

# PCF Life Groups FAQ Sheet

## Sixteen Frequently Asked Questions about Life Groups at PCF

*1. I am already part of a small group that is up and running, and we have been meeting for years. How does our group fit within your vision? Do we need to change groups or disband?*

We don't want to disrupt a group that has been meeting for some time and desires to continue meeting. On the other hand, our desire is that eventually all Life Groups at PCF will be geographically based and doing the same thing each week. We encourage you to think and pray about what is best for your group.

If the group you are already part of decides you want to continue meeting, we ask that your group leader meets with the elders and the Life Group Coordinator to lay out the vision and direction of your group, and then participates in the regular monthly training along with the other Life Group leaders. We consider this very important, because as elders and leaders of the PCF flock, it is crucial to us that every Life Group leader is being regularly trained and supported, is praying together, and is accountable to the elders. As those who are accountable to God for the spiritual health of every member of our flock (Acts 20.28; Hebrews 13.17; 1 Peter 5.1-5) it is important to the elders and leaders of PCF that there be no 'Lone Ranger' Christians and no 'Lone Ranger' small groups at PCF.

*2. I am part of a women's ministry or other ministry that involves meeting in a small group once a week. Are you asking me to join a Life Group in addition to this group?*

No. If you want to join a Life Group in addition to your current small group, that is fine. But we're not asking you to join two small groups. We don't want you to be spending time only with other Christians. If we are to be obedient to Christ's command to tell others the gospel (Matthew 28.18-20), we must be spending time with unbelievers, too.

*3. I've never been in a small group before, and I'm a bit nervous about joining one. How important is it that I join a Life Group?*

We think it is important. In fact, it is one of the best things you can do as a Christian. We understand that some PCF members have had bad experiences with small groups in the past, and are disenchanted with the whole thing. We ask you to prayerfully give it another try.

*4. I'm too busy to join a Life Group. What should I do?*

We would ask you to take another look at your calendar, and to find the time to be part of a Life Group if at all possible. PCF already has a minimum of meetings during the week. It seems to us that every member of our church should be at least regularly attending church on Sunday morning and participating in a small group of some kind during the week. That seems like a bare minimum.

*5. Do all the Life Groups need to do the same thing as all the other Life Groups each week? Can we do our own thing?*

We would prefer that all Life Groups be doing basically the same thing at any given time. What exactly that is may change over time. Life Groups may study a book of the Bible, follow up on Sunday morning's sermon with interpretation and application questions, read through a Christian book, or do something else. The Life Group ministry of PCF will decide, together with the elders and in consultation with the small group leaders, what is best for the Life Groups to be doing at any given time.

*6. When will the new Life Groups start?*

Life Groups will begin in the middle of September. This will give the leaders of the PCF Life Group ministry time to communicate to the entire church the new direction of this ministry and identify and contact the geographically-based groups.

*7. How many people will be in each Life Group?*

We think 10-12 people is an ideal size for each Life Group. That number of people is small enough to fit comfortably in a living room and still feel like a small group.

*8. Will the PCF elders be in Life Groups?*

Yes, each of the four elders believes in this ministry and is committed to being part of a Life Group in his geographical area.

*9. What about our kids? Can they participate in our Life Group?*

The material in the Life Groups will be geared primarily for adults. We want to give each group freedom in how you think through the place of children. The families in your Life Group might choose to leave their kids at home with a babysitter (hopefully, the geographical proximity of each group will be a help here). Or you might choose to bring your kids and have them meet in a different room, rotating adult helpers from your Life Group to teach the kids or do an activity. Perhaps older children can profitably participate in the group. The choice is up to you. If you have a family with a little baby or young children in your Life Group, and finding a babysitter is difficult for them, you may want to consider meeting at their house in order to make it possible for them to regularly attend.

*10. How long does each meeting of a Life Group go?*

Again, that is up to your group. We think 2 hours is a good time to shoot for. That gives you time to chat, study, pray, and sing together. Families with young children may want to meet earlier in the evening in order to get their children home to bed in good time for school the next morning.

### *11. Can women be leaders of Life Groups?*

Our plan is for the Life Groups to be led by male-female (preferably husband-wife) teams who will both come to the regular leaders' training once a month, with ultimate leadership responsibility resting on the male leader.

PCF is complementarian in its understanding of the Bible's teaching on manhood and womanhood. That is, we believe that God has created men and women as totally equal in value. God has also entrusted men with primary leadership in the home (Ephesians 5.22-33) and primary teaching and leadership responsibilities in the church (1 Corinthians 11.2.1-6; 1 Timothy 2.8-15).

Our goal is that Life Groups will be one of the core ministries of our church and will play a major role in the teaching, counseling, pastoring, and discipling of PCF members. This means that leadership of a Life Group will involve substantial teaching and pastoral responsibilities. Because of this, we feel it will be most honoring to Christ and true to God's Word if Life Groups, which will consist of both men and women, are led by men. However, every male leader of a PCF Life Group will have a female support person (preferably his wife) who can offer counsel and follow-up interaction to women in the group.

### *12. What will we actually do in our Life Group?*

The format of each weekly meeting of your Life Group is quite simple. We encourage each group to have a time of **welcome** at the beginning in which people can talk about their week and catch up. This will be followed by a time of **group study and sharing** – as noted above, this may involve the study of a book of the Bible, questions relating to Sunday's sermon, or reading a Christian book. The evening will conclude with a time of **singing** (if the group is sufficiently musical!) **and prayer**.

We also encourage all PCF Life Groups to **eat together** before your meeting on a regular basis (maybe once a month). These can be great times of sharing and getting to know each other better. No need for one person to prepare the meal every month – why not make it pot-luck and have everyone bring something?

### *13. Isn't this new vision for Life Groups terribly controlling and centralized? Why be so domineering and regimented?*

We hope that you receive this new vision not as controlling and domineering, but as a sincere attempt by your leaders to bless you with a ministry that is clearly thought through, Christ-honoring, and biblically-based. It would be irresponsible for us as leaders to give someone the great responsibility of leading a small group and then say, 'So long! We hope it goes well!' and wash our hands of all responsibility. We are accountable to God to guard and tend the souls of the PCF flock, and the best way we can do that is to ensure that the leaders of your Life Groups are well-equipped, regularly prayed for, and regularly receiving training.

*14. Does the term 'Life Groups' mean I'll be in a group forever? What if I'm not comfortable staying in the group that I'm in?*

For each Life Group session we will be asking for a 13-week commitment to the group: 10 weeks of study with 3 weeks off for leader's meetings (every fourth week). During that time we would expect each member to attend faithfully unless they are sick or out of town. This gives everyone a graceful entrance and exit strategy, allowing regular opportunities for new members to join, for growing groups to reform into multiple smaller groups, and for members to change groups if absolutely necessary. (We thoroughly expect most people to love their Life Groups and want to stay together, but understand that scheduling and other conflicts may arise that cannot be resolved. We also have an enemy who wants to rob us of all the blessings of true fellowship and who will be actively seeking to sow strife and division – may God give us victory over his wicked schemes!)

*15. I would like to join a Life Group. Who should I speak to about this?*

Please email or call our Life Group Coordinator, Peter Schunemann, at [peter.schunemann@pcfchurch.org](mailto:peter.schunemann@pcfchurch.org) or 603-465-6761. Or sign up on the sign-up sheet in the foyer over the course of the next month.

After gathering names of all those who would like to be in a Life Group, Peter will identify each of the new Life Groups based on geographical area and get back to each member of the newly formed groups to let them know which group they're in.

*16. I have some further questions about Life Groups. Who should I speak to?*

Please call or email our Life Group Coordinator, Peter Schunemann, or contact Pastor Stephen by phone (church office: 978.433.6360, home office: 978.433.5658) or email ([stephen.witmer@pcfchurch.org](mailto:stephen.witmer@pcfchurch.org)).