

New Life Church Home Groups (City)

Why:

New Life seeks to be a vibrant and reproducing church that lives out the Greatest Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40, Mark 12:29-31, Luke 10:27) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). From those passages & the story arch of Scripture, we believe that every disciple of Jesus has a call to lifestyles of Worship, Community, and Mission. Having a space in addition to our Sunday Service is key to forming these lifestyles in the context of authentic relationships. It is also important to have a space that is designed to be the missional front door of our church. Jesus told us that the world would know we are His disciples by our love for one another (John 13:35). We believe that one of the best ways to invite someone into the family of God is to a smaller setting where someone can see the body of Christ up close and in action to experience Jesus' presence & love.

What:

Therefore, one way we gather as a church is by "Home Groups." Home Groups are vibrant families on mission. They are groups of 10-20 regular attenders that engage in rhythms of Worship, Community, and Mission. Members of a Home Group tend to be united by a common mission field, believing and petitioning God to empower them to show people Jesus there and live sent.

How:

Home Group meets on a regular basis for about two hours, though that can change depending on the plan for the gathering. Home Groups are meant to be light-weight, low-preparation, and low-maintenance. This does two things: Home Groups are not overly time-intensive to lead, and the simplicity shows that the focus is on being together, and engaging with the Lord rather than a program planned by the leader to come and consume. As such, members of Home Groups take ownership and contribute and serve others in their group, and leaders look for ways to invite the gifts and talents of others to build one another up in love.

Because of the missional nature of the Home Group, we believe people will see Jesus and want to be a part of the family of God and join the Home Group. As such, we aim to be accessible over attractional. Rather than catering to new people by toning down the spirituality of Home Group, we aim to explain clearly why we do what we do and make room for newcomers to participate or observe as they are comfortable. Also in regard to mission, Home Groups generally have an upper limit of 20 adults in regular attendance so that there is a clear time to start to consider multiplying as a group. Multiplication in the church is more of an art than a science. Many factors should be considered, such as leadership capacity, how many are in Discipleship Groups, the mission fields of the two new groups, and the health of the group. Multiplications are lead through gently by the leaders in conjunction with their Home Group coach. Though multiplication is relationally challenging, we see it as imperative that we share the Gospel and make room for new people to experience the body of Christ. We follow Christ's example of laying down His life for the sake of others.

A key element of Home Groups is that they have predictable patterns. This serves members by knowing what to expect typically from a group, and serves to give common practices across Home Groups in our church. This unity allows for transitions between Home Groups to be less jarring as the rhythms remains similar. It also makes inviting to Home Group easier as it is easy to describe what happens during the time.

Predictable Patterns of a Home Group

- Reading & discussing the Bible
- Praying together
- Fun & meaningful relating
- The Gospel communicated weekly
- Mission together

All of these things are to be done in a way that is accessible to non-Christians.