



new life fellowship

Small Group Leadership Training

"Life Change Happens Better in Circles, than in Rows"



New Life Fellowship
82-10 Queens Blvd
Elmhurst, NY 11373
718-424-0122 ext 112
www.newlife@nyc
smallgroups@newlife.nyc

Table of Contents

NLF Vision: The 5 “M’s” of New Life.....	2
Small Group Mission Statement.....	3
Biblical Basis for Small Groups	6
What is a Small Group.....	8
Goal of Small Groups	9
Guidelines to have a Healthy Small Group.....	12
Guidelines for Being Together	13
Community and Small Group Structure	14
Small Group Leader Descriptions.....	15
Small Group Apprentice Description.....	16
Small Group Coach Description	17
Small Group Meetings	18
What do you do in a Small Group.....	19
First Meeting Format.....	20
How to Pick Bible Study Material	21
Facilitating a Small Group Discussion.....	24
Characteristics of a Good Question.....	25
Practical Pointers for Small Group Discussions.....	27
Appendix 1: Small Group Models.....	29
Appendix 2: Sample Daily Office	31
Appendix 3: Creating a Rule of Life	33
Appendix 4: Different Ideas for Group Covenants.....	37
Appendix 5: Ice Breaker Questions.....	39
Appendix 6: Small Group Planning Guide	40
Appendix 7: Small Group Attendance (HUB).....	41
Appendix 8: Small Group Evaluation	42
Appendix 9: Spiritual Gifts Survey ©2003 LifeWay Christian Resources.....	43
NLF Resources	47

NLF VISION: The 5 “M’s” of New Life

Monastic – Slowing Down to be with God

- Silence/Solitude
- Scripture
- Daily Offices/Prayer
- Sabbath Keeping
- Rule (Anchor) of Life
- The Examen

Multi-racial – Bridging Racial, Cultural, Economic & Gender barriers “Celebrating Diversity”

- History of race/women
- The new family of Jesus
- Self awareness
- Intentional friendships with other ethnic groups
- Lifelong learner/listener

eMotional Health - Loving yourself and others well

- Quit unhealthy spirituality
- Going back to go forward
- Limits
- Grief and loss
- Brokenness
- Loving incarnationally
- EH skills

Marriage to Christ - Shaping our lives out of Marriage to Christ

- Seeing marriages and singleness as sacrament
- Connecting our spirituality and our sexuality
- Understanding marriage as one of the core images of Christianity
- Communion with each other (not using each other)

Missional - Offering ourselves to the world

- Serving the poor in our local community
- Called to full-time ministry
- All life is sacred (no sacred/secular divide)
- Stewardship and generous giving

Small Group Mission Statement

“Life Change Happens Better in Circles, Than in Rows”



The vision of NLF small groups (both general and focused) is to facilitate the grouping of **4-15** 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 **building community with others** from the larger community and inviting them to the group, explore **spiritual formation** in relationships (with God, each other, and the world around them) by learning together, keeping each other accountable and also being mission focused by **being on mission** in the group and community at large.

The small group leaders will model the **NLF Rule of Life** and regularly integrate rhythms 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 neighborhoods and opportunity to play together.

LIFE IN COMMUNITY – What are some ways that you can build community by inviting people to your group?



1. Ways you can connect people to your group publicly.

A. Large settings

- Sunday mornings (Lobby, Shell Room etc.)

- Connection Events (Open Mic, Retreats, Men's Breakfast, etc.)
- Equipping Events (Alpha, Though the Word, Summer Equipping, EHD courses etc.)
- Outreach Events (Summer parties, Community events, CDC, VBS, etc.)

B. Small Group Connection

C. ALPHA/Basic Christianity

D. Take a risk by inviting others to your group.

E. Social Media/Email etc.

2. Ways to facilitate connecting within your group.

A. Social gatherings. – Try to do something fun once a month. (game nights, outings, dinners, potlucks)

B. Icebreakers at your gatherings (see appendix 5)

C. Snacks or Meals - Use food as a way to form relationships.

3. Overall Atmosphere (Stress these at the first meeting!)

A. Safe—Confidentiality – what is said in the room, stays in the room. Read suggested guidelines for the group (see pages 9 & 10)

B. Open—Lead through vulnerability

C. Non-Judgmental—Practice Speaking in the "I"

LIFE OF FORMATION— How will your group learn together?



1. What will your content be?

A. Sermon Study

B. Bible study

C. Book study

D. EHD Materials

E. Topical

2. Using the Inductive Bible Study Method.

- A. Observe
- B. Interpret/Reflect
- C. Application.

(See Resources page 47 - Types of Bible Study page 21)

LIFE ON MISSION – What are some ways that your group can be on mission?



1. Ways your small group can be on mission in the world around them.

- A. Serve with in New Life Community Development Corporation (CDC)
 - Food and Clothing Pantry
 - Health Clinic
 - Mentoring program
 - ESL
 - Email: <http://newlifecdc.nyc>
- B. Participate in a church event or outreach.
- C. Create a safe environment for people who do not yet embrace Christianity.
- D. Go as a group to do an outreach or service project in the community you are in.
- E. Connect with some of our Global Partners. (EHD, Philippines, etc.)
- F. Adopt a room at New Life that the group will clean.

2. Ways that people in your small group can serve one another.

Each member can take on different roles within the group.

- Contact person
- Small Group facilitator
- Prayer coordinator
- Host
- Person who brings food or snacks

Biblical Basis for Small Groups

In recent years, the winds of change have blown across the face of the church. It's a reflection of the rapid transition taking place in American culture. These changes are precipitated by the information explosion, the continued influx of immigrants, and a society that has become increasingly hostile to the Gospel. In addition, today's urban work environment, with its freeway traffic, harried schedule, and technological advances leaves many with a scarcity of social relationships. To meet the needs of our society, churches are returning to an old, but biblical, approach to ministry—small groups. Ideally, these groups meet at a variety of times, for a variety of reasons, and in a variety of places. Small groups fit the changing face of American culture. Perhaps it could be asked, "Isn't this just the latest fad?" For some, perhaps it is. Others, however, see this as a return to an early form of the church. What does the Bible say?

The Old Testament

In Genesis 1:1 we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The Hebrew word for "God" is Elohim. It is a plural term, even though it is translated singular throughout the Old Testament. The word expresses the perfect harmony and fellowship that exists between the three members of the Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three share in the divine nature and majesty of God. It is a unique relationship they have; beyond our human ability to understand. But this relationship forms the basis for community and group life in the Bible. For example, in Genesis 1:26, we discover that God created two people in His image because it was "not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18-25). People were created to be in a communal setting with one another. God's promised blessing was to all the nation communities of the world (Gen. 12:3). The nation of Israel, with its divisions of tribes, families and households, also emphasized the small group place in God's plan for mankind.

The New Testament

Jesus as a Small Group Leader

Jesus' work further demonstrated the significance of small groups for the people of God. Jesus himself was involved in both small and large group ministry, but his large group ministry was preceded by, and sometimes resulted from, his ministry to the small group (Mark 1:29-34, 6:30-44). He began his work by establishing a small group of disciples (Mark 1:14-19) and spent the majority of his time with them, focusing on relationships. He also used the small group to teach and model spiritual truths, attitudes and behaviors. (Luke 8:10). Finally, Jesus used the group as his method for leadership training. His band of twelve men were to carry on the work of the gospel after he finished and returned to the Father. In the book of Acts, we read that these twelve men literally turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

The Early church and the Small Group

Taking their cue from Jesus, the apostles continued His emphasis on the small group as the building block of Christianity. They found it to be an effective means of establishing the early church. The New Testament term "household" is descriptive of the rich experience these early believers had with the small group. In the New Testament, a household was a true community of relationships around which an individual lived. This included his family and friends (Acts 10:2; 24; 11:14; 16:15,31). It was out of this community of relationships that the body of Christ was formed. When someone became a Christian, it was not uncommon for his entire family to follow in his footsteps. That was only natural, since their changed life, and constant testimony to the grace of God, was a powerful witness to the truth of the gospel.

Consequently, the ministry strategy of the New Testament church involved going house to house (Acts 5:42 for the apostles; Acts 20:20 for Paul). Since there were no church buildings, entire churches met in homes, (Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15) or, at times, in upper rooms that were larger and could accommodate a small crowd (Acts 20:6-8). These little home fellowships were numerous in a single city. In Rome, for example, Paul tells the recipient of the letter to the Romans to greet Aquila and Priscilla and the church that was in their house (Romans 16:5). This is followed by a long list of other Roman believers to greet. The inference is that there were other house churches in Rome. In Jerusalem, where

the church started, believers met in small groups in homes (Acts 2:42; 5:42) and in the temple for large group meetings (Acts 2:46). When people went to church, they didn't go to a building, they went to a home. "Church" took place in the homes of the early believers. Consider Acts 2:41-47. In small groups people ministered to one another, they worshiped, they did evangelism, they partook of the Lord's supper, they prayed, and were taught the Word.

Today, more and more churches are rediscovering the biblical value of the small group. Small groups provide the intimacy, nurture and accountability needed to live the Christ-like life in modern day America. Groups surround people with the relational proximity that cannot be had in corporate gatherings. Through groups, people are released to minister and be ministered to. The end result is growth of the body and the expansion of the church.

Other verses: Acts 2:42-47, Matthew 18:20, Luke 8:10, John 17, Luke 16:13-16, Acts 20:20

Something to Consider

"The most definitive change for the nature, function, and structure for the church came with Constantine. With his acceptance of Christianity, the church came into public favor. Perhaps nothing symbolized this change as dramatically as the shift from the house church to the basilica (building) as the fundamental expression of church life and function. Worship in the house church had affirmed and symbolized the priesthood of all believers and the unity of the body in one fellowship of the people of God. Moving into the basilica was more than a changing of meeting place... This meant a change in ecclesiology – in the theology of the church. The basilica facilitated the division between the clergy and the laity... Worship changed from being the united celebration of all the people to a clergy-performed ritual with the laity as spectators."

What is a Small Group?

A Christian small group is a voluntary, intentional, face to face gathering of four to fifteen people on a regular time schedule, with a common purpose of discovering and growing in the possibilities of abundant life in Christ.

Small Groups are:

Voluntary – people come because they want and have a perceived need

Intentional – very clear plans, purpose and objectives

Face to Face – designed for interpersonal relationships, to build community through **authentic relationships with God, each other and the world**

4 to 15 people – minimum and maximum number for positive interpersonal support

Regular Time Schedule – the group meets once a week, every other week or once a month

Common Purpose – agreed upon goals and objectives, with a contract that spells out these goals

Discovering – the group is open to those who are not Christian but are open to spiritual things

Growing – the group is open to those who are Christian who are looking for a deeper, more vibrant life **of prayer, rest, relationships and work** as outlined in **the NLF Rule of Life**.

Possibilities – willing to stretch, dream and risk

Abundant life in Christ – opens to the deeper things of God

Benefits of Small Groups

- A place to discover and share the love of Jesus Christ.
- A place for spiritual growth, transformation and renewal.
- A place for friendship, support and encouragement.
- A place for strength in difficult times.
- A place to give and receive love.
- A place to serve others.
- A place to discover and use spiritual gifts.
- A place to meet God through prayer and worship.
- A place to get to know the Bible better.
- A place to strategize and accomplish Christian mission.

Goal of Small Groups

Goals

As the small group leader, it is important that you:

- Understand NLF Small Group Vision and Purpose
- Understand the role of the Small Group Leader, Apprentice and Coach
- Understanding how to *build community by inviting people* to your small group.
- Understanding how to help your group *grow in their spiritual formation*.
- Understanding different ways your group can *be on mission*.
- What are some resources I can use to help develop the group?

A. Facilitate and Deepen Relationships in three areas

- God
- Each other
- The world around us

B. Foster healthy relationships

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

- Safe (Confidentiality – what is said in the room, stays in the room) See page 13
 - Open (Lead through vulnerability)
 - Non-Judgmental (Practice Speaking in the “I” and turn to wonder)
- * Group Covenants (See appendix 4)

2. Leadership

Changing leaders facilitate life changing groups

3. Expectations

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 group member

See Spiritual Gifts Survey (see appendix 9)

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)

8. Safe Environment

Provide a safe environment where people can take the risk of self- exposure without feeling threatened. Risk is what moves people down the chart from superficiality to confession; from non-involvement to involvement, and thus, to community. Threat is what keeps people from taking risks

and allowing intimacy to occur. On occasion, very little separates risk from threat. A good group leader must hold threat and risk in balance. One way to do this is the use of questions. Group members are moved to deeper levels of intimacy when they ponder and respond to the proper questions. Questions should move from what happened yesterday to what happened today. They should move from general to personal; from cliché to confession. This, of course, presupposes that the leader is willing to become vulnerable and share on these levels themselves. Notice the sample questions and statements below.

9. Levels of Intimacy and Questions

- **Sharing superficialities:** Clichés, the safe, the obvious, the popular
"I want to thank the Lord for a wonderful life."
"How are you doing today?"
- **Sharing information:** What I do, who I know
"I joined the church when I was 21."
"When did you get married?"
- **Sharing ideas and opinions:** What I think, faith questions
"I think the EV Free Church has good theology."
"How does suffering relate to Christian maturity?"
- **Share feelings:** Passions, values, personal faith, our personhood
"I struggle with the purpose of prayer if God already knows."
"Describe a time in your life when you felt pessimistic."
- **Share closet confessions:** Shame, abuse, deep hurt/pain, sin, forgiveness, violence
"I find it difficult to pray with my husband."
"When have you felt abandoned or rejected by God?"

10. Intimacy

Facilitate intimacy and cohesion by meeting peoples' needs. In a group, people need affirmation, forgiveness, forbearance, and the freedom to fail. They need to feel understood and listened to. According to John Mallison, for a group to meet needs, it must also provide people with a sense of belonging. Group members must feel that they are an integral part of the health of the group. They must sense that their involvement in group life is an asset, not a liability. Cohesive groups have a sense of purpose and meaning. They are not perceived as being a waste of time. Wide ownership in the development, and planning, of the group is also an important part of group cohesion and intimacy. Mallison rightly notes that, "The individual will relate to a group to the degree that he/she sees it meeting some of his/her needs. And the extent to which the group can meet these needs of its different members will determine the degree of group cohesion."

11. Ministering

Minister to one another to increase involvement in other's lives. The group leader must allow everyone in the group to meet needs. When people are ministering, and using their spiritual gifts, they are fulfilled, satisfied and happy. Most importantly, community is developed. Each person has a gift mix. We as leaders need to help others discover and use their gift mix and encourage them to care for one another. Each member of the group must come to the group expecting to give as well as receive. That means that the leader needs to facilitate group members to be free to serve. This will give them a renewed purpose.

12. Sample service chart: Opportunities to Minister to One Another

- ❖ Opening
- ❖ Worship

- ❖ Calling absent people
- ❖ Calling new people
- ❖ Phone list
- ❖ Planning birthday celebrations
- ❖ Hosting a social activity
- ❖ Planning a social activity
- ❖ Book receipts
- ❖ Email prayer requests
- ❖ Leading a small group discussion
- ❖ Taking attendance on the HUB (see appendix 7)

13. Play

Play together. We need times of fellowship and play to help break down the barriers that keep us from building intimacy with one another.

What are some things you as a group have done to fellowship together?

What other things could we as missional groups do to have fellowship with one another?

14. Expressions of Love

Show genuine expressions of love and special investments of time. Taking special interest in someone, visiting their home, or sending them a note will go a long way towards creating intimacy. These expressions of love will produce a warm, safe environment for the group to grow in.

What other ways could we show interest and concern to members of the group?

15. Serve

Serve together. As a community group, you could serve the community, church, or another community group.

What could we do to serve each other?

What could we do to serve the church?

What could we do to serve the neighborhood?

16. Outreach

To maintain the attitude of being sent to reconcile and restore the world to Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, **a community group could sponsor an outreach event** and invite another group, church or just their un-churched friends.

What could we do as an outreach event?

Who could we invite?

Guidelines to have a Healthy Small Group

People long for intimacy: Intimacy with others, their spouses, and God. But for all the longing, there is an illusive nature to "intimacy." Due to our own fallen natures, intimacy is not natural. It is something we must work at. Here are eight keys to developing intimacy within your small group.

1. A Clear Purpose

- Covenant/contract (see appendix 4) to keep everyone on track
- Commitments- regular meetings become the priority in a person's life.
- 4 important characteristics, time in the Word, (with application) worship/prayer, mission, ministry to one another.

2. A Good Beginning

- Invitations
- Preparations and a good first meeting. (see pages 20-22)

3. A Helpful Leader

- Prayerful
- Prepared and active.
- Facilitator
- Leads through vulnerability and love
- Keep learning, don't have all the answers

4. Clear Communication Patterns

- Equalized participation
- Interactive discussion
- From surface to depth
- Listening and speaking.
- Other than the leader and apprentice, no one bears more influence or power over the group than any other.
- A lively discussion where everyone has a chance to share, but not demanded
- Don't allow anyone to confess anyone's faults but their own
- Don't allow anyone to dominate
- Group members communicate ideas clearly and accurately

5. Worthwhile Content

- Discussion/action/study
- Avoidance of doctrinal or political discussion that is divisive or argumentative

6. Growing Trust and Care

- Feelings
- Conflict/congruence.
- Conflicts that arise from opposing ideas and opinions are acknowledged and dealt with
- Deal with conflict and problem people immediately and outside the group context on a one-to-one basis.

7. Centered on Jesus Christ

- Prayer and discipleship
- A healthy time of prayer
- Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are central to the function of the group and is the unseen guest at every group meeting

8. Serving/Laughing/Mission

- Use a team approach to running the group
- People released to serve others and exercise their gifts
- New members brought into the group will keep the group alive and growing
- A relaxed attitude where people can laugh and have fun

Guidelines For Being Together

- **Extend And Receive Welcome**
People learn best in hospitable places. We can support each other through our hospitality to one another.
- **Sharing Is Invited Not Demanded**
There is no pressure to share, although sharing affirms God's truth to you when you speak it out loud, and it may benefit someone else. 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
- **Be Present In Your Listening And Speaking**
We ask that you listen with your hearts when others are speaking and we will listen to you with our hearts when you are speaking. While others are talking, please let them finish without interruption
- **Listen In The Silence – God Is Speaking!**
Treat silence as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling up the space with words.
- **Speak Only For Yourself Using "I" Statements**
You're only an expert on yourself.
- **Take Notes on Yourself** (especially when having a reaction about someone else in the group)
*When the going gets rough turn to wonder
What Does My Reaction Teach Me About Me?*
- **Keep Your Sharing Brief**
Some of us talk more easily than others. Keeping your sharing brief keeps the sharing balanced. Keep sharing to no longer than five minutes in order for each person in the group to have time to share.
- **Honor Confidentiality**
In order to create a safe group for openness and honesty we want to ask that what is shared in the group stays in the group. Feel free to share your own personal experiences outside the group.
- **Arrive On Time And End On Time**
We respect one another by arriving on time and we will respect you by ending on time.
- **Please Silence Cell Phones.**
If you have an emergency, please take calls outside of the meeting room.

Community and Small Group Structure

Geographic/Neighborhood Groups – Life in Community

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 married and single, and meet in Forest Hills, Flushing, Bayside, Elmhurst and many other neighborhoods.

Affinity Groups – Life in Community

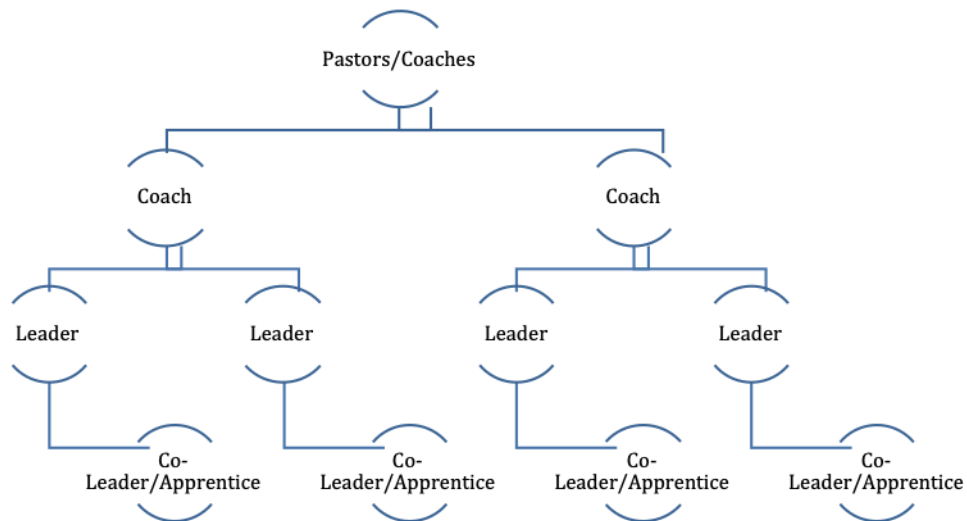
Affinity small groups are small groups that draw people who are in a similar life stage, marital status etc. Married Couples, Singles, Young Adults, Men's groups, Women's and Cultural groups would be examples of affinity small groups.

Pathway – Life of Formation

Groups like ALPHA, EHD courses, Through the Word

Task Groups – Life on Mission

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 small group leaders, CDC etc.



Small Group Leader Description

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
- Attend the EHD courses: "Emotionally Healthy Spirituality" and "Emotionally Healthy Relationships"
- Participate in the Leadership Conferences
- Grow in the NLF Rule of Life (Discipleship)
- Give Regularly and Faithfully of your Financial Resources to God's Kingdom
- **Faithful, Available, Teachable**

Responsibilities:

- 1.** Develop an intimate walk with God
 - Create a Rule of Life (How to craft a Rule of Life appendix 3)
 - Practice daily time with God e.g. use the Day by Day devotional
- 2.** Build and lead a leadership team
 - Identify the key 3 people that you as the small group leader will invest in as potential leaders include an Apprentice
 - Identify and empower people to flourish in their gifts
 - Equip your key leaders with resources appropriate to their area of service
 - Use a coach as a resource, especially when you have a problem in your group that you cannot handle. Don't wait!
 - Deal with conflict early and in a healthy manner
- 3.** Care for people in the group
 - Pray for members of the group
 - Follow up with people between meetings
 - Get to know the members of the group and their "story"
 - Create a safe, open, non-judgmental environment for people
- 4.** 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 Apprentice Description

Expectations

- Become a Member of New Life Fellowship
- Attend the Orientation to Small Group Leadership Class
- Attend the EHD courses: "Emotionally Healthy Spirituality" and "Emotionally Healthy Relationships"
- Participate in the Leadership Conferences
- Grow in the NLF Rule of Life (Discipleship)
- Give Regularly and Faithfully of your Financial Resources to God's Kingdom
- **Faithful, Available, Teachable**

Responsibilities:

- 1.** Develop an intimate walk with God
 - Create a Rule of Life (How to craft a Rule of Life appendix 3)
 - Practice daily time with God e.g. use the Day by Day devotional
- 2.** 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
- 3.** 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 as they are offered
- 4.** 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
- 5.** 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
- 6.** After the meeting
 - Care for the members. There are four types of people that especially need to be followed up on:
 - Those who were absent
 - Those who were ignored or "were silent" during the meeting
 - Anyone that was "attacked" during the meeting
 - Anyone who is hurting in a special way

Small Group Coach Description

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.

Expectations:

- Has experience leading healthy small groups
- Able to mentor and supervise others
- Is a member of New Life Fellowship
- Has attended the EHD courses: "Emotionally Healthy Spirituality" and "Emotionally Healthy Relationships"
- Submit to the leadership of your pastor or community director
- Attend the Orientation to Small Group Leadership Class
- Participate in the Community Directors Meetings and Leadership Conferences
- Grow in the NLF Rule of Life
- Give Regularly and Faithfully of your Financial Resources to Gods Kingdom
- **Faithful, Available, Teachable**

Responsibilities:

- 1. Maintain an intimate walk with God**
 - Create a Rule of Life (How to craft a Rule of Life appendix 3)
 - Practice daily time with God e.g. use the Day by Day devotional
- 2. 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.
 - Visit small group at least three times a year.
- 3. 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.
- 4. Multiplication of the group**
 - Identify apprentices
 - Encourage growth
 - Support the birthing of the new group

Small Group Meetings

Setting up the Room

Setting up the room may seem trivial, but it is essential for the health of a good group. Physical dynamics will affect the outcome of a meeting. Remember, the small group is a face-to-face gathering of three to fifteen people at a regular time, with the common purpose of discovering and growing in the possibilities of abundant life in Christ. You want to do all that is possible to make that happen. Setting the room up in a circle promotes community, eliminates communication problems, and encourages all to participate.

Running a Small Group Meeting

Running the meeting is an important part of leading a small group. Though the way the meeting is run doesn't necessarily make a group effective, it does aid in the development of community. There are several effective ways to run a meeting. The following will offer three alternatives. All have been proven in small group settings. Your group has the right to choose exactly how it will function. As you read over these models, ask yourself what would work best in your situation, adapt accordingly.

Begin and end on time unless the group agrees that you will not operate that way

This is especially true if there are children or baby sitters involved. To violate this expectation, unless the group agrees otherwise, only creates frustration and hard feelings and may lead to people leaving the group.

Use a team approach to running the group

Have a host, a worship leader, and others to help. It is always important to have a group apprentice who is learning to facilitate the group along with the group's leader. Start the group with this expectation that people will eventually help do what is necessary to make the group work. Ask people to take responsibility for the group. All the gifts and personalities of a group are important.

Leaders keep learning and do not have all the answers

Avoid being the answer man! The small group leader is to facilitate. If necessary she or he can find answers to hard questions after the group has adjourned.

Ask good questions

Asking good questions is an important part of facilitating a small group. Good questions generate intrigue and allow us to share our feelings of thoughts. Keep questions open ended, that is, they allow for a multitude of answers. Often there are "how" and "why" Questions. Questions that require a simple yes or no do little to generate discussion. A good facilitator has more questions at his or her disposal than is needed. Do not use questions to make statements that are confrontational (example: Isn't it true that most politicians of your political party care little about the lives of the poor?)

Be comfortable with silence

One of the most difficult facets of leading a group is when people don't speak. However, the scripture tells us that we meet God in that silent place. Don't be afraid to remain silent.

Two Keys

If you have a problem you cannot handle, go to your community director, coach or pastor. Jesus Christ is central to the function of the group and is the unseen guest at every group meeting.

What do you do in a Small Group?

Welcome

Begin the meeting with a low-key ice breaker (see appendix 5) is a way 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 attendees.

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.

Move 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.

Worship or Daily office

You can transition into a time of worship through singing if you'd like. If you do not have a musician in the group feel free to use YouTube, digital music. Have words available. Use familiar songs, if possible.

Another option is to do a daily office (see appendix 2), 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. We recommend that you use Pete Scazzero Day by Day devotional.

Word/Study

This is not a time to preach a sermon or dispense 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.

Sharing, Accountability and Prayer

Close the time by moving 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"?

Witness

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

See appendix 6 – Small Group Planning

See appendix 7 – Small Group attendance in the HUB

First Meeting Format

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. (See appendix 2)

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 Covenant" (appendix 4) and explain each point.

Fill out the group agreement sign and date.

Divide the group into small groups with a large piece of paper and marker. Have them write down what they think would make the small group successful. Then mark down the top three from the list.

As a whole group record on another paper the top three ideas from each group. Discuss what ideas people can and cannot live with. The result will be a covenant.

Include specifics like time, how long to meet and what to do about children, if necessary.

Or: Read through a covenant and decide what you as a group like or dislike about it and adapt it to your group.

* See appendix 4 – Group Covenants

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.

* See Appendix 6 - Small Group Planning Guide

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 moving into smaller groups and praying for one another.

Taking prayer requests may also be appropriate during this time.

How to Pick Bible Study Material

- Consider the backgrounds and interests of group members.
 - Avoid material that is too long or too difficult.
 - Consider the Biblical heritage of each member.
 - Consider the motivational level of each to study the Bible.
 - Do not assume too much Bible knowledge.
- * See page 50 for Resources

Incorporating Emotional Health and Contemplative Spirituality in Small Groups

- A. Emotional Health**
- Use the CTR, focus celebrations and appreciations
 - Speaking in the "I"
 - Sharing thoughts AND feelings
 - Give people an opportunity to share feelings, wants, needs, and preferences.
 - Clarifying what another person is thinking rather than make assumptions.
- B. Contemplative**
- Silence
 - Lectio Divina
 - Daily Offices (Day by Day)
 - Rule of Life

Ways to Study (Ways to lead your group)

Most Bible studies in groups are inductive. People can dig for information and share what they learn from looking at the text on their own. Sometimes it is necessary to add what scholars have learned in their studies of the same text, but usually people understand the text themselves and from the findings of others in the group. For this reason, it is important for leaders to learn how to use inductive questions in their group.

A. Inductive Bible Study - 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?

B. OPEN--DIG-- REFLECT from Serendipity

Open questions introduce the Bible study or create a need in those doing the study. These should be creative and catchy. Remember, people are unconsciously asking the question, "Why should I participate in this discussion? For example:

- What role do you think emotions play in the maturity of a Christian?
- Pete quotes "our family directly affects who we are today more than any other thing that has happened to us." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?
- The title of the lesson is BREAK THE POWER OF THE PAST. What does this title imply?

Dig questions observe and or interpret the text. These questions force the participants to interact with the text. For example;

- Read Genesis 3:1-13.
- How would you describe the sin of Adam and Eve?
- In what ways is that same sin played out in your life today?
- List some character qualities of Adam and Eve.
- How can this family of origin from Adam and Eve be changed in our lives?

Reflect questions cause us to make the principles in the text real in our own lives. For example:

- What are one or two things that you believe God wants you to "re-learn" in His family?
- Who do you need to forgive and when will you do it?
- What attitude do you need to change?
- What will you do to serve someone this week?

C. HOOK--BOOK--LOOK--TOOK. Similar to open dig, reflect.

Hook- Why should I listen to you today? Attention getter. Opens the mind. For example:

- What is it like to visit another church where you know no one?
- What is it like to move into a new neighborhood?
- Start a new job?

Book – What does the passage/ book say? Changes the mind to the thinking of God. It is the backbone of the study. For example:

- What does this passage say about hospitality?
- What is hospitality?
- When should we practice hospitality?
- Is it only for those with the gift of hospitality?

Look – what does it look like today? What are the implications and issues for today? Changes passion. Bridges the gap between the author's thoughts for the original audience and what it looks like today. For example:

- What would we need to do differently if we were to practice hospitality after the church service?
- This week in our neighborhood?
- Or at work?

- Who would we invite over for a meal or out to lunch?
- What would our families/co-workers think?

Took – What are you going to do about it today? Changes the will / Actions. Application. For example:

- What are you going to do this week to demonstrate hospitality?
- What is one act of hospitality you will practice this week at work?

D. Sermon Based

Sermon Based Small Groups (SBSG) serve to equip our small groups and leaders to lead effective discussions. SBSG aid the small group leader by preparing content for them, thereby limiting the amount of preparation needed to facilitate a meeting. Secondly, SBSG are for the purpose of building continuity with the Sunday teachings. Questions are crafted to help small groups go deeper into the sermon content.

Every week, the sermon questions will be posted in the HUB and NLF website created to go out to our small group leaders. These documents serve to equip the small group with questions that help dig deeper into scripture, as well address issues, questions, and insights that the sermon raised. Therefore, questions should have a balance of observation, interpretation, and application. By *observation*, we are referring to an approach to the text that embraces the tension of observing the text, as well as being observed by it.

Interpretation questions are for the purpose of discovering meaning.

Application questions are to lead the group and individual to reflect on how to practice what was studied.

Participation

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

Protection

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

Pace

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

Keep to the Point

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

Facilitating a Small Group Discussion

The best way to lead a small group meeting is to facilitate, not teach. The following chart compares and contrasts the differences.

Teacher	Facilitator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides information • Communication goes back and forth between teacher and students • Points out conclusions • Written or oral "testing" of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an experience • Communication with all the members in the class • Helps discover conclusions • Feedback-observed in changes lives

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.

Myths about Small Group Facilitators

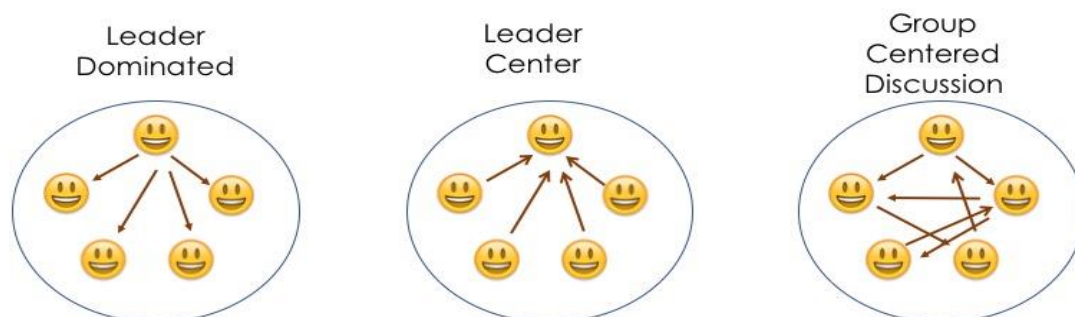
- You must be a Bible scholar or expert on the topic
- You should have the right answer for everyone
- You must be the small group leader and have absolute spiritual authority over people

What group facilitation is not:

- Preaching
- Instructional teaching
- Leader-centered

Group facilitation is:

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



Characteristics of a good question

Use open ended questions. They have many right answers. They are designed to illicit opinions from the participants.

Avoid questions of fact- questions of fact are boring and hamper discussion. Their answers are so obvious people will feel awkward responding.

Questions should be answered by everybody- good questions must be suitable for the group at hand. Share some of the practical hazards of holding a strongly Calvinistic view of election, may be a practical question for those studying doctrine, but for others, it may be irrelevant or too theological. "What is a good thing happening in your life now, and what makes it good?" is a much better question that many people can answer.

Keep questions short and simple. Complicated questions tend to confuse. Two or more questions asked at the same time also tend to confuse. "What does it mean to be created in the image of God and why is this important for those who are interested in Christian feminism?" Both topics are complex. Instead, ask "The Bible says we are created in God's image. What are some ways that we are like God?"

How to use discussion questions

- Give the group time to reflect on the question – they need time to process it.
- Don't answer your own question if others don't answer immediately – this requires that the leader is comfortable with silence, be ready with another question if the first one fails to illicit a response.
- Questions should focus on information, opinions, feelings, and applications.
- Questions should relate to the subject at hand – a discussion that is constantly heading off on a tangent can frustrate those involved in the group.
- Create an atmosphere where people can share at whatever level they want – no one should feel forced to answer questions. At the same time, no one should be kept from sharing what is important to them, so long as it relates to the subject at hand.
- Give everyone an opportunity to talk, by asking the quiet ones if they want to add something or what they think about the question. They have the right to say they would rather not answer.

Question Samples

Effective and Ineffective Questions

- Is God all-powerful? *Ineffective*
- How much does Jesus love us? (cf. John 3:16) *Effective*
- Nicodemus came to Jesus by night to talk. Why? How is John using darkness to make a point? (cf. John 13:30) *Effective*
- What significance does the number 12 have in the New Testament? *Ineffective*
- In your family, who likes to play jokes? Any one joke stand out? *Ineffective*
- What must you do to be saved? *Effective*
- 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? *Ineffective*
- The Bible says God is holy. What's that mean and why is it so significant? *Effective*
- What does the Bible say about the Holy Spirit? *Ineffective*

- When can you love someone too much? *Ineffective*
- 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? *Ineffective*
- It's been said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. What's beautiful to you that others have felt is ugly? *Effective*
- What was the most difficult class you took in college and why? *Effective*
- What's the theological significance of the transfiguration? *Ineffective*
- As parents, when is it hard to be objective when relating to your kids? *Ineffective*

Observation questions:

- What words, phrases, emphases, stand out to you after reading this passage?
- What thoughts, insights, questions, or feelings do you have after reading this passage?
- What is surprising or ironic to you that you see in this passage?

Interpretation questions:

- If you had to summarize Paul's main message he is trying to instill in this passage after chapter 1, what would it be?
- What does it mean to speak the truth in love?

Application questions:

- Kindness to others is God's pathway of transformation. How do you hear those words?
- How will you practice today offering kindness to someone you have been withholding it from? Can you share specific ideas that you would like to take action on?
- What are some specific things this small group can do to help you live out this call?
- If the bible study is based on the Sunday sermon (www.newlifefellowship.org/connect/ - select Small Group Leader Resources) feel free to add or adapt your own questions.

Practical Pointers for Small Group Discussions

It has been stated that only 12% of those in a college lecture actively listen. Another 20% are listening, but not actively. The rest are thinking about other things, daydreaming, or reminiscing. People want to be involved. People want to participate. Interaction and discussion are essential for any positive small group experience. So how does one lead a small group discussion?

1. Explain the guidelines for healthy small group discussion, (see page 10) and review additional in the moment comments.:
 - a. Let's try to stay on the discussion topic
 - b. Let's refrain from unsolicited advice giving and judgmental remarks. No fixing- we are here to listen, to support, and to be supported. We are not here to give advice, preach etc.
 - c. It is all right to express your feeling here. Try to share from your heart as honestly as you can. It is okay to cry, laugh, or be angry in the group without being condemned.
 - d. No caretaking/ rescuing without permission. Allow others to walk through their pain a bit before offering to come alongside and support. Ask if you can give them a hug.
 - e. The goal of our maturing is love; therefore, confrontation must be done empathetically.
 - f. Initiate your prayer need and we will support you.
 - g. In this group, you are encouraged to share your experience, your strength and your hope in Christ.
2. Be accepting and appreciative of all answers, even flaky or 'incorrect' ones. Don't reject input.
3. Avoid "Can you guess what I'm thinking game." Be open to various answers; don't wait for the 'right' one.
4. 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.
5. If people seem puzzled by your question, try rewording it.
6. 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?"
7. If people go off on rabbit trails, say, "Getting back to the topic..."
8. 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."
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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!

Role Playing — Practical Exercise

The following personalities could be part your small group.

- 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)

APPENDIX 1: Small Group Models

Model 1: Tight/ Never Changing

In this model, the format is set by the Pastor or staff and carried out by the leader. All of the groups do essentially the same thing. Every meeting is the same, and often the Bible study is the same for every group. This tight agenda keeps the group in balance and requires minimum group leader skills. The fastest growing churches in the world are using this method. Care must be taken to avoid inflexibility.

- Always start on time
- Opening...7 min
- Introduction of guests
- Ice breaker/conversation starter
- Opening Prayer...15 minutes
- Praise and worship...15 minutes
- Singing
- Reports of answered prayer
- Praise notes
- Testimonies
- Conversational Prayer/Praise...7 minutes
- Bible Study/ Application...35 minutes
- Intercessory Prayer...20 minutes
- Outreach/ Empty Chair...5 minutes
- Prayer for those who need Christ
- Who is on your prospect list?
- Any good news
- Pray silently for a few minutes
- Closing Prayer...1 minute
- Total time...90 minutes

Model 2: Flexible Agenda/ Four components

Every small group is expected to include four elements (Love, Learn, Decide, Do) but the group decides how much time to allot to each element. Within certain boundaries, this model allows for flexibility, and democracy within the group.

Nurture Group
Bible Study Group
Task Group

Model 3: Open Agenda

This model requires significant training of the small group leader.

Before the meeting:

- A.** Pray for the group members by name. Be specific and be personal.
- B.** Prepare
 - People: who is coming and why?
 - Arrangements: what needs to be done- seating, temperature, Bible study, childcare, music, coffee, drinks, materials, who will do it?
 - Relationships: how will you help people feel cared for? How will you help people relax and open up? Ice breakers?
 - Study, task: what is your agenda? What questions will you use for study?
 - Prayer: what are the goals of your prayer time? How much time?
 - Time: how much time is available? How will you use it? What is the real starting time?

During the meeting

- C.** Use of time: Keep the group within limits. There are situations where the time will change according to the need of the moment, but there needs to be an agreed on beginning and end.
- D.** Flow of discussion: Here are some ground rules for leading a good discussion.

The role of the leader needs to shift as the need arises.

- Motivator-stimulates thinking
 - Enabler-keep the discussion on track
 - Clarifier-explain what is being said
 - Affirmer-encourage people and thank members for contributing
 - Challenger-ask people to justify ideas from scripture
 - Redirector-draw others into the discussion
 - Assist people to participate but never force anyone to answer.
 - Pace yourself. Getting through the questions isn't nearly as important as permitting everyone to participate.
 - Don't dominate, answer your own questions, or become an authority figure.
- E.** Interpersonal communication: During the meeting, there may be interactions that require you to do some follow up later on. For example; there may be one person who tries to dominate and refuses to respond to your directing. Make a note of it and move on.

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE DAILY OFFICE

Silence and Centering (to be read together)

This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength."
-Isaiah 30:15

Silence 3 Minutes

1st Reading (to be read together)

- ¹ Keep me safe, O God,
for in you I take refuge.
- ² I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord;
apart from you I have no good thing."
- ³ As for the saints who are in the land,
they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight.
- ⁴ The sorrows of those will increase
who run after other gods.
I will not pour out their libations of blood
or take up their names on my lips.
- ⁵ LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup;
you have made my lot secure. **(*moment of silence*)**

2nd Reading

- ⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
surely, I have a delightful inheritance.
- ⁷ I will praise the LORD, who counsels me;
even at night my heart instructs me.
- ⁸ I have set the LORD always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.
- ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest secure,
- ¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the grave,
nor will you let your Holy One see decay.
- ¹¹ You have made known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand. **Psalm 16 (*moment of silence*)**

New Testament Reading (Romans 8 from the Message) (to be read together)

¹⁸⁻²¹That's why I don't think there's any comparison between the present hard times and the coming good times. The created world itself can hardly wait for what's coming next. Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in until both creation and all the creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens.

²²⁻²⁵All around us we observe a pregnant creation. The difficult times of pain throughout the world are simply birth pangs. But it's not only around us; it's within us. The Spirit of God is arousing us within. We're also feeling the birth pangs. These sterile and barren bodies of ours are yearning for full deliverance. That is why waiting does not diminish us any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy.

Devotional Reading (1 person reads this slowly)

There is a lot more going on, on the way than getting to a destination. And there is a lot more going on, on the way than what we are doing. There is what God is doing. Which is why we "wait for the Lord." We stop, whether by choice or circumstance, so that we can be alert and attentive and receptive to what God is doing in us and for us, in and for others, on the way. We wait for our souls to catch up with our bodies. Waiting on the Lord is a large part of what we do on the way because the largest part of what takes place on the way is what God is doing, what God is saying. Much of the time, disabled or enervated by sin, we can't do what must be done, so we wait for God to do it in us. Much of the time, we don't know what to do, so we wait until we understand what God commands us to do. The waiting is not just an indolent "waiting around." We wait "for the morning," which is to say we wait in hope. We wait while we are being "ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven." We wait for God to do what we cannot do for ourselves "in the depths." When he has done it, we are once more on the way.

The Jesus Way by Eugene Peterson

5 minutes of waiting on God

The Our Father (together)

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Closing Prayer (together)

To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen

Philippians 4:20

Share prayer requests and pray for one another.

APPENDIX 3: Creating a Rule of Life

I. The Danger of Leading without Jesus

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" Matthew 7:21-23

II. What is Loving Union?

To allow Jesus and his will to have full access to your life in a posture of attentiveness, openness, and surrender.

III. Obstacles to Loving Union

A. Compartmentalization

B. Chaotic Rhythm

IV. The "Rule of Life" as a Structure to Facilitate Loving Union

"Your personal rule of life is a holistic description of the Spirit-empowered rhythms and relationships that create, redeem, sustain and transform the life God invites you to humbly fulfill for the glory of Christ our Lord." - Stephen Macchia

A. Integration of All Life Under the Lordship of Christ

V. Crafting a Personal Rule of Life

Grand Examen

Step 1 Look back

- Look back over the last 6-12 months
- Name significant life changes
- When have you been most stressed
- Note any patterns of stress anger or depression
- Summarize that past year in a phrase or sentence

Step 2 Look Forward

- What do you sense your soul needs in this season
- What are some invitations God might have for you
- What are your hopes and dreams for this coming year
- Describe with a phrase or sentence how you envision your life over the next 6 months

Step 3 Look around

What community support do you need in this season?

- Who are the people you need to invite to walk alongside you?
- How can others best support you?

Developing your Rule of Life

Step 1 Prayer

In light of the grand examen exercise, write down practices you need to integrate or deepen in the area of prayer to provide a regular rhythm of connection with God.

(Morning prayer, cultivating silence)

What practices or disciplines help to anchor you in God?

Step 2 Rest

- Write down everything you currently do that nurtures your spirit, fills you with joy and rest. (include activities you are NOT currently doing but want to do).
- Write down the activities you need to avoid, limit, or eliminate that pull you away from remaining anchored in Christ.

STEP 3 Relationships

- Write down relationships that you need in your life to help anchor you in God.
- Could be joining a small group, connecting with extended family, investing in your marriage or singleness, mentoring or being mentored

Step 4 Work

- Write down activities you sense God calling you to engage in missionally. evangelism, social justice, generosity with finances,
- What are the challenging “have to’s” in this season of your life that are impacting your rhythms?

Another approach to develop your Rule of Life

Step 1

Write down everything you currently do (or hope to do) that nurtures your spirit and fills you with delight (e.g. people, places, activities).

Normally, when we think of spiritual activities, we limit ourselves to things such as prayer, going to church, worship, and Bible reading. Don't censor yourself. Your list may include gardening, walking the dog, being in nature, talking with close friends, cooking, painting, jumping out of airplanes, or any number of other possibilities. List them all!

Step 2

Write down the activities you need to avoid, limit, or eliminate that pull you away from remaining anchored in Christ.

This refers to avoiding certain things that impact your spirit negatively - such as violent movies, excessive social media involvement, being harried, and going beyond your limits. The list that you create, whether you know it or not, is your unconscious way of life.

Step 3

What are the challenging “have to’s” in this season of your life that are impact your rhythms?

(e.g. caring for aging parents, a special needs child, a demanding season at work, parenting small children, an illness, etc.)

Step 4

Fill in the Rule of Life worksheet.

Step 5

Which aspects of your Rule is God calling you to focus on in this season of life?

(Starting with 2-4 aspects is a good start).

Step 6

Take a step back and examine your Personal Rule of Life.

- What do you think will be your biggest challenge?
- What is the one thing you must do now?
- What might be one "stretch goal" you may want to consider? (sharing your faith, eating healthier, reading more, practicing generosity, etc.)
- What are the implications of this on your calendar?
- What do you have to say no to?
- How might you have to adjust financial priorities because of the Rule?
- Is there someone I can invite to encourage me in keeping the Rule?

Remember:

1. Listen to your heart's desires when discerning your Rule. God often speaks to us through them.
2. Make sure your Rule includes some joy, play, and fun.
3. Take baby steps. Don't make your rule impossible to follow.
4. You're going to have trouble keeping a Rule sometimes. Recognize that you're human and try again. Unexpected things come into our lives that we can't help. We take on projects that are bigger than we expected. It takes experimentation to discern what form your Rule should take.
5. Figure out how much structure you need – a lot or a little.

Debra Farrington in her book, *Living Faith Day by Day* writes: "Over the years I've also struggled with the amount of structure to build into a rule. People I respect deeply have detailed rules with set times for prayer, established types of prayer, and so on. They tell me that if they don't get up at 6:30 each morning and take a half hour of prayer time that they will never get to it during the day. But that doesn't work for me. It makes my spiritual life into something to add to my to-do list, and it becomes a chore and not a blessing. Over the years, I have found that my rule for prayer needs to be more open-ended. I am committed to praying daily, but how and when I do that varies from day-to-day."

Again, remember the goal as you enter this journey of utilizing this powerful tool called "A Rule of Life" – to receive the love of God and to offer His love to those around you.

Prayer

Rest

Love
of God

Relationships

Work

APPENDIX 4: Different Ideas for Group Covenants

The Covenant Group

The covenant of affirmation: There is nothing you have done or will do that will make me stop loving you. I may not agree with your actions, but I will love you as a person and do all I can to hold you up in God's affirming love.

The covenant of availability: Anything I have-time, energy, insight, possessions-is at your disposal if you need it, to the limit of my resources. I give these to you in a priority of covenant over other non-covenant demands. As part of this availability, I pledge my time on a regular basis, whether in prayer or in an agreed-on meeting time.

The covenant of prayer: I covenant to pray for you in some regular fashion, believing that our caring Father wishes His children to pray for one another and ask Him for the blessings they need.

The covenant of openness: I promise to strive to become a more open person, disclosing my feelings, my struggles, my joys and my hurts to you as well as I am able. The degree to which I do so implies that I cannot make it without you, that I trust you with my problems and my dreams, and that I need you. This is to affirm your worth to me as a person. In other words, I need you!

The covenant of honesty: I will try to mirror back to you what I am hearing you say and feel. If this means risking pain for either of us, I will trust our relationship enough to take that risk, realizing it is in "speaking the truth in love" that we grow up in every way into Christ who is the head (Ephesians 4:15). I will try to express this honestly in a sensitive and controlled manner and to meter it, according to what I perceive the circumstances to be.

The covenant of sensitivity: Even as I desire to be known and understood by you, I covenant to be sensitive to you and to our needs to the best of my ability. I will try to hear you, see you, and feel where you are and to draw you out of the pit of discouragement or withdrawal.

The covenant of confidentiality: I will promise to keep whatever is shared within the confines of the group in order to provide the atmosphere of openness.

The covenant of accountability: I consider that the gifts God has given me for the common good should be liberated for your benefit. If I discover areas of my life that are under bondage, hung up, or truncated by my own misdoings or by the scars inflicted by others, I will seek Christ's liberating power through His Holy Spirit and through my covenant partners so that I might give to you more of myself. I am accountable to you to become what God has designed me to be in His loving creation.

Serendipity Covenant

Attendance: Priority is given to the group meeting, except in case of emergency, we will be present and on time.

Participation: The purpose of this group is to get to know one another and build genuine Christian community. This is accomplished by participation in the group and letting others 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.

Confidentiality: Anything that is shared in the group is to be kept in strict confidence. This is not a therapy group, but information will be shared from, time to time, that should not be repeated outside the group.

Accountability: At the close of each session, we may be asked how this study or ministry time affected us personally. We may also be asked how an area of growth, brought up at a previous meeting, is progressing. When we state a personal goal, we are giving permission for others to hold us accountable.

Accessibility: The group is for those who are aware of their weaknesses and strengths. By being part of a group, we are admitting that on occasion we may need support from others and that we are willing to support others in the same condition. This may not always be at the most convenient times of the day.

Evangelism: This group is willing and ready at any time to adopt new people who need support. In forming a group, we also keep an empty chair for anyone who wants to join, providing they agree to these minimum disciplines in the covenant.

Small Group Covenant

We agree to the following practices as a group:

Respect – To create a safe place where people can be heard (no quick answers or judgments)

Confidentiality – To keep anything shared strictly confidential

Attendance – To give priority to the group meeting (call when absent or late)

Responsibility – To share the responsibility for the success and maintenance of our group

Outreach – To open our door to others who need to experience what we have

Participation – To contribute to group discussions and give others the opportunity to participate

What do we want to do about . . .

Topic

Meeting Logistics

How long will we meet for?

What day and how often will we meet?

What time will we start and end?

Where will we meet?

Refreshments

Childcare

APPENDIX 5: ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

- 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.
- 9) "Where I'm from" poem
- 10) Where did you live when you were twelve years old and what is one memory you have of that?
- 11) Who was the most influential person in your childhood, and why?
- 12) What was the most memorable holiday you ever took, and why?
- 13) When, if ever, did God become more than a word to you, and how did that happen?
- 14) What is one experience or success as a child that you can remember, and what did that mean to you?
- 15) What was the most exciting (challenging, difficult, growth-producing, enjoyable, or terrible) part of your life up to now and why?
- 16) What is one part of your life that you enjoy and one part that is difficult for you?
- 17) What is your favorite room in the house (dessert, sport, hobby etc.)?
- 18) What are you looking forward to and what are you reluctant to face in the next week?
- 19) What is one thing that gave you joy or a sense of accomplishment this week?
- 20) What is one thing you are good at (bad at)?
- 21) If you knew you could not fail and money was not an issue, what one thing would you like to do in the next five years?
- 22) What is your favorite season and why?
- 23) What do you like best about the current season and why?
- 24) If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be and why?
- 25) What is one dream or hope you have for the future?
- 26) What do you daydream about the most?
- 27) Who has changed your life?
- 28) What is the best book (apart from the Bible) that you have ever read?
- 29) What makes you feel depressed?
- 30) List the things that make, or keep, your life complicated?
- 31) What is most boring or unenjoyable about your work?
- 32) How do you feel about the choice of career you have made?
- 33) What kinds of things irritate you...make you furious

Appendix7: Small Group Attendance (HUB)

Small Group Name

Did not meet

Name of Barcode Use Old Method

Start typing the person's name

	Head count for additional people not on this list
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
Discussion Topic:	
Event Notes:	
Praises & Prayer Requests:	
People Info: <i>List new members, visitors, and people leaving the group and the reason.</i>	
Email an event summary to: <i>(Required)</i>	
<input type="radio"/> Leadership only (group leaders, coaches, directors)	
<input type="radio"/> The entire group and the leadership	
<input type="radio"/> No one = Don't send an email.	

Cancel or **Save**

Appendix 8: Small Group Evaluation

It is our hope and prayer that we provide everyone at our church small groups they genuinely need and want. Here is a chance for you to help us accomplish our goal. Please be open and honest—we can take it! After completing, return the evaluation to your small group leader.

What three things do you like most about your group?

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____

What is the best thing you did as a group?

What one thing did you like least about your group?

What is one thing that you would add to your group?

What is one thing you would de-emphasize about your group?

How have you specifically grown as a result of this group?

If you used a study guide or book complete the following:

What is the name of the guide? _____

What did you like most about the guide? _____

What did you like least about the guide? _____

Additional Comments:

DIRECTIONS

This is not a test, so there are no wrong answers. The Spiritual Gifts Survey consists of 80 statements. Some items reflect concrete actions; other items are descriptive traits; and still others are statements of belief.

- Select the one response you feel best characterizes yourself and place that number in the blank provided. Record your answer in the blank beside each item.
- Do not spend too much time on any one item. Remember, it is not a test. Usually your immediate response is best.
- Please give an answer for each item. Do not skip any items.
- Do not ask others how they are answering or how they think you should answer.
- Work at your own pace.

Your response choices are:

- 5—Highly characteristic of me/definitely true for me
- 4—Most of the time this would describe me/be true for me
- 3—Frequently characteristic of me/true for me—about 50 percent of the time
- 2—Occasionally characteristic of me/true for me—about 25 percent of the time
- 1—Not at all characteristic of me/definitely untrue for me

- _____ 1. I have the ability to organize ideas, resources, time, and people effectively.
- _____ 2. I am willing to study and prepare for the task of teaching.
- _____ 3. I am able to relate the truths of God to specific situations.
- _____ 4. I have a God-given ability to help others grow in their faith.
- _____ 5. I possess a special ability to communicate the truth of salvation.
- _____ 6. I have the ability to make critical decisions when necessary.
- _____ 7. I am sensitive to the hurts of people.
- _____ 8. I experience joy in meeting needs through sharing possessions.
- _____ 9. I enjoy studying.
- _____ 10. I have delivered God’s message of warning and judgment.
- _____ 11. I am able to sense the true motivation of persons and movements.
- _____ 12. I have a special ability to trust God in difficult situations.
- _____ 13. I have a strong desire to contribute to the establishment of new churches.
- _____ 14. I take action to meet physical and practical needs rather than merely talking about or planning to help.
- _____ 15. I enjoy entertaining guests in my home.
- _____ 16. I can adapt my guidance to fit the maturity of those working with me.
- _____ 17. I can delegate and assign meaningful work.
- _____ 18. I have an ability and desire to teach.
- _____ 19. I am usually able to analyze a situation correctly.
- _____ 20. I have a natural tendency to encourage others.
- _____ 21. I am willing to take the initiative in helping other Christians grow in their faith.
- _____ 22. I have an acute awareness of the emotions of other people, such as loneliness, pain, fear, and anger.
- _____ 23. I am a cheerful giver.

- _____ 24. I spend time digging into facts.
- _____ 25. I feel that I have a message from God to deliver to others.
- _____ 26. I can recognize when a person is genuine/honest.
- _____ 27. I am a person of vision (a clear mental portrait of a preferable future given by God). I am able to communicate vision in such a way that others commit to making the vision a reality.
- _____ 28. I am willing to yield to God's will rather than question and waver.
- _____ 29. I would like to be more active in getting the gospel to people in other lands.
- _____ 30. It makes me happy to do things for people in need.
- _____ 31. I am successful in getting a group to do its work joyfully.
- _____ 32. I am able to make strangers feel at ease.
- _____ 33. I have the ability to plan learning approaches.
- _____ 34. I can identify those who need encouragement.
- _____ 35. I have trained Christians to be more obedient disciples of Christ.
- _____ 36. I am willing to do whatever it takes to see others come to Christ.
- _____ 37. I am attracted to people who are hurting.
- _____ 38. I am a generous giver.
- _____ 39. I am able to discover new truths.
- _____ 40. I have spiritual insights from Scripture concerning issues and people that compel me to speak out.
- _____ 41. I can sense when a person is acting in accord with God's will.
- _____ 42. I can trust in God even when things look dark.
- _____ 43. I can determine where God wants a group to go and help it get there.
- _____ 44. I have a strong desire to take the gospel to places where it has never been heard.
- _____ 45. I enjoy reaching out to new people in my church and community.
- _____ 46. I am sensitive to the needs of people.
- _____ 47. I have been able to make effective and efficient plans for accomplishing the goals of a group.
- _____ 48. I often am consulted when fellow Christians are struggling to make difficult decisions.
- _____ 49. I think about how I can comfort and encourage others in my congregation.
- _____ 50. I am able to give spiritual direction to others.
- _____ 51. I am able to present the gospel to lost persons in such a way that they accept the Lord and His salvation.
- _____ 52. I possess an unusual capacity to understand the feelings of those in distress.
- _____ 53. I have a strong sense of stewardship based on the recognition that God owns all things.
- _____ 54. I have delivered to other persons messages that have come directly from God.
- _____ 55. I can sense when a person is acting under God's leadership.
- _____ 56. I try to be in God's will continually and be available for His use.
- _____ 57. I feel that I should take the gospel to people who have different beliefs from me.
- _____ 58. I have an acute awareness of the physical needs of others.
- _____ 59. I am skilled in setting forth positive and precise steps of action.
- _____ 60. I like to meet visitors at church and make them feel welcome.
- _____ 61. I explain Scripture in such a way that others understand it.

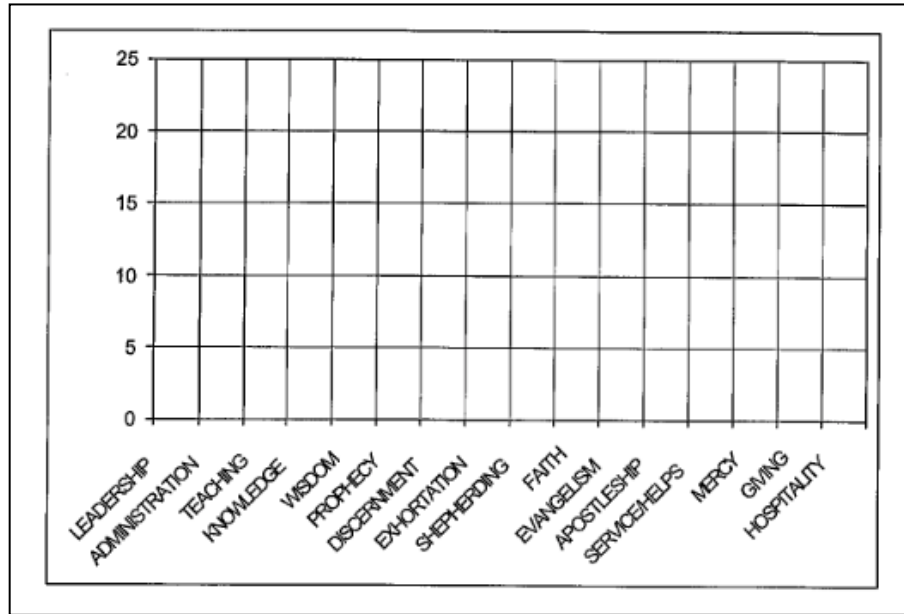
- _____ 62. I can usually see spiritual solutions to problems.
- _____ 63. I welcome opportunities to help people who need comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counseling.
- _____ 64. I feel at ease in sharing Christ with nonbelievers.
- _____ 65. I can influence others to perform to their highest God-given potential.
- _____ 66. I recognize the signs of stress and distress in others.
- _____ 67. I desire to give generously and unpretentiously to worthwhile projects and ministries.
- _____ 68. I can organize facts into meaningful relationships.
- _____ 69. God gives me messages to deliver to His people.
- _____ 70. I am able to sense whether people are being honest when they tell of their religious experiences.
- _____ 71. I enjoy presenting the gospel to persons of other cultures and backgrounds.
- _____ 72. I enjoy doing little things that help people.
- _____ 73. I can give a clear, uncomplicated presentation.
- _____ 74. I have been able to apply biblical truth to the specific needs of my church.
- _____ 75. God has used me to encourage others to live Christlike lives.
- _____ 76. I have sensed the need to help other people become more effective in their ministries.
- _____ 77. I like to talk about Jesus to those who do not know Him.
- _____ 78. I have the ability to make strangers feel comfortable in my home.
- _____ 79. I have a wide range of study resources and know how to secure information.
- _____ 80. I feel assured that a situation will change for the glory of God even when the situation seems impossible.

SCORING YOUR SURVEY ©2003 LifeWay Christian Resources

Follow these directions to figure your score for each spiritual gift.

- Place in each box your numerical response (1-5) to the item number which is indicated below the box.
- For each gift, add the numbers in the boxes and put the total in the TOTAL box.

LEADERSHIP	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 6	Item 16	Item 27	Item 43	Item 65	TOTAL
ADMINISTRATION	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 1	Item 17	Item 31	Item 47	Item 59	TOTAL
TEACHING	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 2	Item 18	Item 33	Item 61	Item 73	TOTAL
KNOWLEDGE	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 9	Item 24	Item 39	Item 68	Item 79	TOTAL
WISDOM	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 3	Item 19	Item 48	Item 62	Item 74	TOTAL
PROPHECY	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 10	Item 25	Item 40	Item 54	Item 69	TOTAL
DISCERNMENT	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 11	Item 26	Item 41	Item 55	Item 70	TOTAL
EXHORTATION	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 20	Item 34	Item 49	Item 63	Item 75	TOTAL
SHEPHERDING	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 4	Item 21	Item 35	Item 50	Item 76	TOTAL
FAITH	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 12	Item 28	Item 42	Item 56	Item 80	TOTAL
EVANGELISM	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 5	Item 36	Item 51	Item 64	Item 77	TOTAL
APOSTLESHIP	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 13	Item 29	Item 44	Item 57	Item 71	TOTAL
SERVICE/HELPS	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 14	Item 30	Item 46	Item 58	Item 72	TOTAL
MERCY	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 7	Item 22	Item 37	Item 52	Item 66	TOTAL
GIVING	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 8	Item 23	Item 38	Item 53	Item 67	TOTAL
HOSPITALITY	+	+	+	+	=	
	Item 15	Item 32	Item 45	Item 60	Item 78	TOTAL



1. For each gift place a mark across the bar at the point that corresponds to your TOTAL for that gift.
2. For each gift shade the bar below the mark that you have drawn.
3. The resultant graph gives a picture of your gifts. Gifts for which the bars are tall are the ones in which you appear to be strongest. Gifts for which the bars are very short are the ones in which you appear not to be strong.

Now that you have completed the survey, thoughtfully answer the following questions.

The gifts I have begun to discover in my life are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

- After prayer and worship, I am beginning to sense that God wants me to use my spiritual gifts to serve Christ's body by _____.
- I am not sure yet how God wants me to use my gifts to serve others. But I am committed to prayer and worship, seeking wisdom and opportunities to use the gifts I have received from God.

Ask God to help you know how He has gifted you for service and how you can begin to use this

NLF Resources

Check out the Small Group Resources link on the New Life Website (www.newlife.nyc) 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. Emotionally Healthy Church book and Workbook by Pastor Pete (available at the NLF Book Table)
2. Emotionally Healthy Spirituality book and Workbook by Pastor Pete (available at the NLF Book Table)
3. Emotionally Healthy Relationships, DVD and workbook by Pastor Pete and Geri Scazzero (available at the NLF Book Table)
4. NavPress Life Change series as an excellent guidebook for inductive bible study
5. Intersity Press Topical studies including Pastor Pete's studies on Old Testament Characters, LOVE and others.
6. Sermon-Based Small Group Resources available at www.newlife.nyc
7. www.smallgroups@newlife.nyc is a great online resource

Recommended Publishers

Serendipity
Zondervan
NavPress
Intersity