

GROUP
LITURGY

Start-up Guide Part 2

Welcome! This liturgy will serve as a Part 2 of a 2 week series start up guide for your time with your group.

This is a perfect resource for newly formed LifeGroups and existing LifeGroups coming back from a longer break.

1

HANG OUT

Time: Begin below section 10 - 15 minutes before the group starts

- **Engage**

Start off light and ask simple questions like, how was your day? What did you have for dinner? Keep the heavier conversation for the larger group setting.

- **Prayer of Dedication**

Invite one person or the whole group to dedicate your time to the Lord using Matthew 6:9-13.

9 Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Amen

- **Connect**

Questions of the day: "What is the most thoughtful thing someone has done for you lately?"

2

EXPECTATIONS + COMMITMENTS OF GROUP LIFE: OUTREACH

Let's get on the same page!

As you start up this group season together, it's important to establish a vision for being together (community week 1) and serving together (outreach week 2). These two postures are essential to group life, and we find that thriving groups take time to intentionally talk about the values, challenges, and practices associated with them.

This section is designed to help both newly formed and existing groups answer questions and make (re)commitments that will honor Fellowship's vision for groups, and acknowledge the weight of each member's effort to show up in community. These don't need to be collected, but if it's helpful to physically sign them, please do so!

2

"We commit to giving our lives away on mission."

This feels like an elementary connection to make for many, and yet a valid struggle for others. When we don't address the real obstacles of lack of margin, scarcity mindsets, and self-centered wounds that need to be healed, we can become a people who lack the joy God intended for us. So if you want to nurture joy in your community, talk regularly and practically about your serving rhythms:

- Do we have a regular practice of serving outside of this LifeGroup community or could we be in danger of becoming insulated and internally focused?
- Share about the last time you experienced deep joy that came from helping someone else in need.
- What additional practices can we add that will help us nurture joyous serving?

"We commit to developing an invitational posture towards our non-christian friends and neighbors."

Non-christians typically have two reactions to other followers of Jesus: either "wow, those people are really zealous and obnoxious" or "wow, those people are really hospitable", with the latter mindset shrinking more and more. This is a heartbreaking reality that we believe LifeGroups are most equipped to engage because non-christians will show up at trusted small gatherings much faster than impersonal large gatherings. So talk with your group about some of the opportunities that exist for your group.

- How do you currently feel about the natural frequency of your interactions with non-christians? How could that increase or be more intentional?
- Are their people that you are praying for to come to know Jesus?
- What additional practices can we add that could create evangelistic opportunities?

“We commit to supporting our local church community as tangible needs arise that we can meet.”

The body of Christ is so diverse and we love the wisdom of how God designed the body to care for itself. When hands and feet and fingers come together in unity they carry the burdens of the community in ways that glorify God. So the question is what has the Spirit put within your hands that can be multiplied to meet a need? Is it money, a particular skill set, the strength of your youth, or the treasured wisdom of your experience. Have a conversation about ways your group can tangibly support the church this season.

- Have you ever used Fellowship’s Get Help form to connect someone to help?
If not, click on the link and get familiar with it:
<https://madeforfellowship.com/help/>
- What additional practices can we engage to meet practical needs?

“We commit to love our city and seek the welfare of the community God has put us within.”

Pastor Albert has always held the posture that if our church ever closed its doors Monrovia High School District should be upset and begging us to reopen! Obviously not because we’re that amazing, but because we’ve so embedded ourselves in their success that to be missing creates a practical problem. This is not something that happens overnight, but we believe that established groups have a huge opportunity to maximize their impact.

- Could we benefit from identifying someone in our group to be a serve liaison/coordinator?
This could be an easy way to share responsibility amongst the group.
- Have we gone to Fellowship’s Serve website to check out opportunities that we can get involved with? Saving Innocence is a monthly opportunity that always needs donations.
<https://madeforfellowship.com/serve/>

3

READ THE PASSAGE

Let’s study! Use this section to dive deeper into scripture and discuss the kind of “belonging to become” church we believe God has called us to be. Consider listening to this sermon from Pastor Albert, before or after your group session, in order to gain more insight into Fellowship’s vision for creating a community of belonging.

The Parable of the Lost Son

25 Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. **26** So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. **27** “Your brother has come,” he replied, “and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.”

28 The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. **29** But he answered his father, “Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. **30** But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!”

31 “My son,” the father said, “you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. **32** But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

Luke 15:25-31

4

ENGAGE - DISCUSSION

These questions are designed to help guide your group conversation. Feel free to use only one or use all of them. Trust the flow of the conversation based on what the Holy Spirit is doing in your unique group.

Observation Questions

What do you notice about this text that jumps out at you? Share some of your initial highlights.

Interpretation Questions

In your own words, can you share how and why the elder brother in the story represents the Pharisees (religious people)? What do you think Jesus is trying to convey in v.31 when He says “you are always with me, and all I have is yours”?

Reflection Questions

One thing we learn from this story is the danger of religious people. Share about a time in your own life when you experienced a hurtful or uncomfortable moment at the hands of a “religious person”.

Pastor Albert shared that religious anger is marked by the Jonah sentiment, “just enough grace for me but not grace enough for them”. Share about a time where you identified with this feeling.

Do you resonate with feeling like God’s grace is too generous and reckless? If so, where do you think that comes from?

Application Question

We also learn from the story that God wants us to experience religious freedom vs religious slaving. This is something you experience as you invest your time, talent, and treasure in your church community. Share some thoughts with your group about one way you’re currently doing that well, and one way you could be more intentional over this coming season.

How could this community help encourage you in these areas over the next few weeks?

5

PRAY

Wrapup your group session in prayer. Throughout your group journey a regular rhythm of prayer is so important! It can also look very different from week to week, so we encourage you to discuss how it could be expressed in your meeting. Make sure you balance opportunities to both pray for individual requests as well as the Kingdom of God at large. Consider having someone be responsible for keeping track of a group prayer journal. We’ll also make some recommendations from time to time.

- Praise and thank God specifically for new insights you’ve gained during this time—about God, about each other, about your community.
- Humbly confess to God the specific struggles and/or questions you might have with the thought of serving the church and serving the city.
- Pray that God will use your Group to make a rich impact on the church and the city this year. Be specific in what you pray for.