



The Assembly

Group Life Leadership Guide

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WHY GROUP LIFE

God created us to live in community with other believers. It's in community that we can experience growth and healing.

We believe life change happens in the context of relationships.

At The Assembly, we help people to Know God, Maximize Potential, Discover Purpose, and Make a Difference. Group Life is the Maximize Potential component of this vision. God wants every one of us to experience freedom, growth, and healing while on this earth. He has chosen to use community to accomplish this.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

JAMES 5:16

We go to God for forgiveness, but we have to go to people for freedom. It's God's design!

Meaningful relationships can be hard to find, and Group Life exists to make life-changing relationships relevant and accessible to you.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12

The Assembly Group Life Model

At The Assembly, we believe our church must grow larger and smaller at the same time.

We grow larger to reach as many people as possible with the life-giving message of Jesus. We gather in smaller groups to build community and care for people.

We base our Group Life model on the early church as described in the Bible, in the book of Acts. In Acts, you can read about the tremendous growth of the first church in Jerusalem, where small group meetings in homes helped lay the foundation.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

ACTS 2:42

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

ACTS 5:42

Group Life offers people:

1. A Place to Connect

Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:22 TLB

We were not made to do life alone. Group Life provides a place to connect with others, share life, and grow in faith together. When you find a group where you belong, where you are fully known and loved, you experience the strength and growth that comes from such godly community.

2. A Place to Protect

We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

1 JOHN 3:16 NLT

It is through life together that God uses others to bring support and encouragement to our lives. Small groups become a place where others don't just know your name, but care about what is happening in your life and want to support you in your spiritual journey. It's where people lift one another up in prayer and receive grace and wisdom for life's challenges.

3. A Place to Grow

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

PROVERBS 27:17

We believe every person is created with God-given potential to make a difference in the world. Small Groups are a place you can grow with others to become more like Jesus and reach the potential God has put inside you. It's where we receive godly perspective, gentle sharpening and accountability so we can flourish in our relationship with Jesus and with one another.

WHAT GROUP LIFE LOOKS LIKE

The Assembly Group Life consists of the following:

Weekend Groups

Meet on Saturdays and Sundays to provide a place for community and fellowship with people in similar stages of life.

Care Groups

Provide practical application and community for those walking through challenging circumstances, relational pain, or life-changing issues towards redemption, restoration and freedom.

Alpha

A series of conversations introducing and exploring the basics of the Christian faith. Alpha is a place to ask questions and discover truth. It is excellent for skeptics and unbelievers, as well as for new believers.

Wednesday Night Groups

Provide opportunities for Bible study, prayer and intentional discipleship.

Sisterhood Groups

Provide specific, life-giving discipleship to women.

Brotherhood Groups

Provide specific, transformative discipleship for men.

Home Groups

Provide small group gatherings in homes across the community.

Assembly Sports Groups

Provide quality recreational sports focused on fellowship, outreach, exercise, and reasonable competition, with the goal to be active both physically & spiritually.

Group Structure

Groups meet throughout the year, typically (but not always) in three semesters.

Spring - 13 Weeks

Summer - 6 Weeks

Fall - 13 Weeks

Groups meet weekly or monthly during each semester. Groups meet in a variety of places like church, homes, restaurants, and coffee shops. Many new groups start each semester making it easy to build community and enjoy different types of groups.

No matter what your group meets about, each meeting should be made up of four things:

1. Casual Fellowship

Laid back time for group members to talk and get to know each other.

2. Activity or Discussion

This will vary based on what kind of group you're leading. It could be an activity like pickleball, dinner, an outreach, or a discussion about a book or the weekend message.

3. Prayer

Ask for prayer requests from group members and pray at the beginning and/or the end of each group meeting.

4. God's Word

This is what differentiates your small group from your neighborhood supper club. Whether it's through activities or discussion, always find a way to include the Word of God. This can be as simple as sharing something God is teaching you with the group or talking about a verse you read that week.

Small Groups are not a place for:

- Business
- Offerings
- Unapproved materials or speakers
- Controversial topics
- Alcohol or smoking

YOUR ROLE AS GROUP LIFE LEADER

God has a part for all of us to play in the church, and Group Life Leaders come alongside the pastors and staff of The Assembly to help care for people.

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

EPHESIANS 4:11-13 NLT

The primary role of a Group Life Leader is to disciple group members by helping them move one step in their walk with God.

Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds;

PROVERBS 27:23

Therefore go and make disciples...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..."

MATTHEW 28:19A, 20A

People in your group will be at different places in their spiritual lives and each person will have different next steps to take. Here is a guide of some **next steps** you can help people take:

- Start attending weekend services
- Start reading the Bible regularly
- Start praying regularly
- Attend ALPHA for foundational discipleship
- Be water baptized

- Complete The Assembly Growth Track
- Join the Dream Team
- Start tithing
- Attend an upcoming Brotherhood/Sisterhood event
- Attend a Care Group
- Share your faith with a family member, friend or coworker
- Invite a friend or neighbor to church
- Attend a Group Life Leader Training

How to be a successful Group Life Leader:

1. Pray regularly for the members of your group.
2. Consider partnering with a co-leader to help share the responsibility of caring for and leading your group.
3. Connect with group members, and encourage them to connect with one another, between meetings (text, call, meet up, etc.)
4. Have fun through laughter and by creating an enjoyable environment.
5. Respect people's time by beginning and ending your group on time.
6. Invite group members to attend church services and events with you.
7. Rally the group around a member going through a crisis. Use wisdom and be sensitive.

The Importance of Prayer

Prayer is a foundation of our church, and it is important for your small group.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

JAMES 5:16

How to pray for your group:

- Ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit in your group.
- Pray for any requests group members share.
- Pray that God will open people's hearts to hear His truth.
- Pray for authentic community to develop.
- Pray for wisdom and strength to lead your group well.

Confidence as a Group Life Leader

If you only do what you feel comfortable doing, you don't need God. God's best is often found outside your comfort zone. When you serve God and people by leading a Small Group, He will equip you and give you the strength and wisdom to lead well.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7 NLT

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

EPHESIANS 5:10

Overcome the lies of the enemy by praying Scripture, such as these:

1. When you feel like you don't have the time, remember God has created you for this, and His timing is perfect.

If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.

ECCLESIASTES 11:4 TLB

2. When you feel unqualified, remember God has equipped you.

It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of His new covenant.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:5-6 NLT

3. When you feel like your past disqualifies you, remember God uses imperfect people.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

When you feel you don't know how to help someone in your group, remember ESPN:

E: Encourage

S: Share Scripture

P: Pray

N: Next Steps

*A note about counseling:

If someone in your group requires additional help or guidance, outside of the discipleship methods used in this guide, please refrain from providing counseling. All counseling must be within the proper guidelines of our protection policy. Please ask permission from the group member to contact a Pastor for further assistance in connecting to a licensed counselor, if deemed necessary.

How to Create Good Group Dynamics

1. Set expectations.

A key to helping people feel comfortable in your group is to let them know what to expect. Take time to share how the group will flow from week to week. This can include things like explaining the times you will begin and end the group, how discussion or group activities will happen, and how group members can share prayer requests or best engage in the group.

2. Follow the 70-30 rule.

Give the members of your group room to speak up instead of doing all the talking yourself. About 70% of talking should come from members and 30% from the leader.

3. Keep discussion positive.

If conversation takes a negative or destructive turn, guide it back to a healthy place. If someone needs to talk about a sensitive or complex issue, you can follow up with them after the group or call the Group Life Pastor to help you respond well.

4. Keep the conversation relevant to everyone.

Remember people in your group will be at different places in their spiritual journey. Be thoughtful when you talk about spiritual concepts or church terms that might be unfamiliar to new Christians or new church-goers.

5. Respect boundaries.

Men should minister to men and women should minister to women. A couple may minister to a single person. We want to maintain integrity and purity in our groups. These boundaries will help protect the leader and group members from entering into an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation.

Preparing to Lead

All Group Life Leaders complete the following steps before leading:

- Complete The Assembly Growth Track
- Become a member of The Assembly
- Attend a Group Life Leadership Training
- Complete a one-on-one interview with Pastoral staff
- Read and Sign Child Protection Policy

HOW TO START YOUR SMALL GROUP

- Ask God for direction about what group to lead and who to invite.
- Meet with the Group Life Pastor about your plans at least one month before starting.
- Once you decide on a topic or activity for your group, choose a place and time to meet.
- Invite people you know or meet to come check out your group.
- Pray for God to do great things through your Small Group.

Preparing for your group meetings:

- Send a message to group members reminding them about the first meeting.
- Arrive early to set up a welcoming environment.
- Consider having nametags available to help everyone learn names for the first few weeks.

Conversation

Here are a couple conversation starters to help get people talking as your group gets to know each other:

- How did you learn about our group?
- What are your hobbies?
- What are you looking forward to this year?
- What brought you here?
- What are you hoping to get out of this Small Group?

Stay Connected

As a ministry of The Assembly, we ask that you keep record of attendance for your group, as well as keep us updated with any pastoral care needs and/or celebrations. You can find all of the forms and links to communicate these important details at theassembly.group/group-leaders.

Communication with the Group Life Pastor is important for the support and health of your group. On occasion, the Group Life Pastor will reach out with important information, or you may reach out with questions or updates. You are not alone in leadership – we are here to support, encourage, and celebrate with you! Timely communication is appreciated and will be reciprocated by the pastoral team.

Thank you for being an important part of Group Life at The Assembly!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I recruit people to come to my group?

- Start with people who are already in your sphere of influence (co-workers, friends, and neighbors).
- Find people around you who are new to the church, are new believers, or have shown interest in getting involved.
- Look for people you think you can help to realize their potential.
- Ask God to send the right people to your group.

Where can I hold my Small Group?

The place for your group will best be determined by what type of group you are leading. Some of the most common meeting places are homes, restaurants, parks, coffee shops, and office buildings. Some groups meet on campus with pastoral approval.

Where can I find curriculum for my group?

Right Now Media is a large online resource that you have access to as a member of The Assembly. There are hundreds of studies available, and access is granted to all of your group members as well. If you don't have an account go to theassembly.org/rightnow and follow the link.

Does my group have to meet weekly?

We encourage meeting weekly each semester in order to build genuine relationships. However, we understand that schedules vary based on the group. Some groups meet bi-weekly or monthly.

What if we need childcare?

You are welcome to choose to offer childcare at your Small Group, but it is not required. Please meet with the Group Life Pastor to discuss the best strategies and accommodations for your group.

How do I measure if group members are taking next steps?

Ask! Make it a regular part of your discussion whether in a group setting or individually. Here are some great questions to guide your conversation:

- How did you get connected to this group?
- What are you most looking forward to in the group?
- Do you attend The Assembly?
- What brought you to The Assembly?
- Which campus do you attend?
- Have you ever been part of another group before?
- What do you feel like God has been doing in your life lately?
- What areas of your faith are you hoping to grow in the coming months?
- What are you focused on in your life right now?
- Have you been through The Assembly Growth Track? Do you remember what your personality type is or what your spiritual gifts are?
- Have you ever served on The Assembly Dream Team?
- How can I pray for you?

Everyone in your group will be at different places spiritually. The vision of helping them “take next steps” is not to get them to do everything at once, it’s to help identify where they currently are spiritually and offer a practical next step to help them grow.

Here are some examples of next steps you can share depending where a group member is spiritually:

- Invite them to attend a weekend service with you.
- Share your personal story and what God has been teaching you.
- Invite them to an upcoming event, such as a Sisterhood or Brotherhood event, or a midweek service.
- Share how the Growth Track can help them discover their purpose and invite them to attend.
- Invite them to consider being water baptized. Invite your Small Group to be there to celebrate anyone getting baptized.
- Share how you find time regularly to pray, worship, and read God's Word, and encourage them to make their own plan for time with God.
- Tell them about the Bible app and the Right Now Media resource.
- If they are ready to receive Christ, offer to pray with them.
- Encourage them to learn more about areas like tithing, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and spiritual warfare by watching past messages at theassembly.org.

LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

The same goes for those who want to be servants in the church: serious, not deceitful, not too free with the bottle, not in it for what they can get out of it. They must be reverent before the mystery of the faith, not using their position to try to run things. Let them prove themselves first. If they show they can do it, take them on. No exceptions are to be made for women—same qualifications: serious, dependable, not sharp-tongued, not overfond of wine. Servants in the church are to be committed to their spouses, attentive to their own children, and diligent in looking after their own affairs. Those who do this servant work will come to be highly respected, a real credit to this Jesus-faith.

1 TIMOTHY 3:8-10 MSG