

## Life groups—Ethos of accountability

Life Groups operate within the following ethos.

- What is shared is confidential
- All are comfortable with group members
- They are friendship based
- There is freedom in how groups form
- Regular attendance is important
- Facilitators are trained and accountable
- They express low control—high accountability
- We listen to one another and to God
- Individuals share what they want
- Sharing is without judgment and with grace
- Prayer for one another is central
- Normally same-gender
- Ethos erosion concerns the pastoral leadership of the church



## Life groups—

### ...what are they?

They are where we help one another grow as disciples of Jesus. They provide a safe place in which we meet with friends to share our life experiences in the light of the teaching of the Bible, open to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. We use the three shapes to reflect upon various aspects of our lives. We pray for one another and make ourselves accountable in our Christian walk. The 'ethos of accountability' overleaf provides further insight into their character & purpose.

### ...how do they operate?

Normally a group meets every 3 weeks or so at a time convenient for group members. They are limited in size to encourage open sharing. Someone trained in their ethos and practice is responsible for facilitating the group. They are responsible to the church's pastoral leadership. Each group member owns personal responsibility for their own walk and is willing to share appropriately. Members are committed to attending regularly to ensure continuity.

### ...how do I become part of one?

You may know someone already within a group. Do chat with them about their group. Alternatively have a word with a pastor to indicate your interest. Because groups have a size-cap and depend on healthy relationships between members to be effective, it may take time for you to find a group. Please be patient!



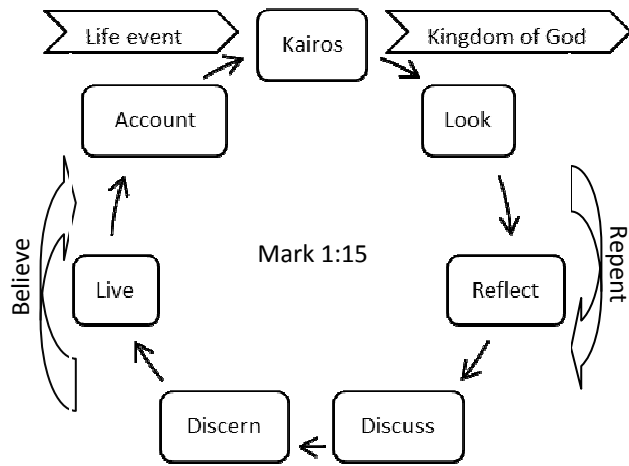
# Introducing Life groups



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Life groups

## Life Learning Circle

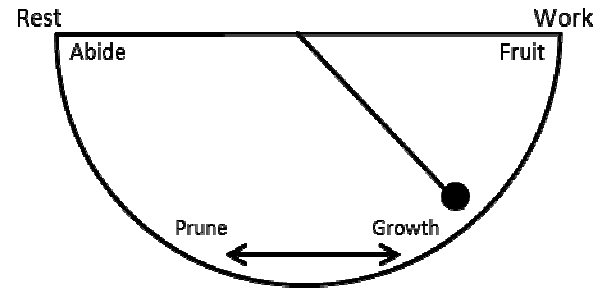


By being spiritually alert God can use events—**kairos** moments or periods in our lives—to impact us. Such events can be obvious, but some are small everyday happenings (e.g. Matthew 6:25-29). A process is set out below that helps us become conscious of God's kingdom drawing near.

- **Look**—We need to develop a healthy way of looking at events (Matthew 6:22-23).
- **Reflect**—Time is needed to quietly consider what has happened. We need to go into our 'inner-room' where we can relate with the Father (Matthew 6:6).
- **Discuss**—It helps to share with trusted companions your thoughts after time alone. Jesus encouraged us to discover the power of two or three gathering as he did with his disciples (Matthew 16:20).
- **Discern**—God wants us to discover God's will and purpose in our lives: how to respond to someone, take action or not, or to plan something (Romans 12:2).
- **Live**—Our calling is to work this out in everyday life but always understanding that God is working in and through our lives (Philippians 2:12-13).
- **Account**—Being a disciple is realizing our life is ultimately accountable to God. *Life groups* help develop this outlook through the habit of open companionship.

We go on learning as we work through this process consistently. We learn to live our lives within the kingdom of God.

## Rhythm of Life Semi-Circle

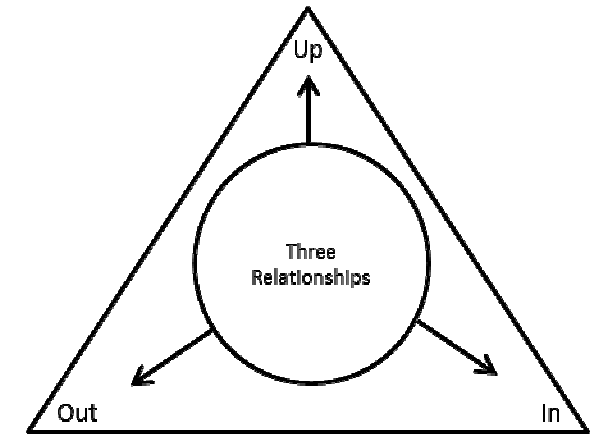


The biblical pattern of life includes the rhythm of rest and work. Until the recently the state legislated a weekly day of rest. But now in a society aiming for ever increasing efficiency and productivity, individuals easily lose this rhythm. And church may add to the problem through its demanding community life. We need to help one another work from the place of rest, not merely see rest as a reward for work.

- Humans were created on day 6. It meant humans' first experience was God's rest on day 7. This day had no 'evening and morning' like the others. It was the day without beginning or end—a day to permeate all the others.
- Human life starts with rest, it is not the reward for work. We are human beings *before* we are human doings.
- Jesus offers us rest (Matthew 11:28-30). He taught us 'to abide in him'. This is the way to fruitful living (John 15:1-11). He also taught us that 'pruning' in our lives ensures more growth and fruitfulness. The principle of rest is important.

The semi-circle helps you keep under review your rhythm, to plan your rest, and work-life balance. *Life groups* will help you reflect and become accountable in this.

## Balanced Relationships Triangle



Living balanced lives is a key to on-going effectiveness.

### Up—our relationship with God

Jesus underlined loving God with all our heart, soul and mind is central (Matthew 22:37-38). However the crucial source of such love is to grasp God's relationship with us. We are learning to live our lives in the light of God's loving gaze—being known and loved by God so that we become those that love in turn. (Ephesians 4:18-19).

### In—our relationship within God's family

Jesus also said the love of God involved the love of our neighbour (Matthew 22:39-40). He made everything depend on the love of God and neighbour. We learn to love other within God's family, the church. Jesus gave us new commandment to 'love one another as I have loved you' (John 13:34-35).

### Out—our relationships within society

Jesus wants us to share in God's mission to bring love and reconciliation into society (John 20:21) where we are to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-14). *Life groups* will help with the challenges and opportunities of your calling and place in everyday life

The leaflets *Personal Reflection Questions* and *Questions from God to you* will help you maintain balance in these relationships.