



LIFE Groups Tool Box

It is our desire to partner with those who want to build community in BridgeWay and Denver

Like in any tool box, there will be tools that are still needed (Thank you Craftsman tools!!!) However we believe that this is a great place to start to building your LIFE group. Please follow the steps and read the Basic Things to Understand as a leadership team to gain some tools to help you!

STEPS

Step 1. Pray 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty. Zec 4:6

Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain. Ps 127:1

We believe you are powerful and you hear from the God who is the keeper of all of your dreams. Our heart is that you connect with Him and He will show you the why, the what, the where, the when, but especially the who (not the rock group The Who!) (Please see attached – Powerful Manifesto)

Points of Prayer

1. Who will be your co-leadership team?
2. When will you meet? (time/date)
3. Where will the group meet?
4. Is this a closed or invite only group?
5. What will you do to promote and grow your group?
6. When will you know when the time for the LIFE Group to end? (if needed)
7. Who will lead worship? (if needed)
8. Who will be your target audience?

Please tell us what the Lord has been speaking to you as you have been praying. Fill out the attached form and return it to pastor Jeff with your LIFE Group Application.

Step 2. FILL OUT THE LIFE GROUP APPLICATION and return it to pastor Jeff. [Nothing can move forward until this is completed and the LIFE Group is approved by the BridgeWay staff. Please do not recruit or advertise until all has been approved.]

After all is approved...

Step 3. BUILD YOUR TEAM. After prayer this is the most critical step. You can only do what YOU can do, however if you have a team you can do exponentially more.

If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Ecc 4:10-12

Some things to look for in a co-leader:

1. LIKE HEART / LIKE SPIRIT. Do not be unequally yoked (not just Christian/ un-Christian thing)
2. If SINGLE – please, same sex co-leader
3. Look for people with DIFFERENT GIFT MIXES (talk more about this later)
4. Look for POWERFUL HEALTHY PEOPLE to be leading with you. You do not want to have to fix the leadership team in the middle of the group!
5. Look for people who are BIGGER THEN YOU. **If** this is God and He has **called you to lead the group**, do not walk in fear and choose people who are smaller than you. **Be powerful and confident!** God's leadership choices are different than the world (David / Gideon / 12 Disciples) He chooses someone, gifts them and anoints them and then expects them to be comfortable with smarter, more anointed and gifted people.
6. After prayerful consideration on your team, it maybe a good idea to ask BridgeWay Leadership for COUNCIL ON YOUR SUGGESTED LEADERSHIP TEAM – then proceed to invite them to the leadership team.

Step 4. Meet with your new leadership team. Never assume your team knows your heart for what God has spoken over the LIFE Group. BEFORE INVITING OTHERS TO YOUR GROUP YOUR TEAM MUST BE ON THE SAME PAGE.

1. PRAY TOGETHER
2. SHARE YOUR HEART about the direction the Group should go
3. PRAY SOME MORE
4. DIVIDE UP THE RESPONSIBILITIES between the team
5. DEFINE, with the team, what the boundaries are for the LIFE Group. This will create a safe place for your people. Example – this is a Young Adult Group – what are the ages? What do we do when we feel a predator is in our group, etc?
6. DISCUSS THE SCOPE of your leadership team's commitment to meeting the needs of the group (talk more about this later)

SOME BASIC THINGS TO UNDERSTAND AS A LEADERSHIP TEAM

UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF YOUR GROUP – feed the sheep

1. FELLOWSHIP – enjoying one another's company. To some this is the reason they will come to your group, they want to be loved and feel a part of community. BridgeWay Church is just too big to meet the needs of all the people. This is why you do what you do!!!!
2. CONNECTION – people are different in their level of connection, we need to find out what that looks like to each person. (Lunch / phone call / e-mail / none at all) [Don't be afraid to ask them - Help me, help you]. A good tool is the Book *5 Love Languages* – Gary Chapman
3. NEEDS MET – physical / spiritual / financial / emotional. One of the main goals of a LIFE Group is a real connection with brothers and sisters in Christ (family) and just like family there comes a time when we need one another in a particular way. Hopefully your team has all ready met and discussed the commitment of meeting the needs of the group.

Ideas

- Take up an offering among the group if a true/legit need arises for one of the group
 - Prayer – of course!
 - Meals delivered to a home when a personal crisis happens
 - Group prayer – if a group member is having a bout with spiritual warfare go over to that persons house and bombard it with prayer
 - Be creative with this!!! (this is where *your* pastor gifting kicks in)
4. FEEL SAFE – If people do not feel safe they will not come back. Creating a safe environment starts with a culture of honor. (See attached notes on Honor) This must be intentional. There are some in the body that feel they should be leaders (and are not ready) and can try to “help” lead your group. However you and your team can help this person find alignment. This is an example of protecting your sheep.

LEAD/PROTECT THE GROUP – setting healthy boundaries

1. What happens when someone asks THE QUESTION? You are not the Bible Answer Man (or Pastor Peter). We are not expecting you to know everything, so relax. If you do not know something (and it is relative question), give yourself a break and explain that you will get back to the person with an answer ASAP.

Some things to remember

- The Bible is scripture – Jesus is the word. You have a relationship with the word!
- Some truth is in tension – example...

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Jesus honored the woman at the well / called another woman a dog - fun, huh?

Remember the Bible is a book designed to be read with the eyes of the Holy Spirit – not with the eyes of man.

- Can you live in mystery? Here is the truth, we don't know it all – but with each day comes new revelations. This is about being in a relationship with the author not just memorizing the book. If all we need was the book the Pharisees would be in heaven right now!
2. What to do with an ULTRA NEEDY/WOUNDED PERSON? Remember we talked about setting up boundaries with your leadership team before you had your first meet? THIS IS WHY. When you know the scope of your group you can *then have* a good set of boundaries. Your group is not to take the place of S.M.A.S.H. sessions or long term counseling. (Even if someone in the group has the skills to SOZO someone, your group meeting is not the time or the place.) Have the person contact John Knopping and his team to set up a S.M.A.S.H. session. John's group has the training AND the spiritual covering to handle the needs of this type

of situation. Don't let your group get bogged down (it is like spiritual mud) or side tracked. Stay on your target!

3. What to do with DOMINANT CHATTY KATHY? – Ah, good times! This is another place where your leadership will come in to build a safe place for your group. Your team must pull the person aside and lovingly give them boundaries. Maybe they need some one-on-one time to meet some needs or maybe they have never been raised in community, either way it is so important to nip this in the bud before it grows and chokes out your group.
4. What to do if YOU ARE WRONG? – You are human right??? Mistakes happen, emotions run hot, you have a bad day, the cat puked on the sofa 5 minutes before everyone showed up, it happens to the best of us. If something goes wrong – own it. Remember this is about community/family. Part of that is learning to love when things aren't perfect. Clean up any mess that has been made (apologize, correct behavior, explain, etc.) and move on. This is a great opportunity for the group to grow. God can fix anything if your heart is right and there is no offense.
5. CONFLICT RESOLUTION – God loves people right where they are, however, He loves them too much to let them stay where they are. The same goes for the people in your group. The Bible is very clear how to deal with conflict. (Mat 8:15-17) Don't be afraid to confront, you are powerful! Remember, you have an abundance of what you tolerate. THE IDEA BEHIND CONFRONTATION IS RESTORATION NOT CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR.
6. Dealing with the group after someone DECIDES TO LEAVE (and it is messy or uncomfortable). A key to all human relationship is HONOR. Bringing honor to the person, even if they do not “deserve” it is huge. It will convey to your group that they will be loved and honored if *they* need to leave, which will open up the lines of communication even more between the group.

Some things to remember:

- You are not responsible for the comments of others – just how you will respond to the comments
- Not everyone is ready for community
- Not every group fits every person

Working with DIFFERENT GIFT MIXES – Five Fold Ministries

The beautiful thing about God's family is that not everyone is like you!!! This can be a good thing or a bad thing – it all depends on how you look at it (and how healthy and confident you are). If we can grab a hold of this we can build a team that can meet the needs of the group. God has created us with different gifts so we can work as a body and not just as a thumb (gross). I am going to use terms that are Biblical, yet can be confusing at times.

Think of it this way... a car accident happens in front of a group of Christian people – the Christian people react, it is fun to see how each of them work

1. The pastor – He is the first one to the scene. He is making sure the needs of the people are met. Are they safe, hurt, scared? He brings comfort until the emergency team arrives. IT IS ABOUT THE SHEEP

2. The teacher – Looks at the scene and measures the skid marks and direction of the accident to see what happened. He then begins to jot down notes on his next book on safe driving habits. ITS ABOUT THE WORD
3. The evangelist – asks all the people who are now safe and comfortable (thanks to the pastor) and asks “If you were to die right now, are you ready to meet the God of heaven?” Then he goes over to the crowd gathering to see the accident and begins to share the gospel to them. ITS ABOUT THE LOST
4. The prophet – he knew the accident was going to happen; he had a dream about it last night. He knew no one would die because he cast out the spirit of death. He goes around giving prophetic declarations to the victims and then discerns who should lead them from here. ITS ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD
5. The apostle – prays for the people and is looking to see God’s kingdom come from heaven to earth. As he sees the faith level arise in the people he has them pray for the others for healing. ITS ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD *

* Adapted from Danny Silk’s book *Culture of Honor*

The point of all this is that we see the different gifts and begin to appreciate what they do in the body. First you need to see YOU in the above list. Who are you to the body? When we surround ourselves with people who are just like us, we have only one gifting operating and can only meet a portion of the needs. We often do this because we feel comfortable with those like us. But when we surround ourselves with the different gift mixes (and allow them to be free and powerful) we can begin to meet the needs of the body.

It is really freeing when all the gifts move in the body, this frees me to be me and I don’t have to be someone I am not. It also allows others to grow in their giftings as well. This is another key component of the LIFE groups – building people up.

PRACTICAL STUFF

1. **KEEP RECORDS.** I know this sounds boring, but, that which gets counted gets valued. Keep attendance. This way you know the group and who is missing. Also shows you trends if you need to adjust meeting times or seasons
2. **DO FOLLOW-UP.** If some one has been absent find out why and how they are doing. (great job for a co-leader)
3. Have all members phone and e-mail address. Also their birthdays, anniversaries, etc should be someplace handy for the leadership team to use
4. **HAVE SIGN UP SHEETS.** So valuable – snacks, prayer requests, meals, etc.

GOALS

- **HAVE FUN!** (That is an order, soldier!) This is about community not about programs.
- **SPLIT!** (This deals mainly with Small Groups) As your group grows start to rise up leaders from the group so you can divide the group into two strong groups with room to grow again instead of one large group that will stall. This is the nature of Small groups (some people call them cell groups for the reason that they are designed to grow and split)

For Me

I will live my life from these truths:

1. God is good and He is for me
2. I am a son of the living God
3. I will live from love and not for it
4. He causes all things to work out for my good
5. I believe that I am in Christ and he is in me
6. I have been given every spiritual blessing
7. Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world
8. No weapon formed against me shall prosper
9. I will live from abundance and not lack
10. I will live like a friend of Jesus and no longer just a servant
11. I no longer am a sinner saved by grace, but I am a saint
12. I will live like a bride and not a handmaid
13. God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, love and sound mind
14. Holy Spirit's fruit is in me – I will control what goes on inside of me [emotions etc.]
15. I will not be ruled by the insecurities and fear of others
16. I will not be manipulated or lead by guilt or shame
17. I will be a victor and not a victim
18. I will take responsibility for myself
19. I will live un-offended
20. I will risk

Because of these thing and more – I will live from a place of power and greatness

As Leader/Pastor/Dad

I will trust that those I lead (mature believers) will live their lives by the above truths. I will lead them by the following truths:

1. I will trust the Holy Spirit in you to be more powerful than any rule I can make to keep you "safe"
2. I will not lead you by control or manipulation
3. I will believe that all people were born to be powerful and want to be powerful
4. I trust that you will take responsibility for your own life [it is yours after all!]
5. I will trust you to be a victor and not a victim
6. I believe God can speak to you on how to meet your needs better than I can guess
7. I will expect you to communicate your needs to me – I will not read your mind!
8. I will treat you as powerful until you are not and then trust that you will to take care of those areas
9. I will help carry your burden, however, I will not carry your cross
10. I trust you are connecting to God – being fed and in His presence

11. I believe you can receive revelations from God [He should be saying similar things to you as to the rest of the church]
12. I will treat you as an equal in things of the Spirit
13. I will believe that you are smart enough and the Spirit will lead you into all truths so I do not have to preach complete messages – I am not your mom and I will not spoon feed you
14. I believe the people of the body will minister to one another
15. I do not believe in top down leadership
16. I will encourage creativity in the people I lead
17. I will applaud your risk taking and encourage you if you fail
18. I expect you to be greater me – I will build a legacy not a monument to myself
19. I will not fear the people I lead [fear **of** people]
20. I will not carry fear for the people I lead [fear **for** people]

A Powerful Culture

God expects us to raise powerful people - He was the one to put two trees in the garden and trusted them with the power to choose. People want to be powerful in a world that promotes victims [even the church]

This next generation of leaders is looking for powerful men and women to lead them. Are we the ready for them? “Men joined the Paratroopers in WWII because they wanted to look up to the man in the foxhole next to them and not look down.” Stephen Ambrose – *Band of Brothers*

David killed the lion and the bear in his private battles – this created a place for his very public battle with Goliath, this cultivated a powerful person. David’s powerfulness created a culture that caused men to step into their greatness.

World changers are powerful people – this is what the world is looking for – sanctified / powerful / creative people. Our job is to help create these people by being powerful ourselves.

“A church that is top-down led - that is not permission giving - that does not allow the people to dream or encounter God fully for themselves - can never produce a warrior. In truth, people who want more of God are going to leave these inferior houses to seek the Lord and His greatness.” Graham Cooke - *Qualities of a Spiritual Warrior*, p 21

“If we do not create a culture that can allow Judas to hang himself you won’t have a culture that can create a Peter that can rule the church.” Kris Vallotton – message *Developing Champions*

“You can teach what you know but you can only impart who you are.” “If you teach what you have never experienced you are an echo and not a voice.” Kris Vallotton – message *Learning to Think*

WE HAVE TO BE POWERFUL – WE WERE CREATED FOR IT AND THEY DESERVE IT

A. Honor starts with in me – My identity and my commitment

1. Son of God – "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Mat 3:17)
2. Son to Leader – I am a willing learner who trust those God has put above me (Rom 13:1)
3. Peer to Brothers - I will not be the "older brother" (Luke 15)
4. Father to Others – I freely give away what I have been given (Mat 10:8)

* I can only give away that which I have. Danny Silk – "it is a reflection of what you are."

* I cannot expect my family/church to be honorable without me leading the way in honoring them and being an honorable person - These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. (Mat 15:8)

* I honor you, not just because of who you are but out of who I am – I have honor in me - Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. (John 12:26)

* I have to learn to create/steward honor in my heart – I control my atmosphere

* I will live out of faith and not fear – God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Tim 1:7 NKJV)

* I will work on my character issues that will keep me from living an honorable life

- A culture of honor is honed in adversity
- Honor is a learned lifestyle – I can't just wait for impartation
- A honor culture will cost you

B. Honor is a key component in creating a safe place for those in the area of my authority

1. I am safe because of my *known* identity
2. I am safe because I know my boundaries (healthy) [boundaries are different than walls – walls protect myself from hurts/pains, boundaries protect what I value in my life]
3. I am safe because I care for our relationship (a safe environment is demonstrated in my covenantal relationship with you) – I will fulfill my God given role as a son or father

* I choose to live un-offended

* I choose to see you with prophetic eyes – I will call you **up**, not call you **out**

* Your power and freedom will not scare me – I will be the biggest fan on your flame

* I will put others above myself – in my heart, in my words and in my actions – submitting to one another in the fear of God (Eph 5:21 NKJV)

* I will create ways to privately and publicly honor those who are above, beside and under my influence

- You don't start by creating a safe environment – a safe environment is created by the fruit or a byproduct of a culture of honor, confrontation and love
- A safe environment believes the Holy Spirit is more powerful in your life than my rules that try to govern your life
- Our desire is to create an unpunishable culture

C. Honor partners with confrontation

1. I confront because I love and care for our relationship
2. I am confront-able because I am a son
3. I will not “guess” your motives – I don’t know your thoughts no matter how prophetic I think I am

* I will create a culture of freedom so you can be you – at the same time I believe you will honor our relationship enough to protect it

* When there is a difference, I will appeal to your conscience and not attempt to manipulate or control you out of fear, guilt or shame [I feel..., when you..., I need to feel...]

D. Honor culture – culture of heaven

1. Sets me up for promotion and favor with man – examples: Joseph /Nehemiah /Daniel /David /Paul
2. Sets me up to receive that which is out of my natural gift mix – Mat 10:41 He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.
3. Sets me up with God’s favor – John 12:26 My Father will honor the one who serves me

* Creates an alignment for heaven to earth movement – Ex 20:12"Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God will give you.

* Choosing to honor is more of a heart condition than an act of will – I can obey from fear/self-serving motives and not from the heart or place of honor

* Creates a peaceful life – Rom 13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.

E. Honor culture – lifestyle not Christianeeze – culture defined – the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization (Merriam and Webster)

* Any new culture takes change. Change in heart, of mind set and change of actions – 2 Cor 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

* Any new culture takes time – Jesus spent 3 years with the disciples (24/7!)

* Any new culture there needs to be emersion – try learning a new language from a book only

* Cultural change cannot exist in the leadership only

* Growing a culture of honor must be intentional – like all things from heaven

Chivalry

2 *archaic* **a:** martial valor **b:** knightly skill

3: gallant or distinguished gentlemen

4: the system, spirit, or customs of medieval knighthood

5: the qualities of the ideal knight: chivalrous conduct



LIFE Group Application

It is our desire to partner with those who want to build community in BridgeWay and Denver.

Personal Information

Name _____
Address _____
City / Zip _____
Phone _____
E-Mail _____
Cell _____

Description or Nature of the Small Group

General Questions

Who will be your co leaders? _____
When will you meet? (time/date) _____
Where will the group meet? _____
Is this a closed or invite only group? _____
What will you do to promote or grow your group? _____
When will you know when the time for the Small Group to end? _____
Who will be your target audience? _____
Are you aligned with the spirit and heart of the leadership of BridgeWay?

