

What is the purpose of Life Groups?

At Christ Church we believe that being part of a Life Group is a vital part of our commitment to growing our own faith and to growing together as a body of Christ. The main aim of Life Groups mirrors that of the church:

to know Christ better, and to make Christ better known.

Meeting on a Sunday morning, in a big group, is especially helpful for teaching, gathered worship and prayer, and to catch up informally before and after the service, but less helpful when it comes to getting involved in discussion or in personal prayer and reflection. It is also difficult to get to know other people well. This is where Life Groups come in: they enable us to build lasting relationships with others through:

- * **Studying** scripture together – asking honest questions and digging in deep to God's Word.
- * **Worshipping and praying** together for God's work: "Your Kingdom come..." encompassing the needs of others as well as ourselves.
- * **Caring and supporting** one another.
- * **Socialising together** – having social events provides a great opportunity to invite others loosely connected to the group (such as non-church friends and partners, children, or occasional group members).

Most groups will meet in homes in person although there may be times when groups meet online. Life Groups also provide great opportunities to invite those new to the church or area, and those interested in learning more about the Christian faith.

Who's does what?

Life Group Members.

Members of Life Groups agree to commit to the group. For most, this will mean regular physical attendance but for some this commitment will look different – perhaps on-line or less regular for periods of time. Members respect each other's confidences, share honestly (as they are comfortable) and commit to pray for their fellow members.

The Life Group Coordinator (LGC).

The LGC is appointed by the Vicar, supported by the PCC. S/he is responsible for offering practical support to the leaders in their roles. Specifically, s/he maintains lists of group members, acts as a point of contact for people seeking to join or change group, and is the point of contact for leaders as needed. S/he will also arrange termly meetings with the Vicar and Group Leaders to provide them with the training or support that they need.

Life Group Leaders.

In 1 Timothy 3:8-13 Paul spells out the need for leadership from "deacons" that is "under" the main church leaders (the "elders" or "pastors"). The need was clear then as it is now. The Vicar can't do it all, and the biblical model is for

delegated leadership. At Christ Church we see Life Group Leaders as being like "deacons", chosen from the congregation by the church leadership to that end. Life Group leaders may choose to share tasks around the group – this is both practical and useful for developing gifts in others. However, they are ultimately responsible for:

- * Hosting arrangements: where each meeting will be held.
- * Termly programmes: meeting dates, venues, leaders etc. for the term.
- * Good communication with group members, the Vicar and the LGC as necessary.
- * Leadership of meetings: Who is doing what for each meeting.
- * Pastoral arrangements: ensuring prayer, help and support are provided as needed.
- * Attending termly leader's meetings and training sessions available.

The PCC & the Vicar.

The PCC is responsible for "how" we do Life Groups at Christ Church – in other words for the guidance laid out in this booklet. The Vicar oversees all matters spiritual and pastoral within the church and leaders should not hesitate to contact him personally if they have things they want to talk and pray over.

How big are Life Groups? Splitting and merging.

At Christ Church we aim for groups that have between 6 and 12 committed members. Without being too rigid, it follows that groups that shrink to less than 6 might best be merged with another group, and that groups that have more than 12 members might be divided into two. Decisions regarding dividing and merging will be taken by the Groups concerned in consultation with the Vicar and LGC.

When and where do our small groups meet?

Here is a summary of our current groups, there is one to suit everyone!

Group leaders	Venue	Times of regular meetings
Ros Barham	Guildford	Tuesday evening, weekly
Womens Group study: Hilary Steynor	Tormead Road	Tuesday morning, weekly
Pauleen West & Rachel Reeves	London Road	Tuesday afternoon, monthly
Tbc	Burpham	Tuesday evening, weekly
Michael Tame	Hilgay Close, Cranley Road	Tuesday evening, weekly
Jules & Richard King	Guildford	alternating Tues/Wed evenings
Men's Group study: Ray Bell & Stephen Hofmeyr	Sunday evening, Tormead Road	7.30pm – see separate full programme of events



What do Life Groups actually do?

Normal Schedule and Routine

Life Groups normally meet weekly in school term-time, taking breaks for half-terms and school holidays.

At Christ Church, Life Groups normally follow the main Sunday schedule – in practical terms this means discussing in detail the sermon from the previous Sunday. Typically, Life Group leaders are provided with specific questions to help guide a discussion, but sometimes a relevant study book is provided to leaders to work through over the term. There are circumstances when a group may follow different material. Normally, this should be agreed between the leader and the Vicar/LGC in advance.

Whole Church Prayer Meetings and courses.

On the second Sunday of every month we hold Sunday Prayer, our monthly prayer meeting at 6pm to which everyone is invited. Life Group members are especially encouraged to attend to ensure they stay connected with the wider church family at this key event in the calendar.

At certain times of the year a range of invitational courses will be run by the Church, such as Alpha, Christianity Explored, the Bereavement or Marriage course etc. Equally, special events such

as Saturday Breakfasts, group walks and festival events will be advertised. Life Group members are encouraged to come to these together and bring friends, as they present excellent pathways to welcome newcomers to our church family.

Who can join, and how?

At Christ Church we are keen to grow and nurture our groups. The LGC is there to direct enquirers to the best group for them. Group leaders are free to invite people to try out their group for a few weeks but make sure that the LGC is aware. We often spread “new” people around existing groups, rather than wait to create new groups. However new groups (such as a “post - Alpha group course) may occasionally be created as necessary.

You're invited to find out more!

We hope that you will want to become part of a group, simply talk to the Vicar or our Life Group Coordinator,
Louise: kenyonlouise@gmail.com
07971 679798

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42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship...

...They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2: 42-47



Learning together

Building friendships

Caring for each other

LifeGroups



CHRIST CHURCH