

lifegroup

How to Structure a Life Group

1. *Prioritize Relationships:* The goal for your group is to become well acquainted with each other, not simply to complete the study. At the end of eight weeks, your group will determine if the relational chemistry exists to the point that you want to continue on as a group. While studying a series is an important part of the group experience, be sure you prioritize connection relationally over completing a curriculum.
2. *Stay Predictable:* During your time together we strongly encourage your group to meet every week or every other week on the same day at the same time. Changing the meeting day and time is a prescription for failure.
We recommend your Life Group meets either for 90 minutes or 120 minutes. During your time together you will begin with some icebreakers and highs and lows. Then you will move into your study/discussion questions. Lastly, you will finish in prayer and a time to connect socially.

Examples:

90 min study

20 min. Icebreakers & highs/lows
40 min Study/discussion questions
30 min Prayer & social time

120 min. study

40 min. Icebreakers & highs/lows
50 min. Study/discussion questions
30 min. Prayer & social time

3. *Discuss and agree on your group values and goals:* Be sure that your group reviews and agrees to the purpose, goals and values of Life Groups at FOC. This will help clarify the goals and expectations of the group and allow everyone to start with the same understanding.
4. *Respect the structure of your group:* Starting and ending on time is important. As a leader, make sure your group is aware that group will begin and end on the times you all agreed on. Honor the time limit you gave for each portion of the study.
5. *Have fun:* We want the group to be an enjoyable and encouraging experience. Make sure laughter is a part of the meeting.

We believe that there are essential aspects to Life Groups, but that each group also needs its own identity. So, while we provide an outline for your Life Group, there is room within the structure for each group to develop its own unique identity. Some groups may put a deeper focus on the relational connection, while other groups may put more into the study/discussion side of things. Make sure everyone in the group is on the same page. While your group may gravitate to one area over the other please keep in mind all three aspects {*Grow Spiritually*-study/discussion, *Connect Relationally*-highs/lows, social time, and

6. *Serve intentionally- care for each other and community service} are all areas that need to be included and fostered in a Life Group setting.*

Let's take a closer look at the break down of the structure of a Life Group:

-*Social time, icebreakers and highs/lows*: Snacks are an important part of your group time. Take time to discuss as a group what your expectations for food and beverages will be. {Will the host be supplying food and beverages, will you do a potluck, dinner or snacks, etc...} Icebreakers can be an essential part of a new group. You may find as your group gets more comfortable it may not be needed. Highs and lows are a great way to connect relationally. We highly recommend starting your time together sharing a high: What was your high point of your week? And your low: What was the low point of your week?

-*Study/Discussion time*: Take time to discuss how you would like to go through the study. A great way to get others to interact and talk is to go around and have each person read a question. People can always pass if they are not comfortable.

-*Prayer*: Prayer is an essential part of every group. It is critical that you provide enough time and space for prayer. There are three basic approaches to group prayer, we would encourage your group to try each of them and figure out if your group works best with one, or if you would like to rotate through all three approaches. {If you have more ideas feel free to try them out}

1st prayer method: "How can we pray for you?" Ask each person in the group that question. Write the requests down and either go around the group and have each person pray for those concerns or have one or two people pray.

2nd prayer method: "Highs/Lows and everything in between." Have each person pray for the person on their right. Specifically thanking God for their highs, asking help with their lows, and raising up any other requests they have.

3rd prayer method: "Popcorn." Ask the group for any prayer requests, and then after an opening prayer, have a time of silence where everyone can either take a turn to pray out loud or pray silently. After a certain amount of time of silence have a previously assigned "closer" close the time of prayer with a final prayer.

-*Social time*: This is a great time to continue talking and enjoying more food! Be mindful of the host and how long they want people lingering around.