life Together:** God is calling us to real fellowship, which is truly experiencing life together. It is sharing the common life that we have in Christ.
- 5. Authenticity:** God wants us to be authentic, genuine, and open. That can often be difficult to do. However, we desire to create an atmosphere that encourages authenticity in the small groups.
- 6. Every Believer Is A Minister:** We are one body with many members and each member is to use his or her God-given spiritual gifts to minister and care for one another through the small

groups. This decentralizes pastoral care and allows the Body of Christ to function in the proper manner.

**7. Multiplication:** God's plan for every church is to multiply disciples, leaders, small groups, and churches. We plan to do this by being a church of small groups.

### **“One Another” Commands**

- 1) “*have peace with one another*” (Mark 9:50b).
- 2) “A new commandment I give unto you, that you *love one another*; as I have loved you, that you also *love one another*” (John 13:34).
- 3) “*Be kindly affectioned to one another* with brotherly love. (Romans 12:10).
- 4) “*Be of the same mind toward one another*. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits” (Romans 12:16).
- 5) “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith *one may edify another*” (Romans 14:19).
- 6) “*Wherefore receive you one another*, as Christ also received us to the glory of God” (Romans 15:7).
- 7) “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and *admonishing one another* in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16).
- 8) “That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have *the same care for one another* (1 Corinthians 12:25).
- 9) “For, brethren, you have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love *serve one another*” (Galatians 5:13).
- 10) “And be ye *kind to one another*, tenderhearted, *forgiving one another* even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).
- 11) “*Submitting yourselves to one another* in the fear of God” (Ephesians 5:21).
- 12) “Wherefore *comfort one another* with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

- 13) “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but ***exhorting one another***; and so much the more, as you see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25).
- 14) “***Confess your faults to one another***, and ***pray for one another***, that you may be healed.” (James 5:16).
- 15) “***Use hospitality to one another*** without grudging” (1 Peter 4:9).
- 16) “As every man hath received the gift, even so ***minister the same to one another***, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10).
- 17) “**Bear one another’s burdens...**” (Galatians 6:2a).

### **TLC Small Group Mission Statement**

To meet people in small group settings to build a community of fully devoted followers of Christ within in order to reach the community without.

### **Strategy Statement**

The small group mission of True Life Church will be accomplished by:

- Identifying, training, developing, and deploying leaders
- Forming small groups of people who meet together regularly for life-application Bible study, to build authentic relationships, to care for one another, for prayer, for service and ministry to others, and to reach out to those around them
- Intentionally shepherding people toward full devotion to Christ
- Striving to bring those who do not know Christ into a relationship with Him and a Christian community
- Developing new leaders and birthing new groups

### **Overview Of Small Group Ministry**

**Introduction:** The Bible says in Acts 5:42 that “daily in the temple, *and in every house*, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” In Acts 20:20, Paul said that he “kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly *and from house to house*.” The Bible pictures large gatherings of believers and small, intimate gatherings as well. Both are necessary. In fact, we believe that a church should always be growing larger and smaller at the same time. It should be growing larger through evangelism as more and more people come to Christ, but it should be growing smaller as people are plugged into small groups where relationships can be developed. Each of us desperately needs to be connected to others as we journey through what is often a fragmented world. We believe that life change can most

easily occur in the context of a small group of believers. All the ministry of a church (evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, worship, and ministry) can take place in a small group. Pastoral care can be done through these groups as believers care for one another. People who are not yet Christians can come and learn about Jesus Christ in a non-threatening environment.

**Ultimately, we believe God's plan is for believers to build a loving and united community within to reach the community without in order to share in an eternal community with Him.**

It is our intent to be "a church of small groups." This means that small groups are not just another program tacked onto an overcrowded church schedule, but they are really at the heart of what we do as a church. Much of the ministry of the church will be done through small groups. God wants His children to live in community with one another, and small groups are the primary vehicle we are using to pursue community.

**Functions of a small group:** These are some of the basic elements that should be done through a small group:

- 1. Small groups are built on authentic relationships.**
- 2. Small groups are places where truth meets life through application-oriented Bible study and discussion.**
- 3. Small groups are places where people love each other and minister to one another's needs.**
- 4. Small groups are places where spiritual growth takes place through intentional shepherding (which means care and discipleship).**
- 5. Small groups are places where people will be introduced to Jesus Christ.**
- 6. Small groups are places of prayer and service.**
- 7. Small groups are places where leaders are developed.**
- 8. Small groups are a key part of the ministry of True Life Church. The ultimate goal is the multiplication of disciples, leaders, groups, and churches so that God's kingdom will be built to the glory of the Lord.**

**Benefits of being in a small group:** Why should you join a small group? Consider the following benefits:

- 1. You will understand the Bible better in a small group.**
- 2. You will begin to really feel like a part of God's family.**
- 3. Prayer will become more meaningful to you.**
- 4. You will be able to handle stress better because others will be helping you bear your burdens.**
- 5. You will have a natural way to share Christ with friends, relatives, and work associates.**
- 6. You will discover leadership skills you never knew you had.**
- 7. You will deepen your understanding of worship.**
- 8. You will be functioning like a New Testament Christian.**

**Key elements of a small group strategy:** What are the key elements that must be in place in order for this strategy to work?

- 1. A reasonable span of care-**One person must not attempt to care for too many people.
- 2. Leadership Development-**Bill Donahue writes, “Your group, and the small group ministry at your church, thrives on the ability to identify and develop qualified leaders to shepherd little flocks of believers and reach out to strays who need Christ.”
- 3. Group Multiplication-**We will use the “open chair” concept to focus on adding new people to the groups. Forming new groups is the ultimate goal.
- 4. Intentional Shepherding-**Bill Donahue writes, “Turning irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Christ has always been at the heart of God and his church. Jesus commanded us to speak, love, and serve others as He would, and live lives that are increasing in love, joy and the other fruit of the Spirit. Disciples are not just people with more answers to Bible questions or who attend more events or listen to more Christian radio. Disciples are people who act like Christ, who are willing to train to be like Him, who practice the disciplines of prayer, solitude, worship, Bible reading and study, community, and ministry. They are lifelong learners and lovers of Christ. Small groups that get intentional about shepherding people toward maturity will see fruit multiplied in people’s lives.”
- 5. Ministry Coordination-**All of the small groups and all of the ministries of the church must function together to accomplish the mission of the church.

### **Biblical Principles For Shepherding**

**Introduction-The Importance of Shepherding:** God is our ultimate shepherd so we are following His example as shepherds. In Jeremiah 23:1-2, God pronounces a woe upon shepherds who damage the flock of God. In Zechariah 10:2 the people are spoken of as being “in trouble because there is no shepherd.” Matthew 9:36 says, “But when He [Jesus] saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” In Acts 20:28, Paul commanded the elders of the church at Ephesus to “take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

### **Principles For Shepherding**

1. A shepherd is a spiritual leader (Numbers 27:16-17).
2. Shepherding is a calling (Psalm 78:71)
3. A shepherd is to have integrity (Psalm 78:72).
4. A shepherd is to guide people with skill (Psalm 78:72).

5. A shepherd is to spiritually feed the flock “with knowledge and understanding” (Jeremiah 3:15).
6. Shepherds are to seek the Lord and have a hot heart for God (Jeremiah 10:21).
7. Shepherds are to strengthen the weak (Ezekiel 34:4).
8. Shepherds are to minister to the sick (Ezekiel 34:4).
9. Shepherds are to bind up the broken (Ezekiel 34:4).
10. Shepherds are to go after the last and straying (Ezekiel 34:4).
11. A true shepherd sacrifices for the sheep instead of indulging himself (John 10:11-12).

**\*Note\* We need to remember as small group leaders that “shepherding is about responsive care and intentional development” (Bill Donahue) and strive to perform both of those tasks in a balanced manner.**

#### **TLC Small Group Leader Qualifications/Requirements**

1. A born again Christian
2. Not a new Christian
3. A member of True Life Church who affirms the Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Core Values, and Statement of Beliefs of True Life Church
4. Affirms the Small Group Mission Statement, Strategy, and Core Values
5. Feels called by God to be a small group leader
6. Completing the appropriate training
7. Consistently pursues spiritual disciplines (such as prayer, Bible study, private and corporate worship, tithing, etc.
8. Solid family life
9. Godly character and integrity
10. Godly lifestyle
11. Able to relate and work well with others
12. Strives to maintain the unity of the church
13. A team player
14. Teachable and submissive to proper authority and accountability
15. Willing to work within the appointed structure
16. Will complete the four basic TLC discipleship classes
17. Complete monthly reports
18. Attends Huddle meetings if at all possible

19. Able to contend for the faith
20. Agrees not to meet alone with members of the opposite sex
21. Husbands and wives working together as a team, but the male is the teacher in mixed groups
22. Displays an ability to develop healthy relationships both inside and outside the church.

## **“8 Habits of Effective Small Groups Leaders”**

**by Dave Earley**

### **1. Dream of leading a healthy, growing, multiplying group.**

-3 Key Dreams of a Highly Effective Group (p.23)

- A. Group Health
- B. Growth in Numbers
- C. Group Multiplication (If you take a small group of 14 and it doubled and birthed every 18 months and each new group repeated the same process, how many people would you have in 10 years?)

-What is our dream for our group? Are we satisfied? Have we lost sight of our original vision?

Do we believe our dream can be accomplished? Do we believe these habits will bring forth results? Are we willing to pay the price to accomplish a big dream like this?

-Will you commit to this dream?

### **2. Pray for group members daily.**

-Earley contends that prayer is the most important activity for a group leader. Do you agree?

-How is your prayer life?

-Do you pray for your group members?

-Can/will you develop a plan to help you pray for them?

### **3. Invite new people to visit the group weekly.**

-Donald McGavern-“Relationships are the bridges of God.” Dave Earley-“If your group has no guests, it will experience no growth.”

-Some of the people that we invite will come.

-Are we inviting people?

-Who can we invite? Who can our people invite? How can we go about inviting people?

#### **4. Contact group members regularly.**

-Are we doing this?

-Practically, how can we do this? When can we set aside some time to do this during the week?

#### **5. Prepare for the group meeting.**

-When do you prepare? How do you prepare? Are you doing enough preparation? Do you need to make some changes in order to do this more effectively?

#### **6. Mentor an apprentice leader.**

-The principle of 2 Timothy 2:2

-Are you mentoring people in your group? Do you have an apprentice leader?

-We should disciple people and then let our apprentice leaders develop out of the spiritual development.

-Who can you mentor?

#### **7. Plan group fellowship activities.**

-This is good for building the group. However, it also an excellent outreach tool and should be used to invite new people to the group as well.

-When was the last time your group did a fellowship activity? What should you plan?

#### **8. Be committed to personal growth.**

-We can't lead beyond what we are.

-All of us are busy, and we can't create more time. Therefore, we are going to have to be more disciplined and make better use of our time in order to be more effective group leaders.

-How does God want us to be using our time? How can we change and grow in this area?