

# Life Groups Leadership Training

## 02 -- How To Launch a Life Group

At South, we believe with all of our heart, that life change happens in community, That the goal of the Christian life is not to go to meetings and even hear great messages or sing some great songs or even be a little bit more moral. We believe there's a revolution that happens in a person's soul. And that the Spirit of God takes up residence in us and God wants to transform us as we follow the way of Jesus, do life in community and go on mission together. God actually wants to transform us.

And the place that happens is in community. And the real container of authentic community is a Life Group. So when Jesus came to change the world, what did he do? He developed a small group and the early church begin to grow.

They met from house to house all through church history. And if you meet anyone whose life has been dramatically changed, you know, it may have been in an organized program or a spontaneous gathering, but I will tell you, there was a smaller group of people where they shared their heart, they were in God's word, they prayed fervently, they held each other accountable and they really cared for one another.

It is so exciting to hear stories of people who were encouraged to start a small group. They were hesitant at first but launch a group. And then later you hear them say, "I never saw myself as a leader but I have been so blessed by my Life Group experiences. It is unbelievable how my group has changed me."

### **So, how do you start launch a Life Group?**

And so what I want to do is walk through, what should be a pretty simple and easy way to launch a small group. Let's look at four steps.

**Step number one is you have to Connect A Group**, right. And this is where I think people get stuck. Wow! You know, who am I going to ask and what am I going to do and they'll probably say no right, I get all that.

So let me ask you first. Are you married, or do you have any friends? Okay, that's not a hard question. Have you got it? Guess what, if you're married, you have a group. If you're married and have some kids, you have a group. If you have a few friends that you naturally hang out with, you have a group. In other words, sometimes we think of a small group as being out there in big church, when you already have the potential for a group right around you. So really what you want to do, is you want to launch a group out of your current group.

Once a group gets 8 to 10 to 12 people, there is not enough time for people to talk and to share and to really develop. Now you may watch a video together but now it's time to break into two small groups, we call it sub grouping. And you know what, when you have a group of four or five over here, and four or five over there, you begin to develop a new leader. But the neat part is, now you really have time to share.

I want to encourage you to feel empowered to start a group with friends. It might be a group of guys or it might be some other couples or might be some women that you work out with or some people that you find yourself at the coffee shop, and everyone is waiting for one person to take initiative. And so here is the next step you want to say to yourself, Okay, I believe God wants to use me. I really care about some people I want to launch a Life Group. It could be with my family. It could be in my church. It could be with some friends. It could be with some people at work. And so, how do you do it.

**Step Number Two: You just need to Clarify Your Invitation.** You need to think to yourself and say like one man a heard of who said, "Lord, you know I work in a high tech company. I know there's a handful of Christians, we all feel very alone, and I want to start a Life-Giving Group there. Help me! And in a very low keyway, he informed a few that he was starting a life-giving small group from 12 to one. Here is how he promoted it. We're going to do a little Bible study, and we're going to call it, Balancing Life's Demands. Our focus will be all about, you know, work and life balance. He sent out a little email and invited one or two friends that he already knew. And then here's the key. When you invite people, you tell them this: (1) Here is what we're going to study. (2) This is who is coming. (3) This is why we're going to do it. And (4) this is how long it's going to go.

Okay, did you get that. Did that sound that hard? Change gears with me a minute and let's pretend it's a different group. What would it look like to start a Life Group for young couples? What if you established a focus and found a really good short video series on marriage or parenting. Set up the series for eight week, with a plan to meet once a week. Pray, finalize your study plan and invite people to come. What is the worst thing that could happen?

But can you image what difference that study could have on making marriages stronger and parents more confident to spiritually lead their children. This will never happen unless someone steps up to take the initiative to make a difference. And so first is, you recruit the group, second, you invite them, and ...

Our Third Step is to **Create a Safe Environment**. You just want a place where people know that you will meet them where they are and be their friend.

Image a group that watches a video on parenting, does a question and answer segment and has a sharing time afterwards. You have to create a safe environment where they know that nothing is going to get pushed on them. They need to know how long it's going to be. And additionally this never hurts. Have a little bit of snacks & drinks to help people just relax when they walk in. You want them to know that this gathering is a safe place where they're going to be heard and where they can learn.

And you know, you don't need to be a theologian, you don't need to be a spiritual giant to create that safe space

And the **fourth step** is the one that I think holds people back. **You do have to Conquer Your Fears**

I meet people all the time who say I want to lead a group but I'm not sure. People will say, "I never saw myself doing that. I heard the invitation to start a group but was anxious about it. But then, I invited three ladies from church. We met in my home, and then God did some amazing things because I didn't let fear keep me from taking a step forward to invite others to join in.

You know, all of us need coaches and I'll never forget times where someone has put their arm around me and believed in me in a way that I didn't believe in myself. Come on, you can do this, just trust God.

And I want you to know that if you're thinking about launching a group and you're fearful and don't know what to do, you are in good company.

Let's just commit ourself to take these **four steps**. They're really not rocket science.

**(1) Connect A Group, (2) Clarify Your Invitation & Intent, (3) Create a Safe Space, and (4) Conquer Your Fears.** And by the grace of God, he's already prepared people that he wants to be in your group. Start praying for people you can invite to join your group! Are you ready? You can do it! In our next session we are going to start helping you with some very practical ways about how to become a great Life Group leader.