

# Life Group Covenant

This covenant is reviewed at the beginning of each session by all groups. Groups that are continuing still review the covenant during the first meeting of each session.

This covenant will help us discuss and clarify our goals, expectations, and commitments as a group. Since healthy groups thrive on trust and participation, a clear covenant is an important starting point toward a successful group experience.

## **Life Groups: Our Basic Purpose**

Life groups exist to promote the development of significant Christian relationships centered around the study of God's Word (see Hebrews 10:24–25; Romans 8:29).

### **Sharing**

Each week, we will take time to share what is happening in our lives. This may include some planned "sharing questions." After the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as our group feels safer and more comfortable.

### **Study**

Each week we'll discuss questions pertaining to the previous weekend's sermon. Our goal is to learn how to apply and live out our Christianity in our day-to-day experiences and relationships.

### **Support**

Each week, we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (see John 15:9–13). This care will take many forms, such as praying, listening, meeting needs, and encouraging and even challenging one another as needed.

## **Five Marks of a Healthy Group**

For our group to be healthy, we need to...

1. focus on spiritual growth as a top priority (Romans 8:29);
2. accept one another in love just as Christ has accepted us (Romans 15:7);
3. take care of one another in love without crossing over the line into parenting or taking inappropriate responsibility for solving the problems of others (John 13:34);
4. treat one another with respect in both speech and action (Ephesians 4:25–5:2);
5. keep our commitments to the group—including attending regularly, doing the question sheet, and keeping confidences whenever requested (Psalm 15:1–2, 4b).

*It is assumed that anyone participating in a group meeting agrees to the above five principles.*

## **Guidelines and Covenant**

### **1. Time**

After arrival and checking in, we'll spend approximately 15-20 minutes of open-sharing and 40-60 minutes in discussion based on the questions, and conclude with One Sentence Prayers. We will aim to conclude at between 75 and 90 minutes, but no later than 90.

### **2. Study**

Each week, we'll study topic(s) covered in the previous weekend's sermon using the question sheet handed out after service or available at [www.saintmatthiasoakdale.com/lifegrouphisweek](http://www.saintmatthiasoakdale.com/lifegrouphisweek)

### **3. Prayer**

Our group will be praying each week for one another and specific requests. We will practice the method of One Sentence Prayers, described here: The leader will review any prayer requests that came up during the open-sharing, then open the time of prayer. Participants may follow by adding prayers the length of one-sentence and may do this more than once. Finally, the leader will close the prayer.

### **4. Question Sheets and Attendance**

Joining a Life Group requires a commitment to attend each week and to complete the question sheet ahead of time. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and other special events—but not much more! This commitment is the key to a healthy group. Most weeks, the question sheet will require from twenty to thirty minutes to adequately prepare for the group study and discussion. If we cannot come to a meeting, we will text, call, or email our host or leader.

### **5. Refreshments**

The Church will provide snack-level refreshments (popcorn & drinks) through the Leader, unless there are participants who desire to take a week to provide refreshments and prepare drinks out of the kitchen.

*It is assumed that anyone who continues participating in a group agrees to the above seven guidelines.*