



# LIFE GROUPS

AT BEC

A Guide for People Considering Joining a Life Group

**Experiencing life in God**  
**Doing life with each other**  
**Bringing life to communities**

# 1. PURPOSE & ETHOS – Why join a Life Group?

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Church is not just about coming to a Sunday meeting: the Bible says that the Church is the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27), and being part of a body means close connection! Our Life Groups are where we form close bonds. We get to know others and be known by them, we care for and pray for one another, and we work out our faith by sharing our lives and struggles. Potentially, we can reach a level of trust, honesty and friendship at which we can lovingly support and hold one another accountable in putting Jesus at the centre of every area of our lives.

Life Groups are also the place where we can share the tasks of serving within the church and reaching out to others. Whether it's being on the coffee rota or holding an invitational Takeaway and Testimony evening, it's easier and more fun to do it with our friends.

The most life-changing reason of all is that we seek to encounter God in our times together. When we study the Bible, pray and worship together and use our spiritual gifts to minister to one another, we grow in our relationship with our Heavenly Father. Life in all its fulness begins with knowing Him (John 10:10).

This is why we call our groups Life Groups and sum up their purpose as:

**EXPERIENCING LIFE IN GOD**

**DOING LIFE WITH EACH OTHER**

**BRINGING LIFE TO COMMUNITIES**

## 2. PASTORAL CARE

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Our Life Groups are the primary place for pastoral care at BEC, whether that is spiritual, mental, emotional or practical. We commit to one another's well-being, encouragement, help and growth, through good times and bad. The Life Group leaders are responsible for having oversight of the pastoral care, but we are all called to play our part in loving and caring for one another (John 13:34; 1 John 3:18)). In Life Groups, we are appropriately honest and open with our friends and leaders about what is going on in our lives, and we can call on support from the Pastoral Care Co-Ordination Team if we need more specialised help. The PCCT is a group of Christians within BEC who have expertise and training in the area of pastoral care. They can point us towards qualified help within or outside BEC, and put support in place for us so that we are not struggling alone. Their help is confidential (subject to the usual safeguarding guidelines). They can be contacted directly by you at [care@becchurch.org.uk](mailto:care@becchurch.org.uk) , or via a message to the church office. Your Life Group leader will not ask them for advice or help on your behalf without asking your permission first.

## 3. EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBERS AND LEADERS

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Belonging to a Life Group is a commitment to our own discipleship and to a group of people who are also on a faith journey (not just to attending a weekly meeting). BEC wants our Life Groups to be a place of safety, true fellowship and mutual benefit, and so it is helpful for us all to be clear about what we are committing to.

### **For ourselves:**

- We attend meetings as often as we possibly can, given our life circumstances, and make Life Group a priority in our week, so that we can build strong relationships and give God's Holy Spirit opportunity to work in our lives.

- We pray for one another regularly, and look to give more than we receive.
- We look after one another when things get tough, and forgive when something goes wrong.
- We build one another up through encouragement and the use of spiritual gifts.
- We are honest and open, but good at keeping confidences- what is said in Life Group stays in Life Group!
- We participate in whatever way we can, and seek to grow in our ability to serve and lead.
- We are wholehearted in our desire to share the good news of Christ with others in word and deed, and seek to make new disciples together.
- We conduct all our relationships in a God-centred, grace-filled and pure way, treating one another with respect and love and welcoming in new members.
- We look for opportunities to build authentic community by being part of one another's lives outside the weekly meeting.

**For our leaders:**

- They seek God's direction and leading of the group, and seek to facilitate your growth as a disciple of Jesus.
- They organise the activity of the group to have a healthy balance of Up (relationship with God), In (relationship with one another) and Out (relationship with others).
- They communicate so that you know what is going on and are included.
- They ensure that you are being looked after in terms of practical, spiritual and emotional care (not necessarily doing all of this by themselves!).
- They encourage and help you to develop your gifts within the group meetings, in the church and in mission.
- They recommend you to the church's leaders for membership, if God calls you to commit to BEC as your local church family.

## 4. MEMBERSHIP OF BEC

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You do not have to be a church member to belong to a Life Group at BEC: we welcome anyone who is interested in finding out more about what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

However, if you are a Christian, or become a Christian, and wish to commit to BEC as your local church family, it is your Life Group leader with whom you need to chat initially. They will explain to you the privileges and responsibilities of church membership, and how the process works. You will also need to attend one of the twice-yearly “Membership at BEC” evenings run by the Lead Pastor.

## 5. JOINING A GROUP FOR THE FIRST TIME

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Have a look at the information on the Life Groups notice board in the foyer and talk to people you know at BEC. Pray about whether God is calling you to a particular group.

Whether you have an idea about that or not, contact the Small Groups and Teaching Team leader(s)\*, who will help you make a decision about the group you are going to try. They will contact the group’s leaders, who will get in touch to invite you to the group.

\*Office telephone: 01788 817326

E-mail: [smallgroups-teaching@becchurch.org.uk](mailto:smallgroups-teaching@becchurch.org.uk)

Website: <http://www.becchurch.org.uk/life-groups.html>

## 6. CHANGING GROUPS

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We hope that you will settle in well to your Life Group, but we recognise that for all of us, circumstances sometimes change. If you become unhappy with something about the group, we would refer you in the first instance to your Life Group leader(s) to see if the matter can be resolved. However, if it is something which cannot be worked around, if the group is not a good fit for you, or if you feel God is calling you to form or join another group for good reasons (such as wanting to join with others in a different missional activity), then we would rather you change groups than stop going altogether.

In this case, we would still ask you to talk to your Life Group leader(s) about what God is saying to you, and to have an honest conversation about why you feel it is right to leave, **before** you arrange to join another group. This is partly out of respect for them, and partly so that they are in the loop and can help you by praying and chatting about your next steps.

You may then want to chat with other group leaders about joining their group, or consult with the Small Groups and Teaching Team leader(s) about a possible new group. We want everyone to be in the group which is right for them, but to go about this appropriately!

## 7. STARTING A GROUP

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If you are a member of BEC, and you feel that God is calling you to become a Life Group leader, or that he has given you a vision for a group with a specific missional focus, you can start a new group. Just talk to your existing Life Group leader to let them know what you are thinking, and chat with the Small Groups and Teaching Team leader(s), who will help you through the process.

## 8. CLUSTERS

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Every Life Group leader has a Cluster leader to support them in their responsibility, and to hold them accountable in the way they carry it out. Cluster leaders have a maximum of five groups to look after in their cluster.

The Cluster leaders in turn are supported by and accountable to the Small Groups and Teaching Team leader(s): a paid role within BEC. The Lead Pastor line-manages the SGTT leader(s).

## 9. MULTIPLICATION

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If your group is healthy, it will grow! Once a group reaches 12-14 members, it is expected to start preparing to multiply into two groups. This may take some time, as people within the group take on the challenge of learning to be leaders, and as the group works out the best combinations and ways forward for the two new groups.

This is not to be feared, as it is a sign that God is at work among you and wanting to make space to add to your numbers. It also does not mean that valuable relationships will be lost: there are ways of maintaining friendships across groups, such as still engaging in service or mission together, and doing social events together.

“... we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” Ephesians 4:15 & 16



Bilton Evangelical Church

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