

## LIFE Community Notes for the Week of Sunday, September 13, 2009

As this is the first meeting of the ministry year, we are encouraging LIFE Communities to do something a bit different. Rather than giving you Bible Study notes this week, we're giving you a meeting guide to help you start the year off right with your group.

During your first meeting, we encourage you to accomplish three things (depending on how you lead, you may only make it through two of these items this week. That's okay - it will provide you with an exercise for another meeting to come):

1) Get reacquainted or newly acquainted with each other:

- a) Welcome any new people in your group
- b) Provide everyone in your group an opportunity to share ONE highlight of their summer.
- c) Take a moment to pray if any personal concerns are raised.

2) Set expectations for the year ahead:

a) Clarify your expectations of each member of the group by way of creating a covenant (feel free to use the sample covenant on page). Read through the covenant, gather feedback from the group, make any changes necessary, pray through each section, and even have the group all sign a copy or all sign ONE copy together

b) Invite people to participate in helping to lead in various roles for the year

- Communication (email reminders and prayer requests)
- Bible Study Facilitators (reminder about the Oasis course)
- Food or Snacks
- Organizing a group service component for the year
- Hosting the Group

c) Clarify your meeting schedule (time, location, night of the week)

3) Consider the following questions to prepare your group to begin thinking about being the hands and feet of Jesus during the "Year of Doing Good":

At Grace Chapel, we're calling this year the "Year of Doing Good" and we'll be encouraged throughout this year to *find creative ways to be the hands and feet of Jesus right where we are.*

- When you hear the phrase the "Year of Doing Good", what thoughts come to your mind? *Allow people to share their impressions, they can be good, bad, indifferent, or confused – that's okay!*
- What do you think is meant by the phrase "being the hands and feet of Jesus"? Has anyone ever been the hands and feet of Jesus for you?
- Read the following out loud:

MT 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'<sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a

stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

MT 25:37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?' <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?' <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

MT 25:40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

- Take a few moments and get your group brainstorming on a list of needs nearby your group – needs within your town, your community, your relational circles, etc. – this is just a brainstorming list to get your group beginning to think about ways you might possibly serve this year.
- Take one or two of the things on that list. What might happen if your group began to commit yourself to helping to meet that need together? What would it look like, how would it feel, who would benefit, how could it happen, etc.? Again, make it clear that your making no commitments during this time, you're just brainstorming.
- As you finish your brainstorming, let your group know that throughout the course of this year, you'll want to come to some consensus on how and where you will serve as a group.
- Encourage them to use the following as a guide:
  - a) Keep it Local – something nearby,
  - b) Keep it Personal – engaging with people, not just organizations,
  - c) Keep it Simple – something that's realistic and possible,
  - d) Keep it Open – consider inviting others to join with you as you serve.
- Encourage them to be continue to be praying about this and ask God to help guide you as you seek together what you might do to serve.
- Commit your year to God in prayer, asking Him to lead your group in the year ahead.

## LIFE Community Covenant (an example)

### Our group purpose:

Our overriding purpose is to build a committed community of friends who share our lives together as we seek to live in relationship with Jesus Christ. As a result of our time together, we hope each person will develop and deepen in their Christian vitality. Our major goals are reflected in the LIFE Community vision, which is directly dependent on our experience and growth in the following areas:

- Lifelong Discipleship:** Since our desire is to grow as disciples of Christ, we will spend a major portion of our time at each group meeting digging into God's Word. We each will try to bring a high level of intensity, expectation and teachability to our study of the Scripture.
- Intentional Outreach:** In our commitment to include some attention and activity to the world beyond ourselves, we will decide upon practical ways to reach people for Christ.
- Faithful Service:** We will commit to looking for ways to serve members of our group, our church, and our community with practical, intentional acts of service.
- Engaging Worship:** We will commit a portion of our time to focus on God and His presence, thus directly glorifying Him. Furthermore, we will pray corporately for one another's lives and personal concerns.
- Community:** Just as the quality of our relationship with God depends upon honesty and trust, we will seek a similar, developing authenticity in our relationships with one another. We will seek to grow together in maturing, supportive, and even stretching relationships.
- When** misunderstanding or difficulty occurs in our relationships (which will happen), we will pursue paths of healing and reconciliation.

### Our group rules

- attendance priority – not only will we make every effort to attend each group meeting, we will also take seriously our starting time and schedule. (In the event a person can't attend for circumstances beyond his/her control, he/she will try to contact the leader.)
- confidentiality - anything said in the group stays in the group, unless specific permission is given for comments to be shared beyond the group.
- participation - each person will have opportunity to contribute and express him/herself, provided that he/she feels comfortable in doing so. We will also accept the responsibility of listening attentively to one another.
- prayer - we will pray for one another between meetings

## Our group plan

We will **Care** for one another - intentionally investing in our relationship with one other - in the following tangible ways this year:

1)

2)

3)

The following person (people) will help to co-ordinate this care plan, keeping us on target throughout the year: \_\_\_\_\_

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We will **Grow** together this year as people committed to becoming more like Christ. We will do that in the following tangible ways this year:

1)

2)

3)

The following person (people) will help to co-ordinate this growth plan, keeping us on target throughout the year: \_\_\_\_\_

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We will make an **Impact** on the world around us – together seeking to be used by God to make a difference in our church, our community, and our world through outreach and service in the following tangible ways this year:

1)

2)

3)

The following person (people) will help to co-ordinate this impact plan, keeping us on target throughout the year: \_\_\_\_\_