



Life Group Facilitators Manual

Our Vision

**Gymea Baptist exists to see people empowered to love God
and engage the world**

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Contents

Why Life Groups?	2
Why "Facilitator" and not "Leader"?	3
The Process of Facilitating	4
Covenants	5
Members Covenant	6
Accountability	8
Group Dynamics	10
Learning Styles in a Group	11
Roles in a Group	12
Group Roles	13
Open Sharing Within the Group	14
Guidelines for Effective Listening	16
Pastoral Care	18
The "One Another" Verses of Scripture	20
Helping People Make Decisions	22
Healthy and Unhealthy Ways to Meet a Crisis	24
Conflict Management	25
Strategies for Managing Conflict	26
Rebirthing	28

Why Life Groups?

GyMEA Baptist Church is a great Church where over 500 people meet weekly to:

- Celebrate their faith in God through worship
- Be challenged and encouraged by the teaching of God's Word
- Be involved in some kind of service to the Body of Christ.
- Be part of a Christian Community serving and impacting the Community at large with the Christian message.

So Why Life Groups?

While celebrating our faith together of a Sunday in large numbers is exciting and encouraging, it limits the opportunity to build deep personal relationships with one another and find meaningful support in times of personal needs.

However, Life Groups provide us with the wonderful opportunity of:

- Caring for one another in a safe environment

The best way for every person in our Church to be cared for is for each of us to care for one another. This is best done in a life group of caring people who know our needs.

- Helping one another grow in our faith

In a life group we can share our struggles and our victories, pray with and for each other and support and encourage one another as we live out our Christian faith.

- Helping one another connect on a deeper level

Life groups allow people to genuinely connect with one another and with our Church Community.

In a safe, loving, accepting environment people have the opportunity to explore their faith, share their feelings and offer themselves for service to their Lord.

Life groups also fulfil the purpose of our Churches Mission Statement in four areas:

- Nurture. (Christian Education)

To grow in our knowledge of the Word of God and apply it's teaching in daily life.

- Community (Pastoral Care)

To encourage and support one another in the journey of living the Christian life.

- Worship

To honour God for who He is and all that HE has done. And to serve Him in all that we do.

- Mission

To reach out into our world with the message of God's love and affirm it with our actions.

The following pages of this manual may help life groups to experience the above.

Why 'Facilitator' and not 'Leader'?

A facilitator in a small group is very different to a leader.

To facilitate in the Macquarie dictionary means to 'make easier or less difficult; to help forward an action or process'.

A good facilitator enables the group to move forward in the direction that has been determined by the group.

To do this they might have to:

- Consider the life of the group and work to make the environment a place that enables them to grow.
- Look at barriers that obstruct growth and consider ways to overcome these.
- Keep the group focused.
- Provide resources and direction.
- Initiate participation throughout the group.
- Guide the whole group to contribute towards learning.

Remember that a life group is not just a bible study and a facilitator is not a lecturer, or do they have to have a biblical degree. This also means the group are not students, they are not there to receive head knowledge, there is so much more to a life group.

John Mallison in his book 'Building Small Groups' says a facilitator is one who:

- Sees each person as having worth and dignity in his/her own right.
- Respects people enough not to intrude upon their privacy.
- Does not force people to speak.
- Does not tell others to participate but creates a situation where they can participate.
- Helps people to really communicate with one another.
- Believes each member of the group has something to say worth hearing.
- Is a good listener and one who encourages others not just to hear, but to listen carefully to what others are trying to say.
- Is patient and gently draws people out and assists them in becoming articulate.
- Does not manipulate the members of a group to agree with or follow his/her ideas.
- Is not self-seeking.
- Is flexible, but not casual; sensitive to the mood and expressed needs of the group.
- Is the servant of the people in the group and not the master
- Has warmth, understanding and an easy manner.
- Does not expect to be a perfect leader.
- Remembers a few of these fundamental guidelines and tries to use them as a basis.

The Process of Facilitating

This is a table of learning. As can be seen, facilitating is far more fulfilling for the 'whole' person's growth. As a facilitator your role is to lead them through the process of meeting together, but the bottom line is the group is the moving vehicle for learning.

Lecture <i>"expert"</i>	Tutorial <i>"helper"</i>	Facilitation <i>"process"</i>
I tell	I tell	You tell
You learn	You see	We explore
You do	We discuss You do	I guide We practice We reflect We assimilate
Transaction	Relational	Relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolving • Changes rhythm • Add/subtract • Transitive (energy)

Effective learning takes place in a personal and challenging environment where there is a strong relationship characterised by mutual trust. This is what the facilitator nurtures within the group to achieve. The outcome is you will create a safe environment in which people are supported, valued and respected.

Covenants

Covenants provide boundaries for the group life. They put the fence around the group so that problems can be stopped before they start. They provide communication on what is and what is not desired within the group.

How to go about making a covenant.

- Involve the whole group in drawing up the covenant. Don't superimpose.
- Make a clear statement of purpose. A vision statement. What are you hoping to achieve?
- Consider some models as a guide. Adapt them to your group's requirements. Use the Core values as a guide.
- Keep it simple. Don't waffle on. Use understandable language.
- Use God's word as your guide.

A Covenant from 'Building Small Groups by John Mallison

1. The covenant of Affirmation (unconditional love, agape love)

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.

2. The covenant of Availability

Anything I have - time, energy, insight, possessions - are at your disposal if you need them. I give these to you in a priority of covenant over non-covenant demands. As a part of the availability I pledge to regularity of time whether in prayer or in agreed upon meeting time.

3. 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.

4. The covenant of Openness

I promise to strive to become a more open person, disclosing my feelings, 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 ~ut you, that I trust you with my needs and that I need you. This is to affirm your worth to me as a person. In other words, I need you!

Members Covenant

The fundamental goal of the life group is to form a trusting family bond on both an individual and group member level. Through familiarisation and a built awareness of individuals' journeys each member of the life group will participate in the spiritual and social development of the individual and group as a whole.

Drawing from a common denominator of growing closer with God we will create an environment of support and trust where individuals may be themselves and state their personal rights through comment, contribution and involvement.

The covenant of the life group may be classified into two (2) sections:

Section One: Aspirational Covenants

Confidentiality	What is shared stays within the confines of the group or between individuals as appropriate.
Consent	Permission is to be granted to share one or another's story with a third person within or outside the group.
Counsel	Offer counsel but do not act as a counselor.
Prayer	We will offer prayer to individuals and if approved by all members, keep a prayer journal to give thanks for the blessings received.
Scripture participation.	We will share the scriptures as part of our group
Honesty	In a non judgmental environment individuals will provide honest and accountable contributions and support.
Applied	Discussion points, feedback and advice will hold a practical application in our dealings and daily life.
Purpose	Our group will display depth and purpose allowing time to gain a closer understanding of individuals' needs.
Comfort	We will provide a comfortable environment in which individuals can be themselves, feel welcome and loved.

Section Two: Practical Covenants

Time We will endeavour to maintain the core interaction of each life group gathering at the time the group agrees on.

Hospitality Individuals will receive the hospitality of the host with respect and appreciation. Contributions and assistance are welcome.

Occasion As appropriate our group will share the houses of life group members and look forward to receiving guests on occasion.

Attendance Group members will endeavor to attend all life group events and treat them as a priority in their spiritual life.

Accountability

In a recent survey of Discipleship Journal readers ranked areas of greatest spiritual challenge to them as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Materialism | 2. Pride |
| 3. Self-centeredness | 4. Laziness |
| 5. (Tie) Anger / Bitterness | 5. (Tie) Sexual lust |
| 7. Envy | 8. Gluttony |
| 9. Lying | |

Survey respondents noted temptations were more potent when they:

1. Had neglected their time with God (81%)
2. When they were physically tired (57%)

Resisting temptation was accomplished by:

1. Prayer (84%)
2. Avoiding compromising situations (76%)
3. Bible study (66%)
4. Being accountable to someone (52%)

So as can be seen by the survey accountability gives permission to someone outside yourself to have a say about what you are doing. A life group is the perfect place to allow this to happen. As a facilitator you must encourage and seek this to occur.

Arch Hart in Leadership magazine said, "Accountability to another is the only way to safeguard against poor judgment, unconscious motivations, and self-deception." Poor judgment - not having all the facts, someone from the outside looking in. Unconscious motivations - fear, self-esteem, insecurity, inadequacies. Self-deception - caught up in the situation (foggy), speaking from the flesh.

When I am challenged by the thought that I will be held accountable by others I will have to ask myself in my daily life, "Could what I am doing be shared with others?" This will help me to think about what I am doing. I am being challenged within myself knowing I have someone that could ask me about my private life.

I believe that is why each group should try to break up into male/female groups every second week to allow the men to ask the men what they have been doing, and the women to ask the women what they have been doing. A great level of intimacy can be honestly shared and a greater level of accountability can be experienced.

But accountability is only as good as the honesty that goes with it. One of the hardest things about being honest is making yourself vulnerable before others. Therefore as a facilitator you must ensure there is safety, openness and confidentiality constantly exercised.

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It also means judgments will be made. People will pass judgment on the situation or circumstance, either good or bad. But we must all work with the person to confess, seek restitution and help them move on in the appropriate way. Remember we are all under grace, not law.

Group Dynamics

Stages of a Group

Life groups, like all living organisms go through different stages of development. This is normal and to be expected. Often facilitators can blame themselves for shifts in the group dynamics which are just part of the natural group process. The stages of a group are not always consecutive. It is possible for stages to be passed through very quickly or for regression to occur before moving ahead again.

Stage 1 - Forming

Needs are focused on belonging, acceptance and developing a sense of safety within the group. Activities that help build trust and safety can be useful here. Higher dependence on facilitator.

Stage 2 - Storming

Members may begin to test the group process. Questions such as "Am I accepted here?", "Is this group going to help?", and "Can I really trust these people?" are raised. Conflict is often a factor at this stage of the group. Activities to do with conflict resolution, sharing values and discussion about differences may help. Further trust building also beneficial.

Stage 3 - Norming

The group is bonding and is operating more cohesively. Members start to take responsibility for its function. Less dependence on facilitator. It can be appropriate to evaluate the group's progress as a group at this stage - taking a balcony view of the group.

Stage 5 - Joining

This is when a new person joins the group. The dynamic of the group may be challenged and it will be important to allow both the group and the new person to settle in. The group may revisit all the earlier stages. Getting the new person to belong and feel connected is important to their bonding. The facilitator should not put pressure on the new person to share or pray until they are feeling comfortable.

Stage 6 - Mourning

At this stage members become aware that group is coming to an end. This may be sad stage for some or all members. Planning end of group activities and ways of saying goodbye is helpful to bring group to a close.

Learning Styles in a Group

People are different.

- They may be introverted or extroverted.
- They may experience life with their senses (seek experiences where they can taste, touch, feel, smell and hear what is happening around them) or more intuitively (make insightful judgments about the way life is and how it functions).
- They may initially process information/make decisions with their head or their heart.
- They may approach life in a structured or unstructured fashion.

Learning Styles

Adult educators and trainers often refer to certain 'learning styles'. There are three major types of learning styles utilized by members of your group. An effective leader should use a variety of presentation and discussion techniques in order to communicate effectively to each learner.

1. Visual Learners

These people respond well to charts, diagrams, and other visual stimuli. They tend to like handouts and enjoy parables and stories. They are visual thinkers; that is, they respond well to word pictures and to stories that are vivid and descriptive and allow them to 'picture' what is happening.

Tips for the leader:

Use handouts, newspaper articles, story boards, paper and crayons, and objects to keep the attention of your visual learners.

2. Auditory Learners

Auditory learners enjoy learning by hearing. They would rather be in a discussion on an issue than read a book about it. Some of them may be avid readers, but in general they would rather listen to a story than read one.

Tips for the leader:

Use subgroups to allow full participation by all members in discussions. Allow members of your group to respond verbally to questions and decisions. Use background music during prayer times or at the beginning of the meeting.

3. Kinaesthetic Learners

These folks like to touch and feel things. They like to participate in action. They learn by doing. While a visual learner might be motivated to help the poor by seeing a picture of the poor in an issue of Newsweek, the kinaesthetic learner would be motivated by a trip to the inner city.

Tips for the leader:

Utilize objects and experiences for your group. Plan outings and events that allow people to experience truth in action. Allow kinaesthetic learners to learn by trial and error, rather than by simply telling them the answer to something.

Roles in a Group

Dealing with Certain Types

- 1. Superficial Person:** Focus the person. Ask them how they are feeling. Help them explore.
- 2. Silent Person:** Ask specific questions, go around the group each taking their turn to share, do pair exercises then come back to the group to share, give members time to write down a response before having to share.
- 3. Super Spiritual:** Focus person by asking a question, be directive, may need to cut in. Ask other to respond to their super spiritual response.
- 4. Dominator:** Intervene, "Hold that thought", tell the person that you will come back to them, take turns with them as last person to share, pairing exercises.
- 5. Overtalker:** Subtle difference from dominator may be driven by feelings of anxiety of feeling overwhelmed. Help person to identify feelings.
- 6. Emotional:** Don't shut emotions down too soon or ignore or gloss over what the person is feeling, be understanding, give person permission to express emotion, remind them of the agreement you have made regarding confidentiality, may be appropriate to pray, get permission for physical touch. Ask, "How can we help?" Stay aware that the person may feel embarrassed or exposed, use sensitivity.
- 7. Person walks out of the group:** Facilitator or group member follow, talk to them about why they left and try to encourage them to come back, the rest of the group should acknowledge the person's leaving but continue working. When they return affirm them for doing so and give them opportunity to share where they are at.

Group Roles

Often members take on certain roles (sometimes consciously and sometimes without really knowing they are doing it). People will take on different roles at different stages of your group. Below are some supportive and destructive group roles you might want to be aware of.

Supportive Roles

Information seeker - asks other members to tell more of their story.

Opinion seeker - takes an active interest in what others in the group think.

Initiator - offers new ideas, new ways of doing things. Often sets the pace in a discussion.

Elaborator - wants more than just the facts in a story. Adds 'colour' to the discussion.

Tension-reliever - often uses gentle humour to relieve tense situations. Uses 'identification' to keep the tense person from feeling alone: "I understand. I feel that way many times myself".

Reviewer - tends to provide summary statements and clarity statements.

Consensus-seeker - looks to see what the group is thinking and whether or not there is agreement on issues or decisions.

Encourager - finds ways to build up others in the group.

Standard-bearer - holds forth the values of the group and defends them.

Destructive Roles

Aggressor - insults and criticizes others. May show strong jealousy.

Rabbit chaser - consistently focuses on stories or issues irrelevant to the topic at hand.

Recognition seeker - tends to focus primarily on his or her own achievements or successes.

Dominator - monopolizes group interaction. Tries to control discussions.

Special-interest pleader - tends to focus on personal pet peeve regardless of the topic or direction of discussion.

Negativist - might be a perfectionist who is never satisfied with anything. Quick to point out the 'down-side' of any issue or topic.

Quibbler - focuses on details. Often loses the forest for the sake of the trees.

Practical joker - rather than using humour positively, tends to distract people with jokes and comments. This is often a defence mechanism, and is used whenever a discussion gets too personal.

Note: Your job as a leader is not to 'peg' each person in order to figure out what their role is. Roles may change from time to time. You simply need to be aware that these kinds of roles exist in a group. Listen to each person with a sensitive spirit and heart. Ask probing questions that help get behind each role. If you have problems working with anyone particular type of person in your group, consult your cluster or ministry leaders for ways to solve the problem and deal with the relationship.

Open Sharing Within the Group

The outcome of people listening to God through a week is that people should be able to come to the group with challenges in their personal life on what God has been revealing and talking to them about. If people are hearing God, both for themselves and for others, then they will have something to share.

- There will be new things taught. (What you have learnt. Hearing God through the Bible, books, 'space')
- Challenges to their daily walk. (Did you know God's work says?)
- Questions from God's word that needs to be addressed (What do you think this means?)
- A spiritual revelation of someone's need (God has laid a specific need, request, thought upon you)
- Discussion of the Sunday sermon and application of it.
- Clarification from the brothers and sisters concerning a certain direction that needs to be pursued.

This removes the concept and mentality that group is a class room. (Someone prepares a lesson and presents it.) Sure someone might have a lesson, you might have a book or study guide but the freedom is there to just do life. So we need facilitators, not leaders.

Open sharing will only happen when certain things are present.

1. Safety. To open yourself up in relationships there must be pursued within the group an agreement of safety. I can let my walls down and reveal the real me. That my opinions will be respected and differences will be allowed. Don't judge or criticise each other in an unhelpful manner.

2. Confidentiality. As part of the concept of safety, confidentiality promotes openness by promising that whatever is shared within the confines of the group will not be repeated elsewhere. What is said in the group stays in the group. (Unless permission is granted by the person.) This must be guarded.

3. Honesty. The desire to be honest with each other is critical to authentic relationships. In order for trust to be built among the group members, they must be speaking the truth in love, so that *"we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ"* (Ephesians 4: 15)

4. Openness. Openness in the relationships within the group promotes honesty and an ease of sharing feelings, struggles, joys and hurts. Reaching the goal of authentic relationships begins with being open with each other. (I didn't know they struggle with that also.)

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5. Sensitivity. A commitment to sensitivity to the needs, feelings, backgrounds, and current situations of other group members will help build relationship in this group. You can't force people into speaking, praying or even participating. Listen carefully. Seek to hear not only words but feelings.

6. Accountability. In authentic relationships, accountability is voluntary submission to another group member(s) for support, encouragement, and help in a particular area of your life, giving them some responsibility for assisting you in that area.

7. Affirmation. It is important to create an atmosphere where group members affirm and encourage one another, build each other up in Christ, and help each other grow.

8. Availability. Group members and their resources should be available to each other. People's time, attention, insight, as well as material resources must be made available to each other in order to meet needs and serve one another.

Guidelines for Effective Listening

By Gary Collins in "*How to be a People Helper*".

1. Prepare to Listen

Sometimes you have no prior warning before some person talks about a problem, but when there is time to prepare, try to get ready physically and mentally.

Physically, recognise that listening is hard work, so try to get enough rest before you meet with a helpee. Sit in a relaxed posture as you listen, but don't be too casual. This can induce fatigue or grogginess and can give the impression that you are not taking the helpee's problems seriously.

Mentally, try to prepare by reading about the issue that will be discussed. Informed listeners can often be more sensitive and able to listen better.

2. Check your Listening Attitudes

Remember the following:

- When you want to listen and recognise the importance of listening, you will listen more effectively.
- Listening is one of the best ways to learn new information and ideas, but it also is one of the best ways to learn about people. The more we listen, without jumping to conclusions, the clearer our understanding.
- Concentration is not easy; listening requires discipline.
- Listening is as important as speaking. A poor listener is likely to be a poor speaker as well (James 1: 19)
- Even quiet times are significant - especially if we avoid the temptation to break the silence with talk. Often people need time to think, and silence allows this - even though it may leave everyone feeling uncomfortable.
- When we learn to listen to others, we often are better able to listen to God.

3. Be Aware of Both Content and Delivery

What the speaker says is important, but how he or she communicates is also significant. Look for evidence of tears, trembling, posture shifts, change in voice pitch or speed and alterations in breathing rate. Notice when these occur. Often such nonverbal signs indicate that the person is talking about an especially significant or sensitive topic.

4. Be Aware of Your Own Emotions

At times you might feel overpowered, angry, threatened, or sad. Don't stop listening because you feel uncomfortable or dislike what you are hearing. Ask yourself why you are responding in the way you are. Be patient as the other person talks.

5. Resist Distractions

You can be distracted by what you hear, by what you see, and by your wandering mind. Try to resist these distractions. Think about why you are getting distracted.

6. Encourage Further Sharing

Head nods, a phrase such as "uh-huh", an occasional paraphrasing or repetition of what the helper said, a short "tell me more" comment - all of these can encourage the other person to keep talking. This sharing is likely to continue if your posture and facial expressions show that you are interested.

7. You can Think Faster than the Other Person can Talk

Because of this, you can reflect on what you are seeing and hearing, evaluate what you have heard, and ask yourself what the helpee really is trying to communicate (or what he or she may be trying to hide).

8. Ask Questions

Try to avoid asking the question "why". This often distracts the person into giving explanations or justifications for behaviour. This, in turn, often shifts attention away from more pressing and more emotional issues.

9. Try Not to Interrupt

10. Avoid Preaching, Lecturing, Giving Advice or Arguing

11. Listen for Themes

Do some topics, phrases, or people's names come up repeatedly? These repetitions may be clues to significant issues.

12. Don't Get Carried Away by Your Own Curiosity

Your purpose in listening is to understand and help the other person, not to satisfy your own curiosity, lusts or personal needs.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care consists of "helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns" (Clebsch and Jackle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*)

There has been some research done about the action church members took when they recognised that they needed help beyond their own resources. The outcome was:

- 3% went the formal route, using the systems (and people) provided by the church.
- 45% sought informal help from friends.
- 39% sought a combination of formal and informal help.
- 13% did not seek help at all.

Presumably the middle bands, comprising 84% of the survey, sought out people they trusted and probably thought of as friends.

The small group provides an opportunity to build such friendships in a way that no other aspect of formal church life can deliver.

So, pastoral care in the life group can be thought of as:

- Feeding - providing what nourishes and strengthens a person.
- Encouraging - giving support, strength and courage.
- Healing - the rough and tumble of the ordinary cycle of life can 'hit us for a six'. Being there for others, dealing with conflict and offering and receiving forgiveness can bring healing.
- Searching - for the one who has gone astray.
- Restoring - bringing a person back with dignity to a sense of belonging and peace with God, other and him or herself.
- Discipling - teaching one another to follow and respond to Jesus' leadership.
- Equipping for life and ministry - responding appropriately to life's challenges, identifying and developing gifts and abilities.

Pastoral care is part of the role of the facilitator of each life group. Though it is not the sole responsibility of the individual facilitator, because each member should be caring for each other, it is important for the facilitator to make sure that care is being given.

There are 3 levels of fundamental care giving.

Primary Care - normal, regular attention and support. This includes prayer support, phone calls, encouragement, visiting the sick, finding resources. (If a person belongs to more than one group have them identify where they expect to receive their primary care.)

Mutual Care - This is what group members give one another. Fulfilling Galatians 6:2

Backup Care - This is about going back up the line for help. Seeking prayer ministry, pastor, etc. Seeking people who can help work out a care strategy.

Different aspects of pasturing can be seen expressed through these verses.

Ezekiel 34:1-16

God expects each one of us to give the kind of care that He himself would give each of His flock. God desires shepherds to :

- Feed the flock
- Lead them to rest
- Seek the lost
- Bring back the scattered
- Bind up the broken hearted
- Strengthen the sick

Being a shepherd is an awesome responsibility. (That is why we try to keep the group to 10-12 people)

Acts 20:25-38

Shepherding done by Paul and elders at Ephesus involves hard work, tears, proclaiming the whole gospel, protecting people from wolves and having empathy with people.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Paul's role was like a mother and father to them. He invested his life in them. He encouraged and comforted them, praying and thanking God for them.

It is an every member ministry.

Every member of your life group can be an authentic people helper.

The facilitator's role is to get them to understand this.

Romans 12:4-5. "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."

The idea that we all belong to one another depicts a depth of relationship beyond most of our experiences with the exception of marriage.

This concept of 'one anothering' must be largely measured by the interaction of the members outside the evening meeting, not just looking at a couple of house in a formal context.

1 Corinthians 12:24b-27. "But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. "

The church is a united body of believers who are given power by the Holy Spirit, are growing to maturity, and are ministering to people both inside and outside the body.

The "One Another" Verses of Scripture

Joining

Accept <i>one another</i>	Romans 15:7
Greet <i>one another</i> with a holy kiss	Romans 16: 16
Greet <i>one another</i> with a holy kiss	1 Corinthians 16:20
Greet <i>one another</i> with a holy kiss	2 Corinthians 13: 12
Greet <i>one another</i> with a kiss of love	1 Peter 5:14

Holding

Be at peace with <i>each other</i>	Mark 9:50
Wash <i>one another's</i> feet	John 13:14
Stop, passing judgment on <i>one another</i>	Romans 14:13
Don't lie to <i>each other</i>	Colossians 3:9
Together to each, wait for <i>each other</i>	1 Corinthians 11 :33
Do not slander <i>each other</i>	James 4: 11
Not become conceited, provoking and envying <i>each other</i>	Galatians 5:26

Supporting

Be devoted to <i>one another</i>	Romans 2: 1 0
Honour <i>one another</i>	Romans 12: 1 0
Live in harmony with <i>one another</i>	Romans 12:16
Agree with <i>one another</i>	1 Corinthians 1: 1 0
Be patient, bearing with <i>one another</i>	Ephesians 4:2
We have fellowship with <i>one another</i>	1 John 1:7
Forgive, bear with <i>each other</i>	Colossians 3: 13
Confess your sins to <i>each other</i>	James 5: 16
Live in harmony with <i>one another</i>	1 Peter 3:8
Be kind and compassionate to <i>one another</i> , forgiving <i>one another</i>	Ephesians 4:32

Growing

You are competent to instruct *one another*
Speak to *one another* with psalms etc

Romans 15: 14
Ephesians 5: 19

Building

They discussed this with *one another*
Build *each other* up
Have equal concern for *each other* as parts of the body

Mark 8: 16
1 Thessalonians 5: 11
1 Corinthians 12:25

Submit to *one another*
Teach and admonish *one another*
Encourage *each other*
Encourage *one another*
Encourage *one another* daily
Spur *one another* on
Encourage *one another*

Ephesians 5:21
Colossians 3: 16
1 Thessalonians 4: 18
1 Thessalonians 5: 11
Hebrews 3:13
Hebrews 10:24
Hebrews 10:25

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Loving

Love *one another* John 13:34
Love *one another* John 13:35
Love *each other* John 15: 12
Love *each other* John 15: 17
Love *one another* Romans 13:8
Love *each other* 1Thessalonians 4:9
Keep on loving *each other* Hebrews 13:1
Love *each other* deeply 1 Peter 4:8
Love *one another* 1 John 3:11
Love *one another* 1 John 4:7
Love *one another* 1 John 4: 11
Love *one another* 1 John 4: 12
Love *one another* 2 John 1:5
Love *one another* 1 John 3:22
Make your love increase and overflow for *each other*
Love *one another* deeply from the heart

1 Thessalonians 3: 12
1 Peter 1:22

Working

Serve *one another* in love Galatians 5: 13
Carry *each other's* burdens Galatians 6:2
Pray for *each other* James 5: 16
Humility towards *one another* 1 Peter 5:5
Serve *others* with (spiritual) gifts received
Offer hospitality to *one another* without grumbling

1 Peter 4:10
1 Peter 4:9

Helping People Make Decisions

This process of decision making is a good foundation to work from when working in a group towards peoples outcomes.

Step 1. Building Rapport

Life groups should be a place where relationships are built on encouragement and support, and are open and trustworthy. Decision making is not so much your job to say what should be done or to make a decision for the other person - even if you are convinced of what he or she should do. Your job, instead, is to guide, encourage, make occasional suggestions, and stick with the person through the decision making process.

Step 2. Clarifying the Issues

Always ask for clarification so you fully understand that what the person is saying, is what you are hearing. What is the decision that has to be made? Is there a time limitation? Remember to pray, asking God to give you guidance and clear thinking.

Step 3. Exploring Alternatives

Begin listing alternatives. If it is possible maybe you can write them down on separate pieces of paper and add positive and negative points. For the person this might take a day, a week or a month.

Step 4. Simulating Change

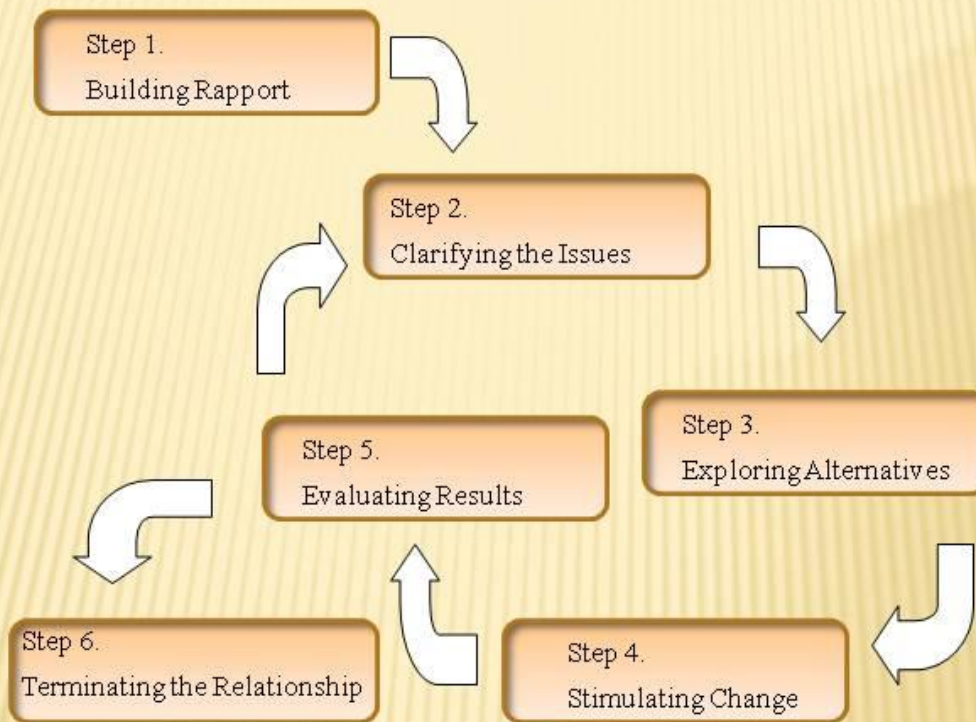
This is moving the person towards action. This will happen as the person is helped to:

- Understand the situation the best they can
- Plan all the alternatives
- Step out in some kind of action

Remember it is always easier to steer a moving vehicle than one that is stopped. Above all else, we should be covering it all in prayer. At that point as we walk in obedience with Him, pray that He will close all doors that we should not enter, and maybe nudge us through one we would not have chosen.

Step 5. Evaluating Results

If things are still unresolved, then try moving in a different direction.



Helping people make decisions

Healthy and unhealthy Ways to Meet a Crisis

Unhealthy Ways to Meet a Crisis	Healthy Ways to Meet a Crisis
1. Deny that the problem exists.	1. Face the fact that there is a problem.
2. Evade the problem by ignoring it, hiding it, or trying to escape it with alcohol or other drugs.	2. Attempt to understand the situation more fully.
3. Refuse to seek or accept help.	3. Open channels of communication with friends, relatives, pastors, or others who might be able to help.
4. Hide feelings of sorrow, anger, guilt, etc.	4. Face up to negative feelings of guilt, anxiety, or resentment, and consider actions and alternative ways of viewing the situation so that you can deal with these feelings.
5. Blame others for causing the crisis, and expect that somebody else is totally responsible for curing it.	5. Separate the changeable from unchangeable in the situation, and accept that which cannot be changed.
6. Give no thought to practical ways by which the crisis might be handled.	6. Explore practical ways of coping with the problem, and take steps (however small) in handling the problem in a practical way.
7. Take on the role of a helpless victim who has been abused by others and who can do nothing except suffer.	7. Accept responsibility for coming with problems, even problems that seem to have arisen from situations beyond our control.
8. Turn away from friends or family.	8. Pray about the matter, honestly sharing your concerns with God. Remember that God is both aware of our crises and concerned about us.
9. Refuse to pray about the crisis.	
10. Convince yourself that a crisis is evidence of God's punishment or disfavour.	

Conflict Management

As relationships in groups deepen, conflict is inevitable. A group that experiences no conflict among members is probably either a brand-new group or a group that has not pursued authentic relationships. Lets look at some biblical principles for conflict management and then at some effective conflict management strategies for small group leaders.

Key Scriptures for Conflict Management

- Speak truth in love (Ephesians 4: 15,25)
- Mirror rather than try to change people's feelings (Romans 12: 15; 1 Corinthians 12:26)
- Seek to edify and be gracious (Ephesians 4:29-32)
- Express real emotions, but do not sin (Ephesians 4:26-27)
- Settle private disputes privately (Matthew 18: 15-17)
- Do not keep a record of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5)
- Think before you speak (Proverbs 15:23, 28)
- Do not return insult for insult (1 Peter 3:8-9)
- Check your motives for conflict (James 4: 1-2; Proverbs 13: 1 0)
- Pursue peace and edification in relationships (Romans 14:19)
- Avoid needless quarrels (Proverbs 20:3; 2 Timothy 2:24)
- Remember the group's interests as well as your own (Philippians 2:4)

Expressing Anger in Groups

There are two ways of expressing anger in groups. "I" messages are clear and confessional. The person using "I" messages own their anger, responsibility, or demands without placing blame. "You" messages are most often attacks, criticisms, labels, devaluation of the other persona or ways of fixing blame.

When Angry, Attempt to Give Clear, Simply "I" Messages

The following are examples of "I" and "You" messages.

"I" Messages	"You" Messages
I am angry.	You make me angry.
I feel rejected.	You're judging and rejecting me.
I don't like the wall between us.	You're building a wall between us.
I don't like blaming or being blamed.	You're blaming everything on me.
I want the freedom to say yes or no	You're trying to run my life.
I want respectful friendship with you again.	You've got to respect me or you're not my friend.

Strategies for Managing Conflict

There are several approaches to conflict-management, each having its own benefits. In life groups, however, the strategies of compromise and collaboration are probably the most effective.

Avoidance (the turtle)

Avoidance is an effective strategy to use with conflict when:

- The issue is trivial
- The situation will take care of itself
- Saving face (yours or someone else's) is important
- Time is limited

Avoidance is not an effective strategy to use with conflict when:

- The problem is important
- The problem will not resolve itself (and may worsen if neglected)
- Credibility would be lost by avoidance
- There is a larger, underlying issues that is important to address

Competition (the shark)

Competition would be an effect strategy to use when:

- Competitive interaction would result in a better solution
- You want one person/position to prevail over another but you cannot declare your sympathies publicly
- The issues outweighs the relationship
- Encouraging competition will clarify the issue and expose weak spots

Competition is not an effective strategy to use when:

- Long-term relationships are important
- Conflict is likely to become personal rather than remaining issue-orientated
- It is important to avoid a win-lose situation or public defeat

Accommodation (the teddy bear)

Accommodation is an effective strategy to use with conflict when:

- The relationship is more important than the task
- The issue is trivial
- Small concessions will reap further gains (ie choose your battles)

Accommodation is not an effective strategy to use with conflict when:

- Your actions could be interpreted as being condescending
- Its use would set an unwise precedent (eg fee bargaining)

Compromise (the fox)

Compromise is an effective strategy to use when:

- There is no simple solution
- Both parties have strong interest in very different facets of the problem
- There is not enough time for a truly collaborative solution
- The situation is not critical and an adequate solution is good enough

Compromise is not an effective strategy to use when:

- A dangerous precedent would be set by failure to hold one's ground
- An optimal resolution is possible
- It is important to avoid concessions of any kind

Collaboration (the owl)

Collaboration is an effective strategy to use when:

- The task and the relationship are both very important
- The time, information, and willingness to collaborate are present
- The outcome is exceedingly important
- Sufficient trust exists between the parties

Collaboration is not an effective strategy to use when:

- Time, trust, and resources are not available
- The issue is not worthy of the investment of time, energy, and resources

Correct Thinking about Caring and Confronting. "Care-fronting"

Together, the words care and confronting provide the balance of love and power that lead to effective human relationships. Unfortunately, the more common practice is to keep these distinct and separate.

Care-fronting offers genuine caring that bids another grow. To care is to welcome, invite and support growth in another. It offers real confrontation that calls out new insight and understanding. To confront effectively is to offer the maximum of useful information with the minimum of threat.

Care-fronting unites love and power and unifies concern for relationship with concern for goals. This way, one can have something to stand for (goals) as well as someone to stand with (relationship) without sacrificing one for the other, or collapsing one into another. Thus one can love powerfully - and be powerfully loving. These are not contradictory; they are complementary.

Rebirthing

This is the term used for the process of multiplication. It has positive connotations compared to slipping or dividing. The way our body works is through cell multiplication and growth.

Life groups will work in the same way. They must for God's kingdom to grow. This kingdom principle is seen in (John 12:24 NIV) *"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."*

Death is painful. But without death there is less life.
Rebirth of small groups must occur.

Cast a vision for birthing from the beginning of the group.

- Start to raise the issue of ending the group slowly and a good distance from the actual end date. Don't spring it on members.
- Help the group understand that their purpose is to give life to other groups.
- Prepare the apprentice or the person/s that are going to take over.

Options:

- Facilitator leaves, apprentice stays. Facilitator starts new group.
 - Facilitator stays. Apprentice starts new group
 - Facilitator stays with some members. Apprentice leaves with some members.
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- All members start new groups (Turbo groups)
(Sometimes you can separate within your group prior to rebirthing. Break and come back together for prayer.)
 - Facilitators need to be alert for signs that members are avoiding dealing with the groups ending. The group may lack intensity; there may be lateness, lots of joking or intellectualising.
 - Explore issues of separation. Talk about how members will find the same level of community in the future. How relationships will still grow with those in the group after separation. Discuss and plan how you want to say goodbye.
 - Celebrate the achievements of the group. What have been the high lights of the time together, the fun, and the outings? What have been the hard times? The journey you have travelled. The growth of the group.
 - Have a party. Food,fun. Have a positive time of affirmation. Everyone brings a word of encouragement for each person and goes around the group one at a time and each person give their word to the one person. Bring a present. Something you have made, something from nature, or a card. A gift.
 - Plan to get together in the future. Have a reunion.