

# New Life Fellowship

## Orientation to Small Group Leadership

***"Small Groups are the Best Place to  
Experience Profound Transformation  
in Community."***

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## **Introduction**

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i) Goals

**(1) Understand NLF Small Group Vision and Purpose**

**(2) Understand the role of the Small Group Coach, Leader and Apprentice**

**(3) Understand how people get involved in small groups**

**(4) Understand the components of a balanced small group**

## **Bible Study**

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### ***Biblical Example of Community: Acts 2:42-47***

i) Read this account of explosive growth in the church

The Fellowship of the Believers

<sup>42</sup>They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup>Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup>All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup>Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. <sup>46</sup>Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

**(1) What are some features of this early community in Acts?**

**(2) Why is it difficult to have this type of community today?**

**(3) How can your small group become this type of community? What are some things that would need to happen?**

**Small Group Mission Statement**

**“Small Groups are the best place for people to experience profound transformation in community.”**

The vision of NLF small groups (both general and focused) is to facilitate the grouping of 5-15 believers who develop **authentic relationships** with **God, each other**, and the **world around them**. Our aim is that each member grows in developing a vibrant life of **prayer, rest, relationships** and **work**, as outlined in **New Life Fellowship’s Rule of Life**.

These groups are to be marked by openness to the Holy Spirit and a commitment to both emotional and spiritual maturity. Our aim is that each member in the group is committed to growing in relationships (with God, each other, and the world around them) by **learning** together, **caring** for each other, and keeping each other **accountable**.

The small group leaders will model the **NLF Rule of Life** and regularly integrate Biblical principles in creating meaningful communities. Most groups will include a Bible Study, a time of sharing and praying for each other, and opportunities to serve the church and world.

**Our Goal of Profound Transformation in Every Small Group is to...**

**1. Facilitate and Deepen 3 Relationships as seen in the NLF Rule of Life**

1. God
2. Each Other
3. The World Around us

**2. How do we Facilitate and Deepen these relationships?**

1. Learning
2. Caring
3. Accountability

**How does someone get involved in a small group at New Life Fellowship?**

Since we believe small groups is the **best place** to experience profound transformation in **community**, our entire church is geared toward **directing people into small groups**.

**1) LARGE SETTINGS**

- a. Sunday mornings (Bridge Builders – Welcome Center, Hospitality, etc.)
- b. Connection Events (Open Mic, Retreats, Men’s Breakfast, etc.)
- c. Equipping Events (Sunday Morning Classes, Retreats, Expectations Workshop, etc.)
- d. Outreach Events (Family Fun Night, CDC, etc.)

**2) Small Group Connection (Formerly called “Group Link”)**

**3) ALPHA**

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## Community and Small Group Structure

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### Kinds of Small Groups

#### **i) Geographic/Neighborhood Groups**

Geographic/Neighborhood small groups take place in a geographic location that is easily accessible to the small group members. These groups welcome all ages, are comprised of marrieds and singles, and meet in Maspeth, Flushing, Elmhurst and many other neighborhoods.

#### **ii) Affinity Groups**

Affinity small groups are small groups that draw people who are in a similar life stage, marital status etc. Married Couples, Singles, Young Adults, Men's groups, and Women's groups would be examples of affinity small groups.

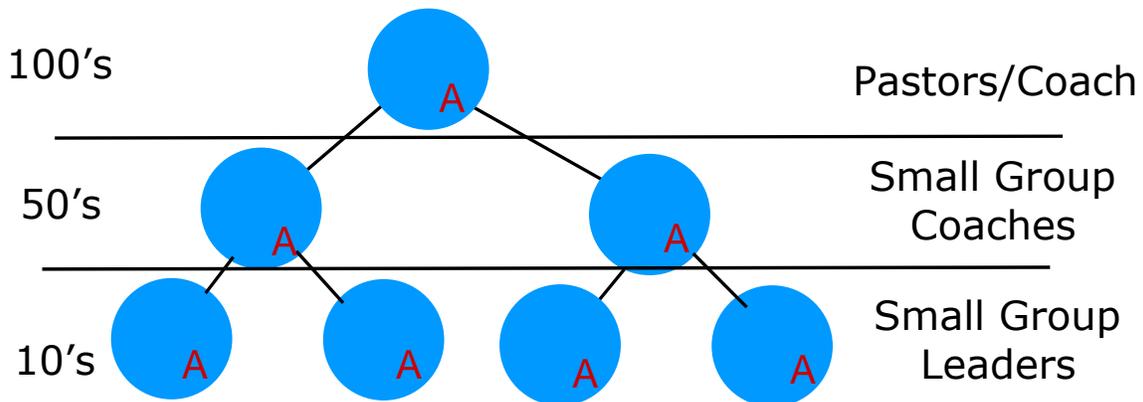
#### **iii) Task Groups**

Task small groups primarily gather to DO something together, while still fostering meaningful relationships. Examples of task small groups would be Choir, Worship band, Children's workers etc.

#### **iv) Content-Driven Classes**

Classes at NLF are a great way to learn a skill, grow in knowledge or participate in an experience with others. Classes are usually short term commitments that focus on transformation and community. Sunday morning classes are examples of content driven groups.

### Leadership Structure



## **Small Group Apprentice Description**

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### **Expectations**

- Become a Member of New Life Fellowship
- Attend the Orientation to Small Group Leadership Class
- Participate in the Leadership Community Meetings and Leadership Conferences
- Grow in the NLF Rule of Life Discipleship Formation Roadmap
- Give Regularly and Faithfully of your Financial Resources to Gods Kingdom
- **Faithful, Available, Teachable**

### **Responsibilities:**

- i) Develop an intimate walk with God
- Grow in the NLF Rule of Life
- ii) Serve on a Small Group leadership team
- Be an encouragement and support for the small group leader
- Take initiative on different aspects of the group
- Provide honest and loving feedback on the growth and health of the group
- iii) Learn aspects of healthy, life-changing group meetings
- Take responsibility for various aspects of the meeting during different times
- Take advantage of training opportunities as they come up
- iv) Help Care for people in the group
- Pray for members of the group
- Get to know the members of the group and their "story"
- Create a safe, open, non-judgmental environment for people
- v) Connect new people to the small group
- Call newcomers
- Reach out to those that are unconnected to a small group
- Help strategize on gathering events to help people get connected

## **Small Group Leader Description**

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### **Expectations**

- Become a Member of New Life Fellowship
- Submit to the leadership of your pastor or coach
- Attend the Orientation to Small Group Leadership Class
- Participate in the Leadership Community Meetings and Leadership Conferences
- Grow in the NLF Rule of Life Discipleship Formation Roadmap
- Give Regularly and Faithfully of your Financial Resources to Gods Kingdom
- **Faithful, Available, Teachable**

### **Responsibilities:**

- i) Develop an intimate walk with God
  - Grow in the NLF Rule of Life
- ii) Build and lead a leadership team
  - Identify the Key 3 People that you as the small group leader will invest in as potential leaders
  - Identify and empower people to flourish in their gifts
  - Resource your key leaders with resources appropriate to their area of service
  - Deal with conflict early and in a healthy manner
- iii) Care for people in the group
  - Pray for members of the group
  - Get to know the members of the group and their "story"
  - Create a safe, open, non-judgmental environment for people
- iv) Multiply the small group
  - Cast a vision for multiplication of the small group
  - Encourage members to reach out to those that are unconnected

## **Small Group Coach Description**

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### **Expectations:**

- Has experience leading healthy small groups
- Able to mentor and supervise others
- Become a Member of New Life Fellowship
- Submit to the leadership of your pastor or coach
- Attend the Orientation to Small Group Leadership Class
- Participate in the Leadership Community Meetings and Leadership Conferences
- Grow in the NLF Rule of Life Discipleship Formation Plan
- Give Regularly and Faithfully of your Financial Resources to Gods Kingdom
- **Faithful, Available, Teachable**

### **Job Summary:**

The primary function of the Small Group Coach is to care for and resource small group leaders, and monitor and ensure the quality of the small groups.

### **Responsibilities:**

- i) Develop an intimate walk with God
  - Grow in the NLF Rule of Life
- ii) Care for Small Groups and Small Group Leaders
  - Meet with the small group leaders (either in person or by phone) to listen, shepherd, and provide feedback regarding life and ministry.
- iii) Coach Small Groups toward Healthy, Life-changing Communities
  - Monitor the quality of groups and give constructive feedback to the SG leaders and apprentices.
  - Resource SG Leaders
  - Aid SG Leaders in pastoral situations that are beyond the ability of the SG leader.

**How to make your small group a community that fosters relationships that are learning, caring, and keeping each other accountable**

**(1) Overall Atmosphere (Stress these at the first meeting!)**

- Safe (Confidentiality – what is said in the room, stays in the room)
- Open (Lead through vulnerability)
- Non-Judgmental (Practice Speaking in the “I”)

**(2) Leadership**

- Changed leaders make life changing groups

**(3) Group Agreement**

- Clarifying expectations on what the group is about and how people will relate to each other is necessary at the beginning of the group.

**(4) Meet outside of the normal small group time**

- Plan a social gathering within the first month of your group beginning, or have someone else plan a social gathering.

**(5) Participation/Ministering by every member**

**(6) Alone Together**

- Give yourself and others Permission to Say NO

**(7) Allow time for what God is doing in individual people**

- Give ample space for sharing and praying in every meeting (suggested 15 minutes at least)

**DISCUSSION: What are some ways to encourage community in your small group?**

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## ***Facilitating a Small Group Discussion***

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### **i) Introduction**

You and others in your group can learn to facilitate a small group discussion. With some skills, preparation and coaching, you can help people discover truth and apply it to their lives. If you think it is too hard – it is likely easier than you think. If you think it is easy – it is likely harder than you think.

**As a participant in a small group discussion what are some of the things that made the experience difficult?**

**What things have made the discussion productive and positive?**

**Definition of a Small Group Facilitator:** One who leads an interactive discussion, focused on a specific topic, enabling the Holy Spirit to bring insight through each person present.

### **ii) Myths about Small Group Facilitators**

- You must be a Bible scholar or expert on the topic
- You should have the right answer for everyone
- You must be the small group leader and have absolute spiritual authority over people

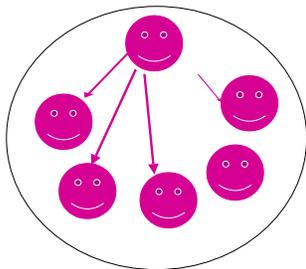
### **iii) What group facilitation is not:**

- Preaching
- Instructional teaching
- Leader-centered

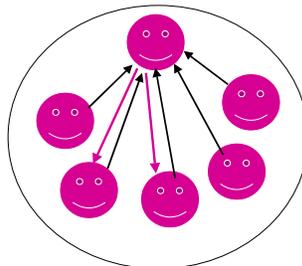
### **iv) Group facilitation is:**

- Interactive
- Group-centered
- Inductive – People Discover truth through their interaction with the text and the group.
- Holy Spirit led

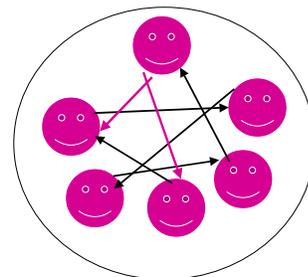
**Leader  
Dominated**



**Leader  
Centered**



**Group  
Centered  
Discussion**



## v) 5 Keys for a Good Small Group Facilitator:

### (1) Preparation

### (2) Participation

- a. Allows Bible (or Topic) content to emerge; knowledge should result from discussion (maintains balance between content and process)
- b. Draws out feelings and asks reflective questions; avoids intellectualizing (maintains balance between content and process)
- c. Draws out quiet people

### (3) Protection

- d. Creates and maintains a safe open and non-judgmental atmosphere.
- e. Is vulnerable and honest, setting the tone of authenticity, acceptance, humor, etc.
- f. Is sensitive to first-time or new people in the group, especially unbelievers
- g. Curbs dominant or excessively talkative people, prohibits another from leading
- h. Is courageous and courteous in addressing disruptive people after the discussion

### (4) Pace

- i. Moves the discussion along at a good pace; not belaboring points
- j. Manages the discussion time well for each section, ending on time.

### (5) Keep to the Point

- k. Keeps discussion on the topic, deflects entertaining (excessive) pastoral needs during discussion

## vi) Types of Bible Study Questions:

(Examples are taken from John 15:1-4)

1. ***Observation:*** Draws attention to a specific focal point in the text. Answers are found in the text with verse cited. Short, factual answers are appropriate for this type of question. Observation questions serve to direct the group to a specific word or issue in the text, implying the point to be discussed. No need for further discussion once answered. Who, what, and where questions are examples of observation questions.

#### ***Examples:***

- a. What two actions does the gardener perform on the branches in verse 2? (cuts off & prunes)
- b. What instruction is given in verse 4? (remain in me)

2. ***Interpretation/Reflection:*** Asks a non-factual question that seeks to draw out meaning from the text. Interpretation/reflection questions serve to enable people to wrestle with the text and understand its meaning. Several answers are helpful and discussion usually flows. These questions start with 'Why' and 'How' or 'What does ... mean'.

#### ***Examples:***

- a. How does pruning a branch help it to produce? How does God 'prune' us?
- b. What does it mean to 'remain' in him?

3. **Application:** Requires one to individually reflect upon how the text specifically relates to his/her own life, today, on a personal level. Application questions serve to enable the Holy Spirit to speak to a person's heart - convicting, enlightening or provoking him/her to repentance, action or response as a result of understanding the text.

**Examples:**

- a. How or where do you believe God is pruning you today?
- b. What does it mean for you to remain in Jesus today?

**vii) What makes a good discussion question?**

- Open ended
- Non-Trivial
- Answerable by all
- Short and simple

**(1) Good and Bad Question Quiz**

- (a) Is God all-powerful?
- (b) How much does Jesus love us? (cf. John 3:16)
- (c) Nicodemus came to Jesus by night to talk. Why? How is John using darkness to make a point? (cf. John 13:30)
- (d) What significance does the number 12 have in the New Testament?
- (e) In your family, who like to play jokes? Any one joke stand out?
- (f) What must you do to be saved?
- (g) In Genesis 1-2, God is to have spoken the heavens and the earth into being. Does this validate the Big Bang Theory? Does Big Bang prove there's a God who actually created?
- (h) The Bible says God is holy. What's that mean and why is it so significant?
- (i) What does the Bible say about the Holy Spirit?
- (j) When can you love someone too much?
- (k) The Bible says we are all sinners. When does sin actually become sin? When I think about it, do it, or both? How can I discern between real sin and potential sin?
- (l) It's been said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. What's beautiful to you that others have felt is ugly?
- (m) What was the most difficult class you took in college and why?
- (n) What's the theological significance of the transfiguration?
- (o) As parents, when is it hard to be objective when relating to your kids?

### **viii) Practical Pointers for Small Group Discussions:**

- a. Explain the guidelines for healthy small group discussion, and remind the group of the guidelines as often as needed:
  - o The goal is to have everyone contribute, please refrain from over-contributing if you are talkative, please give your input if you tend to be quiet, we want to hear from you.
  - o Let's try to stay on the discussion topic.
  - o Let's refrain from unsolicited advice giving and judgmental remarks
  - o Let's be sensitive to the Holy Spirit
- b. Be accepting and appreciative of all answers, even flaky or 'incorrect' ones. Don't reject input.
- c. Avoid "Can you guess what I'm thinking game." Be open to various answers; don't wait for the 'right' one.
- d. Don't panic or answer your own questions if your questions are not answered right away. Give people time to think, be comfortable with silence.
- e. If people seem puzzled by your question, try rewording it.
- f. If a weird answer is given, or a question is asked that you can't or prefer not to answer (to prevent the group from looking to you as the 'authority'), ask the group, "What do the rest of you think?"
- g. If people go off on rabbit trails, say, "Getting back to the topic..."
- h. If people talk too long or too much ask, "Let's hear from \_\_\_\_\_, or let's hear from someone we haven't heard from yet."
- i. Call upon quiet/shy people by name: "What do you think about that \_\_\_\_\_? However, be sensitive to ask a question that can be comfortably answered.
- j. If people bring personal needs into the discussion, in an inappropriate or excessive way, say, "That sounds like..., I would love to talk with you later about that. Now back to our discussion..." Heavier pastoral care issues should be handled outside the group.
- k. Don't ask Bible (or other factual) questions that can't be answered by the text you are studying. We don't want to embarrass people by their lack of knowledge. We want to create an atmosphere where everyone may contribute, regardless of his/her knowledge level.
- l. Don't assume that all people can read or read well. Don't call upon people to read or automatically assign verses to be read by everyone. Ask for volunteers to read to avoid putting people on the spot.
- m. Don't assume that people know the Bible, Bible characters and concepts or even where a particular book of the Bible is located. Gently guide and direct people.
- n. Keep a watch near you to keep track of the time you are spending on each section and to ensure that the discussion ends on time. If time is up and the discussion is lively that is a **great** time to end the discussion! It will encourage people to come back for more!

### ***Practical Exercise—Role Playing***

- Know it all Nellie (expert in Bible and life)
- Needy Ned (continually sharing his life saga and current crisis with the group)
- Olga the Over-contributor (shares too often and too long)
- Timid Ted (shy in a group)
- Out-there Ollie (offers flaky, inappropriate responses to questions and goes down rabbit trails)
- Dominant Danny (believes he should be the leader)

### ***Develop an Outward Focus in your Small Group***

i) The Open Chair

- Make it a priority to have everyone invite someone from the community to the church.
- Have someone from the group meet new people on Sunday AM and invite them to the group.
- Host a fun community gathering where new people can meet members of the group.

ii) Make it clear from the beginning that the group should grow, raise up leadership and multiply.

iii) Be Intentional: Having an outward focus is always a struggle. The small group leader and apprentices can continually keep the group outward focused.

### ***Ways that the small group can develop relationships with the world around them.***

i) Pray for specific people and opportunities and keep a list.

ii) Get training as a group in various forms of evangelism

iii) Participate in NLF Community Development [cdc@newlifefellowship.org](mailto:cdc@newlifefellowship.org)  
Loving people in practical ways

- Food and Clothing Pantry
- Health Clinic
- Beats n' Blessings
- ESL

iv) Participate in a church event or outreach

v) Create a safe environment for people who do not yet embrace Christianity.

vi) Go as a group to do an outreach or service project

vii) Adopt a missionary as a group.

## Your Small Group Meeting

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### *What do you do in a small group?*

#### i) Welcome

Begin the meeting with a low key ice breaker or way begin to open people up to one another and include new people. Creating a warm inviting atmosphere at the beginning of the time will greatly improve the small group experience for new people and regular attenders.

Gear your welcome and ice breakers to the level of relationship that people have with one another. If they do not know one another well you will need to keep the ice breakers non-threatening. As the relationships grow you can use ice-breakers that dig deeper.

Breaking people up into **smaller groups of 2-3** can be a great way of allowing people to share more intimately and allows more people to share.

This is a good place for the apprentice to lead.

#### ii) Worship or Daily office

You can transition into a time of worship in singing if you'd like. You can find someone gifted in this area to lead or you can use CD's if you do not have a musician in the group and have the words available to people. You can get a copy of NLF worship songs on-line or get a printed copy from the office (songs can also be looked up online with a quick google search). Use familiar songs, if possible.

Another option is to do a daily office, which is a time of contemplation. A daily office simply consists of alternating Silence and Scripture Reading for 10 minutes. It is a wonderful way to get centered as a community.

#### iii) Word/Study

This is not a time to preach a sermon or dispense with information. Use this time to create community among the members as they learn to listen to one another in a safe open non-judgmental atmosphere.

Find out more on how to prepare a Bible Study by participating in our Rule of Life Weekend 1.

#### iv) Sharing, Accountability and Prayer

Close the time by breaking into groups of 2-3 to share and pray. Sample questions to facilitate this sharing and prayer time include: "What's the biggest thing impacting your life", or "How can I pray for you", or "Is there anything from tonight's gathering that has impacted you that you would like prayer for"?

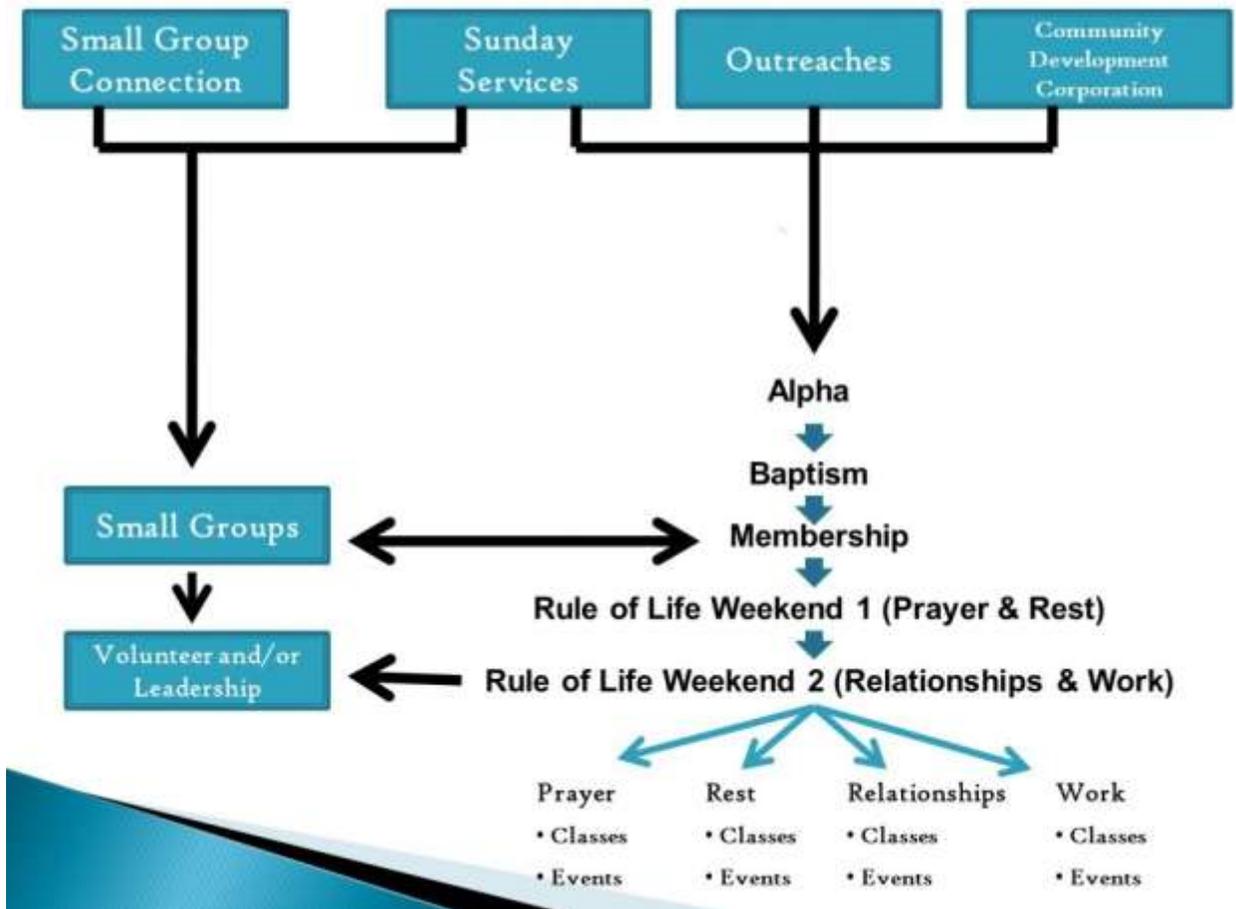
#### v) Witness

Cast vision for reaching out to those in our sphere of influence. Pray for those whom God has place in our midst. Encourage one another in seeking out others in the body that could grow by being a part of your small group.

## Learning and Growing

- i) Be Accountable to Authority
  - 1) Pastor, Coach, Leaders, and Apprentices
  - 2) Leadership Community Meetings
- ii) Continue to Learn and Grow

### Rule of Life Discipleship Formation Roadmap



- iii) Be Fruitful and Multiply
  - 1) Always be Looking for Someone to Develop as Your Replacement
    - Ask and Define Expectations for people
    - Show people
    - Let them lead on their own



## **Suggested first meeting format**

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### ***Get acquainted – 15 min.***

Each person answers any one of these questions.

- Where did you live between the ages of 7-12 and how many brothers & sisters did you have.
- What was the best place in your house to hang out? Why?
- Who did you feel closest to in your family?
- When did God start to become meaningful to you?

### ***Opening Prayer – 1 min.***

### ***Sample Daily Office – 10 min.***

Scripture Reading led by leader (1 minute)

Silence (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading led by leader (1 minute)

Silence (6 minutes)

### ***Developing a covenant or agreement – 45 min.***

The "Small Group Agreement" and explain each point.

Fill out the group agreement and sign and date.

### ***Begin the process of Group Leadership – 20 min.***

- 1) Ask people to identify areas where they may want to serve.
- 2) Fill out the roster with those possibilities.
- 3) Setup a means of communication like a phone chain or email chain
- 4) Plan a fun get together outside the normal group time.

### ***Prayer and Ministry time with each other – 20min***

If the group is large you can save a lot of time by not asking for prayer requests but simply begin by splitting up into smaller groups and praying for one another.

Taking prayer requests may also be appropriate during this time.

## ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

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- 1) Hand out a small slip of paper to each member and have them write a nickname they were once or are currently called, gather the slips together in a hat or bowl and let each person remove one. Going in a circle have each person read the name out loud and have the rest of the group guess who it is! That person can then (if they desire) explain how they got that nickname.
- 2) Name one thing most people in the group probably don't know about you yet. (It could be a skill, hobby, dream or funny story.)
- 3) Name one way in which your belief about God's character changed when you first became a believer?
- 4) If you had two free hours of time to do whatever you'd wish what would you do & why?
- 5) Fill in the blank. One unfulfilled dream of mine is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6) Fill in the blank. More than anything I'd like to be remembered as someone who...
- 7) What is the most important thing you have learned in your walk with God?
- 8) A variation on (#1). Have each member bring a baby or childhood photo of themselves and have the group guess who it was.

## Resources

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### ***NLF Resources***

Check out the Small Group Resources link on the New Life Website ([www.newlifefellowship.org](http://www.newlifefellowship.org)) for book suggestions and other resources for small group leaders. Also check out the **Learning Online Resources** on our website.

Below are some resources that can be purchased or reserved by contacting your pastor or the church office.

1. Worship song book is available electronically. Email Myrna Rohdin at [mrhohdin@newlifefellowship.org](mailto:mrhohdin@newlifefellowship.org) or download from [www.newlifefellowship.org](http://www.newlifefellowship.org) under Small Group Resources.
2. Emotionally Healthy Church book and Workbook by Pastor Pete (available at the Book Table)
3. Emotionally Healthy Spirituality book and Workbook by Pastor Pete (available at the Book Table)
4. NavPress Life Change series as an excellent guidebook for inductive bible study
5. Intersivity Press Topical studies including Pastor Pete's studies on Old Testament Characters, LOVE and others.
6. Sermon-Based Small Group Resources available at [www.newlifefellowship.org](http://www.newlifefellowship.org).

### ***Recommended Publishers***

Serendipity  
Zondervan  
NavPress  
Intersivity

## **Small Group Evaluation**

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Every member gets a copy and answers the questions. Then give it to one of the "leaders" in the group. Be honest, practical but affirming. Discuss the results with suggested changes at the next meeting. OR You could discuss it at that time. Be sure that there is an accepting atmosphere for people's comments and reactions.

What three things do you like most about our group?

What one thing do you like least about our group?

What is one thing you would add to our group?

What is one thing that you would drop or de-emphasize?

## Small Group Roster

Name	Email	Phone	Service
			I can serve in the following way:
			I can serve in the following way:
			I can serve in the following way:
			I can serve in the following way:
			I can serve in the following way:
			I can serve in the following way:
			I can serve in the following way:

Small Group Leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Small Group Apprentice: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Small Group Agreement

*To be reviewed quarterly or as needed*

We agree to the following disciplines as a group:

- Attendance Give priority to the group meeting (call when absent or late)
- Participation The purpose of the group is to get to know one another and build genuine Christian community. This is accomplished by participation in the group and letting other in on our spiritual story as it develops. We must also listen to others as they share their stories. To be in a group you must be willing to let the group hear your story.
- Safety: To help create a safe place where people can be heard with compassion and respect (no quick answers or judgments).
- Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential
- Accountability: To give permission to group members to hold you accountable to goals you set for *yourself*.
- Assimilation: To keep the door open to others in our church or community (unconnected and unchurched people) who need what we have found.
- Responsibility: To share in the roles and responsibilities of this small group according to our gifts, passions, abilities and the needs of the group.

### Small Group Information

Small Group Leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Small Group Apprentice: \_\_\_\_\_

List this group in the Small Group bulletin: Yes No

Contact person for the group: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency (weekly, bi-weekly, 1<sup>st</sup> 3 weeks, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Refreshments/ Mealtimes \_\_\_\_\_

Childcare: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials we will use to begin our group:

What Type of Group will this primarily be? (Circle One) Geographic Affinity Task Content

Will we come prepared for the Bible Study? If so, how much preparation?

Review Date of this Agreement \_\_\_\_\_



