



Vision and Values for Lifegroup

The importance of clarity on the vision of Lifegroup is immensely important. Understanding the role of the Church in the kingdom of God and, then, the role of the Lifegroup as the Church will help you and your group experience all God planned for them.

Acts 2:42–47 describes what the church (Lifegroups) does and how the followers of Jesus love one another and the world:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (NIV)

Lifegroups are really house churches

Lifegroup is the starting place of the family of God. In this sense, it is the Church. Lifegroup is what best matches how the Church is described in the New Testament. The biggest difference between the Sunday gathering and Lifegroup is that Lifegroup is the place where people are known. When people are known, they can be discipled and loved well. Every function of the church is represented in Lifegroup: evangelism, discipleship, ministry, worship, and mission.

The Vision

We are a family with a passion for Jesus and His purposes in the earth.

The Values of Lifegroup

Because the Lifegroup is the Church, our aim must be to build up one another and activate God's people to be his hands and feet in the world. We want people to enjoy and follow Jesus together as God's family, so we must lead in these three key values:

We are Jesus-centered.

So we enjoy and follow Jesus together as His sons and daughters. (John 17:3).

Keys:

- *Intimacy: We always seek to experience a deeper relationship with Jesus. (Ephesians 3:17-18)*
- *Freedom: We address sins, lies, and wounds that hinder our relationship with Jesus. (Galatians 5:1)*
- *Obedience: We follow Jesus by keeping his commands because we love him. (John 14:21)*

Being Jesus-centered also means being life-giving. The term *life-giving* can feel vague, and we will never completely define all the ways our infinite God might bring a life-giving experience to his children.

Here are some the ways the early Church experienced life, which we can emulate:

- Encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Work with one another to make disciples (Philippians 1:27)
- Help guard one another against sin (Hebrews 3:1)
- Edify one another with encouraging words from the Lord and the spiritual gifts he's given (1 Corinthians 14:3, 31)
- Worship with one another and be in the Word together (Colossians 3:16)
- Help one another persist in the mission of the church (Hebrews 10:24)
- Welcome one another and others into fellowship (1 Peter 4:9)
- Bear with one another (Colossians 3:13)
- Raise up leaders who can lead others (2 Timothy 2:2)

If a group is NOT Jesus centered, then it will be leader centered. The group must not revolve around the leader's personality, gifts, or experience. If it is, the result is eventual leader burnout and crippled growth of the group and effectiveness for

kingdom impact. To help keep the life-giving experience centered on Jesus, the Lifegroup leader needs to keep the words of John the Baptist in mind: "He must become greater, I must become less" (John 3:30).

Life Drain Alert

Type A leaders often talk too much. Type B leaders often do not explain clearly enough for others to fully understand.

We have a kingdom calling.

So we join Jesus in his work in the world in preparation for His return. (Matthew 24:14).

Keys:

- *Pray: We fervently pray for others, asking Jesus to include us in what he is doing. (Colossians 4:2-6)*
- *Share: We boldly proclaim the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8)*
- *Mobilize: We send people into the world to make disciples who make disciples. (Matthew 28:18)*

Because Lifegroup is the most important gathering of the Church, it must be centered on what God is doing in the world: reconciling people to himself and bringing them into the Church. Lifegroups that focus on God's expanding kingdom impact their *oikos* (circle of influence) and stir passion in the hearts of Christ-followers for all the nations of the world.

Your Lifegroup can do this in four effective ways:

1. **Invite people.** Lifegroup members should invite both those who are lost and believers not engaged in the Church. Inviting new people is one of the most life-giving activities and it brings joy to Jesus's heart. Don't ever stop inviting.
2. **Love whomever Jesus brings.** Lifegroup isn't static; it's always changing. If a family with young children joins us, we adapt. If we have a person with special needs, we adapt. Regardless of someone's life stage, ethnicity, or spiritual maturity, we adapt to love him or her just as Jesus would.
3. **Multiply.** Be willing to release one another for the sake of loving more people. We will spend eternity in heaven together. Yay! For now, our mission is to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). As the vision is consistently emphasized and new people are consistently added, the group will begin to take joy and pride in multiplying. Being willing to multiply is saying yes to Jesus's commands. He always blesses us when we say yes!

4. Become equipped to talk with others about the Lord. Learn how to have spiritual conversations with the lost, share your personal faith testimony, pray for your *oikos*, and share the gospel. Lifegroup is a safe place to grow and foster boldness in our faith to reach out to others with the love of Jesus. Each one of us will grow to be missional in our everyday lives as we join Jesus in his work in the world.

We leave footsteps to follow.

So we disciple in a reproducible way (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Keys:

- *Personal: We show people how to enjoy Jesus, follow Jesus and study the Word for themselves. (John 15:1-11)*
- *Together: We gather in various contexts to encourage one another in love and good works (Acts 2:42-47)*
- *Sending: We equip and empower teams with diverse giftings and callings for the purpose of growing and multiplying the Body of Christ in the world. (Ephesians 4:11-12)*

Because Lifegroup is the Church, it must be led in a way that other potential leaders can imitate. It's not enough for Lifegroup to be a life-giving experience; it must be led in a way that leaves footsteps behind so that other leaders can follow.

Remember, we're teaching people to *be* the Church. Leading in a reproducible way has an incredible life-giving *and* multiplying effect; it can't be underestimated.