

LifeGroup Time Virtual Guide

We suggest using Google Hangout Meets or Google Hangout to meet. We'd also suggest working with your group to find a good time once kids are in bed to host LifeGroup time, with about an hour to an hour and a half of meeting time.

1. Catch Up On Life:

This is when we update each other on the things that Jesus has been up to in our lives since we last saw each other. As a church family, we care about each other's lives: what we're celebrating, what we're mourning, what decisions we are praying through, and everything in between. (1 Thessalonians 2:8, Romans 12:10 and 15)

Suggested Time: 10 - 20 minutes

- How are you doing? Do you have any practical needs?
- What can you thank God for this week? Where have you seen God at work? What has the Lord been teaching you in the last week?

Pray: Take every opportunity to pray and thank God for the good He's doing in our lives, and ask for help and healing anywhere there is pain.

2. Review the Mission:

We've learned that Jesus is reconciling all things to Himself through the blood of His cross. He has made us His ambassadors and given us the ministry of reconciliation. Thus, we join Him daily on His mission (Colossians 1:15-20, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Matthew 28:18-20).

Suggested time: 10 - 15 minutes

- Reactive: Who in your life (family, coworkers, etc.) can we join you in praying for? Who has God put around you that is showing spiritual interest? Who is hurting and could use some love from our group?

- Proactive - Who are the people we are intentionally living on mission with (neighbors, STC partner organizations, or a specific demographic in Columbia)? What are our upcoming plans to love, serve, and build relationships with this group?
- Are there any rhythms already planned, or an extra rhythm we could plan to create a way for these friends to connect with our group?

Pray: Let's pray for our people by name. Pray for their needs and the power, wisdom, and boldness of the Holy Spirit to have spiritual conversations that help them take the next steps toward Jesus.

3. Bible Study & Sermon Discussion:

We are dependent upon the Holy Spirit to use the Word of God to transform us. Pray that He would open our eyes to the truth of His Word and that God would change us as we study this text together.

Suggested Time: 20 - 30 minutes

Pray: Thank God for the revelation and comfort of His Word through the Holy Spirit. Pray that He makes this time fruitful, with His Word taking root in our hearts.

Read the text: Ephesians 1: 3-14

Bible Study

Spend some time silently reflecting and journaling the following questions as a LifeGroup:

- What stands out from the passage?
- What does this passage reveal to us about God?
- What does this passage reveal to us about people?
- Share with one another what you thought, reflected, and wrote about.

Sermon Discussion:

1. Are you familiar with the concept of union with Christ, or being in Christ? If so, how would you describe it? If you were not familiar before the sermon, what are your first thoughts?
2. Spend the remaining time confessing any barriers that may be holding you back from enjoying God (consider an overbooked schedule, unanswered prayers, unbelief, broken fellowship with the Church, etc). Then, pray for one another that we may be healed in these afflictions to pursue joy in Christ.

4. Engage the Heart:

Jesus calls us to walk in the light, confessing our sins to God and each other. God's Spirit works through confession and community to lead us to repentance. (Romans 3:23-24, James 5:16 and 1 John 1:5-10)

Suggested Time: For the prayer below, we suggest 5-10 minutes.

Pray: Close your time together by praying for the following:

- Pray for the Spirit to work in you as you take steps of repentance
- Pray for God to meet the needs of those in your group
- Pray for the sick and vulnerable

Keeping In Touch: Keep in touch with each other through smaller groups this week. Be sure to check in with each other by phone call, Google Hangouts or FaceTime, text messages, and GroupMe. Be intentional to ask Godward questions like the following when you catch up:

- What are you struggling to trust God with this week?
- How can you give God control of it?
- Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting?
- What steps do you need to take to obey?