

life groups

NLC Life Group Through the Bible Study

Week of January 28, 2017

Sermon: Better Together



NEW LIFE
CHURCH

Life Group Schedule

15 MIN Eat, Meet & Greet

15 MIN Ice Breaker Game: **Connecting Stories**. This game is all about finding common experiences or themes between people. The goal of the game is to connect mini-stories in an interesting way.

Materials required: Pens and Post-it Notes or notecards.

Divide into small groups of 6-8 people. Each person must share at least one item that connects to the other mini-stories. The longer the chain of items that can be created, the better. Write down a few words on a post-it note to keep track of each part of the story.

The first player begins by sharing an interesting memory or experience that they have. For example, one player can say: "One time, I accidentally locked myself out of the house. So then I spent the entire day at a coffee shop." Any other person can tell a related story that has any similar themes or elements to the previous story. For example, the next person can say, "I am a total coffee addict. Every day I drink 3 cups of coffee, and it sometimes prevents me from being able to sleep at night."

The next player, based upon the previous story shared, can say something related, such as: "I don't sleep much at night because I play lots of computer games until early morning." Any person can then add to the story, by saying something like, "I also love computer games." To help the group remember each part of the story, write a few words on a post-it note for each part of the story chain. The more interesting or funny the story, the better.

The group with the longest connected chain of stories wins. This activity is a fun way to get people to share stories, while helping them learn similarities or common interests.

OPENING PRAYER

5-10 MIN Find Your Place Review

- Last week, we continued Finding your Place at the table, which means being in the middle of God's Will. We discussed how to get to this table:
 - › by dropping every excuse, because this is our #1 priority
 - › by remembering how desperate we are! Coming to the Table is a Lordship issues
 - › like sheep, the Shepherd leads us to the table, because we can't find our way on our own! (Humbling!)
 - › by always making room for others! Have compassion on others, because Jesus has compassion on you!

Q1. We challenged you last week to put your schedule on the table and

let God help you sort it out. What 1% adjustment did He show you that you could make this week?

- We also mentioned four personal disciples that help to discern God's voice in your life:
 - › Staying in the Word, as God's voice will always be consistent with the Word.
 - › Talking to Him, because the more you talk with someone, the more you get to know them.
 - › Worshipping Him, choosing to declare from your heart that Jesus is Lord over your life, rather than yourself.
 - › Being thankful. Living in a spirit of thankfulness changes your perspective from worrying about whatever's right in front of you to thanking God for the things He has already done for you.
- We all need the Lord!

Q2. In what areas of your life this week, this season, or this year do you clearly need the Lord to lead you? Take a moment to pray over these together as a group.

35-50 MIN Better Together

GENESIS 2:18 – “It is not good for man to be alone..

- › Before prayer, reading the Bible, or worship was mentioned in the Word, God teaches us that it is not good for us to be alone!
- › if it wasn't good for a man who literally walked with God to be 'alone,' it's not good for us either.
- There are promises for those who seek God in prayer, worship His name, and keep His Words on their lips!
- There are also promises for those who commit to the spiritual discipline of togetherness:

READ DEUTERONOMY 32:30, MATTHEW 18:19-20, AND JAMES 5:16

Q3. What promises does God make in these verses?

- There were some great heroes in the Bible who knew the importance of togetherness:
 - › Jethro encouraging Moses not to lead alone, David had his mighty warriors, Jesus had His disciples, and Paul had Timothy.
- But today we increasingly live lives of crowded isolation.
 - › Lives crowded by appointments, to-dos, family and work obligations, lost in a digital haze of text messages and social media.

- › A study has discovered that the average person checks their device 85 times a day, spending five hours browsing the web and using apps, about a third of the time a person is awake.
- › We are more ‘connected’ than any generation the world has seen, yet more spiritually and emotionally isolated than ever before, because we have forgotten that we are better together.

THE ROAD IS NARROW | THE AHEAD-BESIDE-BEHIND PRINCIPLE.

READ MATTHEW 7:13-14

- If the road is so narrow and so difficult to find, be SURE that people who are going the same direction as you surround you!

CHALLENGE: Ask God to show you where you’re weak—where you might be vulnerable to an attack or likely to lose your way—and then share that with a friend.

- Sometimes it’s not the devil that gets us! It’s just us wandering off the road. Either way we need each other. We’re better together because we’re surrounded and protected.

Q4. Do you have leaders in your life, ahead of you, lighting the way?

- Leaders provide Wisdom, Direction, and Covering.
 - › They can give you insight into the things they lived through that helped or hurt them.
 - › So often we make decisions on our finances, relationships, jobs and other things without so much as a question to a leader who’s a few paces ahead of you.

PROVERBS 15:22 “Plans fail with no counsel, but with many counselors they succeed.”

- › If we want our lives to be full of success...we MUST invite trusted leaders and counselors in on our decisions.
- › Maybe you need to go as far as laying down your ‘right’ to make certain decisions, or maybe you just need to collaborate more with the wise counsel that’s right here!
- › Get in a group and ask them to help you make wise decisions.
- Leaders as Examples
- The Word also encourages us to imitate the lives of people who are living the right way.

READ HEBREWS 13:7

- › It’s hard to imitate and honor people you don’t really know.
- › We need to live in close proximity to some leaders, so we can watch how they live and then adopt in our own families/jobs etc.

READ EPHESIANS 4:11-16, JAMES 3:1, AND PROVERBS 19:20

Q5. Do you have friends beside you, keeping you from veering off into a ditch? Do you have friends who really know you? Friends you can't hide from or lie to? Do you have an army that will be at your side, ready to go to war if something bad happens in your life?

1. Friends Provide Protection and Support!

READ ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12

- Sometimes when we feel overpowered by life, we need the support of friends.

2. Friends Provide Accountability

- Close friends are important to have around when you're about to make a big mistake!

READ PROVERBS 17:17 & PROVERBS 27:17

- › A leader can light the way, but a friend is with you in the storm, helping you come out better on the other side!
- › They know exactly what you're feeling...there's no filter.

3. Friends Provide Fun

- "Friend" is the root word for "friendly." Friends have fun together.
- See: Proverbs 12:26; Proverbs 13:20; Proverbs 18:24; Job 16:20-21

Q6. Are you leading people behind you? Do you have people behind you that you're leading, people who kind of bump you if you slow down or start drifting away from the pack?

- There's nothing like the accountability of knowing people are watching you and mimicking you.
 - › They keep you surrounded and in the pack.
 - › Everyone is called to lead someone!
- Pastor Rick once said 'You only have to be one step ahead of someone to lead them.'
 - › You don't have to be perfect to lead (cause you can't be), you don't even need to be fully mature (cause none of us are!).
 - › What you need is the willingness to love and help someone who might be a few steps behind you in certain areas of life.
 - › There are people in your sphere of influence, right in your small group, that could use your help.
 - › Jesus called a ragtag group—pulled them right off of the boats

and right out of their sin.

- › The only difference between them and us is they said ‘I have no idea what I’m doing, but I’ll say yes!!!’
- Just tell Christ you have no idea what you’re doing...but He asked so you’ll say yes!

4. People Following You Provide Calling and Blessing

- If we’re willing to love and lead people in this way, Jesus promises to show up.

READ MATTHEW 28:16-20

- This is a part of our calling and story—a big reason why it’s better to do life together!
- Matthew 22:36-40
- Philippians 2:3 (humility)

Q7. Take a moment and ask God where you might be weak. Do you need leaders ahead of you, friends beside you, or do you need to open up your heart to leading people who are behind you?

- From my experience, if we will live this way, we can stay on the narrow path that leads to a full life! We can live a life closer to Jesus.
- Challenge:
 - › Find someone in your life group that you can pray consistently for each other’s needs this week.
 - › Write down the names of a few people who are a few steps ahead of you; then reach out to them for wisdom before you make your next big move.
 - › Find a few people around you and be intentional about encouraging them.

ANNOUNCEMENTS