

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Hosting a Group:

Do I need to be a "Bible Expert" to become a Life Group Host?

Definitely not! The most important things that you need are a desire to serve the members of your group and to grow in your own personal relationship with Jesus Christ. When you take this step of faith, through prayer, God's Holy Spirit will give you what you need to be an effective Host. Tabernacle of Praise has many video curriculums available that provide expert teaching to your Life Group. Your host responsibility is to facilitate the discussion around that teaching using provided resources.

What are the requirements to H.O.S.T. a Life Group at the Tabernacle of Praise?

A H.O.S.T. must be a member of the Tabernacle of Praise or commit to becoming a member within 60 days.

What do I need to do to become a Tabernacle of Praise member?

You need to have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, be baptized by immersion at the Tabernacle of Praise or another church that we accept, completed the course TAB Connection.

How many groups or ministries should I be involved in?

The answer to this question is contained in your answer to how much time you have to do ministry effectively? We have found that people do one primary and one secondary group or ministry the best. Life stage and family responsibilities will help to determine how many ministries you can do, i.e. an empty nester will have more time to devote to a ministry than a young family with multiple children. We encourage Life Group leaders to be sure they are involved in a Life Group or ministry where they are being fed spiritually. It is only out of the overflow of what God is doing in your life that you will have the stamina and heart to serve others.

What if I am involved in another ministry?

Life Group membership is how Tabernacle of Praise members and attendees connect and grow in community. In order to serve in ministry, each of us needs to be growing in our spiritual walk and serving out of the overflow of what God is doing in our lives. Life Groups give us a forum where we can support each other in building the 3 E's (Experiencing God, Equipping Believers, and Engaging Culture) into our lives. Ministry is important and it is where we can express our shape for ministry to the body of Christ. Life can be very full and

many are needed to serve the church in significant ways. Yet we know the spiritual power that is needed for service to the church will be gained in people's lives as they study in Life Groups together the things that are most important to God. Sometimes it is just a matter of priorities. We need to be connected and growing before we can be effective in the ministry God has for us. It may require you to set priorities for investment of your time and focus.

I'd like to be a Host, but should I wait until I have more experience?

If you have a willing heart, a VCR/DVD player, and a few open seats in your living room, you are ready to be a Host. Tabernacle of Praise's Life Groups material and recordings are "plug and play" so that anyone with any level of experience can Host a successful group. If you will take our basic "Life Groups Training #1: Becoming a New Host", our pastors and instructors can help equip you to successfully host a Life Group.

How can I form a group with people who are similar to me?

If you would like to form a group as a certain affinity (like Couples, Singles, Women, Men, Single Parents, etc.), let us know when you fill out the online *Life Group Registration Form* at: <http://hurricanechurch.com/#/life-groups/life-group-registration>. However, in most cases your geographic community will provide a "proximate" life stage or lifestyle affinity. Be sure to invite your own friends that you enjoy hanging out with.

We have a small house or condo; can we still host a group?

Sure, all you have to do is say you are full or you can subgroup into smaller groups in several areas in the house. Sub-grouping can actually be more fun for everyone, but it's really up to you.

Can I invite people who don't attend our church?

Absolutely! Inform your friends, neighbors, family members, coworkers and casual acquaintances about your Life Group study. Most of Tabernacle of Praise's study materials are appropriate for both believers and seekers. Pray for God's guidance as you can make an eternal difference in the lives of others. While it is not our desire to attract people away from other Bible believing churches, Tabernacle of Praise's desire is to both connect "unconnected" people at our church and take our next step to reach our "un-churched" community for Jesus Christ through our Life Groups.

I Live out of the immediate area of Tabernacle of Praise. Should we still consider being a Host home?

Yes! If you live out of the area we would still love to support you as a Host. We presently have Life Groups in several cities in WV. Since, it is unlikely that we will be able to provide you with a list of potential group members; we would encourage you to pray about which neighbors, friends, coworkers and family members you could invite to join you for six weeks for your first study.

When should my group meet?

Life Groups meet at the time, place, and day of the week that best ministers to the needs of the groups. Whether it's 5 a.m. on Fridays for a men's group, Sunday night for a couples group, or Tuesday night for a ladies group. If you are starting a new group, you should choose the time and place that is convenient to you the HOST, then people who can meet your schedule will be attracted to your group.

Life Groups in General:

What is the definition of a Life Group?

In its simplest form, a Life Group is defined as a "Life Group Bible Study". A Life Group is a subset of the church body that meets on Sunday. Life Groups meet in non-church locations such as: homes, restaurants, coffee shops, businesses or any location that is convenient for the attendees. They meet morning, noon or night, any day of the week. This follows the pattern of the early church in Acts 5:42 "Day after day, in the temple courts (weekend celebration) and from house to house (Life Group fellowships), they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. [NIV]. At the Tabernacle of Praise, we ask Life Groups to do more than study the Bible. We ask them to accomplish all 3 of the purposes that Jesus gave us in the 3 E's (Experiencing God, Equipping Believers, and Engaging Culture). We believe that as we balance the purposes we grow a healthy church. Healthy Life Groups and healthy followers of Christ.

What is the format for Life Groups?

People connect in new Life Groups consisting of 6 to 16 people who provide love, support, friendship, connection and spiritual strength. The format is an informal and comfortable 1.5 to 2 hour gathering at the home of a Host for a semester. Participants are comprised of people from our church, as well as friends, neighbors, relatives and coworkers who are invited to join in the adventure. Most groups are guided through the study series using DVD curriculums and study guides.

Do we use husband and wife leadership teams?

Yes, we do. We find it very beneficial to have both the husband and wife lead in couples Life Groups. Each one brings different gifts to the leadership position. They each fill in and

compliment the other. However, it is wise for them to choose an apprentice to help assist them with their group in case they are out of town or ill.

Do you have women leading Life Groups with men in them?

Yes we do. We have women leading groups based on the biblical principle that the Pastors have given them the authority, so they are under the covering of that authority to lead that group.

Are the 3 purposes carried out over the life of the group, and, not necessarily on a weekly basis?

That is correct. You want to take a snapshot of your group over a two or three month period to see that there is health and a balance of the 3 purposes. So, a group need not do all 3 of the purposes at every group meeting. A key role of the leader is to see that the 3 purposes are balanced "over time" and to place emphasis on areas where the group needs to grow.

The Actual Life Group Meeting:

How long should the average Life Group meeting last?

A typical Life Group meeting is one and a half to two hours. However, it is unique for each group, depending on the type of group, and should be worked out by agreement of the group members in the process of developing the Life Group Agreement that covers what will be done and how it will be done in your Life Group.

How should time be divided in the group?

This is up to the Life Group Host and why the Host is so important. The Host is able to determine where the group is in the 3 purposes and what they need to be doing. We suggest that the leader take a snapshot about every two to three months to see that health and balance is brought into the group over time.

How should our group handle childcare?

First, make childcare a top priority in order to make it happen. If there are people who can't afford childcare, others need to step-up to help out. Another thing is that you want to rally together. You might be able to get a sitter to watch the kids in one part of the house while the group meets in another room. If there's home nearby, one person can watch the kids there while the group meets in another house. You may even try to rotate

people out of the group to take care of the children. There are many childcare options these are just a few.

On which day of the week does the study take place?

One of the great things about the Life Groups is that it fits with every person's schedule. Pick the day and time that works best for you. Then, select the group nearest to you that works. A business and professional group may choose to meet for breakfast or lunch. A busy career couple might choose to meet on Saturday mornings while a mom with kids in school might prefer a group that meets on a weekday morning.

Do you suggest Life Groups meet once per week?

The short answer is "Yes", we recommend once a week as the ideal frequency for a Life Group to meet. But, we also acknowledge that groups that meet every other week or monthly can still be effective as long as they use other mediums to provide ongoing care, nurturing, and leadership development of the group.

Inviting People/Growing Your Group:

How can I get more people for our group?

You and the members of your group should invite unconnected people you meet at church, your friends, neighbors, coworkers and family to join the group. This is the best way to get new members in your group. Pray before you invite someone new. Ask God to soften his or her heart and then step out in faith and make the invitation. Also, we post a "Master Group List" on the Tabernacle of Praise's church website to help promote Life Groups.

How do I get my established group to want to grow and multiply?

This starts with the vision, mission, and strategy of your group being very clear to you and to the members of your group. Tabernacle of Praise's Life Group Vision and Mission Statements help Life Groups understand why their group exists: Our vision is about the 3 E's of the church. 1. Experiencing God through Worship Services, 2. Equipping Believers through Discipleship, 3. Engaging Culture through Ministry Teams. Our mission is to assist others in: Connecting to God, Connecting to Each Other, and Connecting to the World. It is also very important to lead your group members through the stages of leadership development, from the open chair, to helping people to discover roles and responsibilities, to the solidification of formal roles and apprentices being brought up and finding their purpose through sub-grouping. Sub-grouping allows your group to grow larger while maintaining a good leader to member ratio.

What are effective ways to get Life Groups involved in bringing seekers on a continual basis?

We would suggest, that if a person is asking that question that they may want to lead a seekers group that would be targeted for people that may want to know more about Christ or are open to asking questions or to express doubts, so that there can be a positive open forum. But one of the most effective ways we have found is for someone to champion Missions and Evangelism in the Life Groups. This would help give a voice to that very need of honoring the open chair and bringing seekers to your group. Also we found that although a group may be doing a study, a seeker can also gain benefit just from the relationships and being around other believers in a group.

Should Hosts invite people only from Tabernacle of Praise or can we invite seeker friends?

That is totally up to the Host and to the group. The point is to seek God prayerfully about who to invite. Hundreds of lives have been changed because groups have welcomed their unbelieving neighbors, coworkers, friends and family into their groups. Your group can too!

How do I raise up leaders?

This is a process where your group members can help and do small tasks and functions of your Life Group. Based on their giftedness, rotate leadership and have members lead a sub-group. They can Host when you are out of town, and they can be released to do their own group should they choose. Encourage your Life Group members to attend the Tabernacle of Praise's TAB Connection course and the "Life Groups Training #1: Becoming a New Host", so they can more effectively develop as hosts.

How do I?

How do I get help?

Every Life Group host is assigned a Life Group Hub Coach who is your point of contact to Tabernacle of Praise's Life Group community and is the source of help, information and resources to help you. Your Hub Coach's contact information can be found on in your *Welcome Packet*.

How do we prevent Life Groups from breaking up family unity?

No ministry should take priority over the family. If it does, then, they are out of sync with God's will. We need to help people see the value of the family.

How do people move from one group to another, or do they?

Yes, we have found over time that people do move from one group to another. It is important that you let people have the ability and the flexibility to move to another group. It's important that the leaders understand that meeting the members' needs is the primary concern, even if it means they find another group. We encourage leaders to remember that not all people grow at the same rate, or have the same needs over time. It is healthy for people to seek a group that meets their needs at the time.

My group is dying, what do I do?

This is where connecting with your Life Group Hub Coach is important. Your Life Group Hub Coach will be able to help you diagnose what is happening and recommend changes or training that could help you as a leader, and help your members as well. If different people in your Life Group have different needs, or ideas, than what your Life Group is doing, it may be time for them to move on and find a group that will meet their needs. There also may be value in you taking a break from the group or go to other groups. Again, it is through relationship with your Life Group Hub Coach that you can be coached into seeing what is right for your group.

What if my group wants to continue and I can't continue to lead?

You can identify a new Host from within the group if there is someone that is qualified. Your group can determine the Host as long as they meet our Host requirements. Please read the answers to questions on Host requirements.

What do we study?

Are all of the groups required to study the same material?

We ask each group to select what they want to study based on the interest of its members and their spiritual maturity. For available Life Group curriculums go to:

<http://hurricanechurch.com/#/life-groups/life-group-registration>. Then, Left-click on the "Curriculum Options" tab.

Is curriculum dictated by the church leadership?

Each group selects what they want to study based on the interest of its members and their spiritual maturity. For available Life Group curriculums go to:

<http://hurricanechurch.com/#/life-groups/life-group-registration>. Then, Left-click on the "Curriculum Options" tab. Host may submit any curriculum that they wish to cover; however, all curriculums must be pre-approved by the Life Group Pastor before the beginning of the semester.

Training:

I'm an experience Life Group leader, why do I need to go to Life Group Training #1: Becoming a New Host?

We want every Life Group leader to understand the distinctive principles of the Tabernacle of Praise's Life Groups. Those distinctive principles are covered in Life Group Training #1: Becoming a New Host. Also, we believe that leaders are learners and we strive to provide advanced Leader Training and growth opportunities for our leaders. After you complete Basic and Advanced Leader Training, the Tabernacle of Praise provides

opportunities for seasoned leaders to sharpen their skills on a twice a year basis in All-Church Host Gatherings in January and July each year.

Do you have a Life Group Question not answered here?

Please e-mail KevinDingess@hurricanechurch.com for an answer within one working day.