

Running a Life Group

If you were to ask someone to describe church, they would most likely mention a building, people singing or a preacher giving a sermon. Whilst there are a number of good things about this, it is not the only way that we can do church.

In the New Testament, the word used for church is 'ekklesia'. This literally translates to a gathering of people. In the early church lots of these gatherings would be similar to what we call Life Groups. They would comprise small groups of people, typically less than thirty, who met together to study the Bible, pray, worship, share life and reach out to their communities.

Christian groups often met in homes, outside in the temple courts or even in synagogues (Jewish places of worship). For example, [Romans 16:5](#) talks about the church that, "meets at their house." They did not necessarily have a church building like we may have today. In fact, there is not really any mention of a church building in the entire New Testament.

Sometimes we can think of church as a hierarchy. We think the pastors is the most important and the ordinary people less so. In [1 Corinthians 12](#) the church is described as a body, a working system in which everyone has a role and Jesus is the head. Everyone has a place in the body and no part is more important than the others. Ensuring that everyone has a place to listen, share and exercise their gifts is key to a healthy small group.

The Bible makes it clear that the church, which includes small groups, should be alive and active. It is not enough just to study the word of God; we need to live it out. In [James 1:22](#) we are told "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." It is non-negotiable. We need to be people of action who live out the love and life of God. God has placed us, his people in communities in order that we might bless the people around us and point them to him.

Just like the early church, Life Groups are small groups of people who meet together to study the Bible, share life and reach out to their communities. They meet wherever they can. Everyone is equal. We have seen many different lives and communities changed by ordinary people meeting together in this way. Why not try something similar in your community?

Put it into Action!

If you already meet in a Life Group, you may have heard much of this before. There is still more you can do! Why not invite more people to your Life Group? Or together with your Life Group, work to plant another group in a neighbouring community. If this is the first time you have heard about Life Groups, why not start one? Think about the people from different backgrounds that could be involved, both people who go to church and those who do not. Meet together with these people and discuss how you could start meeting as a Life Group.

Pray that:

- 1) People will come to know Jesus
- 2) Any obstacles to Life Groups will be removed

COVID-19 – Stay Safe:

Remember to take precautions to stay safe when meeting other people.



In a derelict cereal factory in Roan, a group of people met to talk about doing something new in their community. They saw that their community could be better and fairer. They decided they could do something about it and agreed to work together to start a Life Group!
- Roan, Luanshya Zambia



This lesson is inspired by "Running a Life Group in Your Village" taken from "Plant".

You can find out more at: dignityonline.org.uk/publications