

## **WEEK 1**

# **INTRODUCTION, EXPECTATIONS AND GOALS**

LG's are still viewed as the "optional extra" for many people at Kingsway and this mindset needs to change. As part of our 3 keys to being connected, LifeGroups need to be shifted from the optional extra to the **necessity** for Christian's growth and development. The main reason for this is the belief that LG's are the most effective place for spiritual transformation, and spiritual transformation is the goal of our journey to become more like Christ.

There are some LG's which function almost purely at a social level and others at a purely information level. We feel it is necessary to align our LG's onto the same page of what we feel will produce the best personal outcomes of getting together, and producing greater alignment with the core vision of Kingsway Community Church. We believe the focus needs to be on personal transformation, participation and spiritual formation. This format needs to be led ... and accountable. Therefore we want to train, supervise and journey with you as LG leaders at a more significant closeness. We also need to provide you with resources, outlines and study material to make your leading easier and more effective.

Over the next four weeks we are going to spend some time going through what we believe are keys for our LG's this year and beyond. We are also going to give you some keys and tools for leading and facilitating your group with greater confidence and desirably greater fruit.

### **The importance of alignment of leaders.**

*Acts 2:42-47 (ESV)*

*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [43] And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. [44] And all who believed were together and had all things in common. [45] And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. [46] And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47] praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

As a leadership team, we need to be looking to pursue the things that unite ... to be in one accord ... to have all things in common. Leadership can either unite or it can divide ... and division is not necessarily fighting or disagreement ... division can occur when we pursue more than one central vision. Leadership unites ... vision unites ...

Alignment is critical to our journey. Diversity and difference are fine as long as we are aligned in the right direction. One thing I will not tolerate is non-alignment with the core

and critical directions of God's church. When Jesus builds his church, we align ourselves with him ... and we align ourselves to the direction He calls us into. We can disagree, challenge the process, debate and discuss ... but when we choose a direction, we align. (story of plane ... from Brook) ... That's why in areas of prophetic ministry that I believe are key ... there must be alignment. That's why in vision there must be alignment. That's why in how we lead, how we minister ... there must be alignment.

For me this reflects our giving ... our mission ... our congregations ... in all these things we need alignment to who God is saying we are as champions of His church ...

Do we have everything in common ... agreement ... alignment?

Common vision ... direction ... commitment ... cause ... mission ... giving ... love ... acceptance ... values ... honesty ... integrity ...

The church is the leading edge of the advance of God's glory among all the peoples of the world. It is the most constant, continuous and powerful expression of God's presence on earth. The church is at the centre of what God is doing. It is not an appendage or an addition to God's plan. It is the entity charged with the commission to declare God's glory and bears direct and immediate responsibility to make God's name great among the nations.

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### **The Four Priorities:**

**L** = Lifestyle ... *character development*

**I** = Intimacy ... *spiritual development*

**F** = Faith ... *belief development*

**E** = Engagement ... *ministry and mission development*

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**WEEK 2**  
**LIFESTYLE** (*character development*)  
& **INITIMACY** (*spiritual development*)

OK well last week I introduced our training session by looking at a few key foundational points to build our LifeGroups on. We talked about alignment ... about being in one accord ... we talked about the influence and impact we can have on the church and how this can either be positive or negative ... we talked about covenants as partners, as leaders and in our LifeGroups.

LifeGroups are the place where the greatest level of community, belonging, connectedness and life transformation happens.

I introduced the four keys of transformation development we want to see our LifeGroups focused on ... what were they again ... Latte's ..Ice-cream ... Food.

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**Lifestyle – Character Development**

*2 Cor. 3:18 (ESV) And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

*Col. 3:12-17 (ESV) Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, [13] bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. [14] And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. [15] And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. [16] Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. [17] And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

*Ephes. 5:1 (MsgB) Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behaviour from their parents.*

I believe that as Christian, our lives need to be different to that of the world ... whole and holy. We need to be developing a lifestyle that reflects the decision to follow Christ, and the relationship we have with him. The LifeGroup setting is the perfect place to look at our character ... attitudes ... behaviour ... emotional health ... relationships etc.

What does the bible say about Christian character ... and how do we apply to our lives ... what is the role of the Holy Spirit in that ... and so on.

***When wealth is lost, nothing is lost. When health is lost, something is lost. When character is lost, all is lost.***” (Billy Graham)

*Galatians 5:16 (ESV) But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

To put it simply, it means walking spiritually with purpose, balance, observation and action, keeping your eyes on Jesus and winning the tug of war to be led by the Holy Spirit rather than allowing your soul to rule over your choices and decisions. Walking by the Spirit is a process of your soul learning to surrender control, and let God take charge of your life.

God has something in mind. He is deeply and personally committed to restoring humanity. Restoring you. This is good news, by the way. All of the other things we long for in life – love and friendship, freedom and wholeness, clarity of purpose, all the joy we long for – it all depends upon our restoration. You can't find or keep good friends while you are still an irritating person to be around. And there is no way love can flourish while you are still controlling. You can't find your real purpose in life while you're still slavishly serving other people's expectations of you. You can't find peace while you're ruled by fear. You can't enjoy what you have while you're envying what the other guy has. On and on it goes. God wants us to be happy. Really. But he knows that in order for us to be truly happy, we have to be whole. Another word for that is holy. We have to be restored.

## **Intimacy ... spiritual development**

The next key to LIFE is our spiritual development of intimacy with God ... our abiding in God ... our prayer life ... our seeing and hearing God.

If you could take a moment, seize it, and squeeze out of it all the life available within it, shouldn't that moment be in the future rather than in the past? What if you knew somewhere in front of you was a moment that would change your life forever, a moment rich with potential, a moment filled with endless possibilities? What if you knew that there was a moment coming, a divine moment, one where God would meet you in such a way that nothing would be the same again? What if there was a defining moment, where the choices you made determined the course and momentum of your future? How would you treat that moment? How would you prepare for it? How would you identify it?

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I believe each of us will have moments like these in our futures, some will appear so small at the time, but become so significant, and others we will just know are moments of destiny and impact.

Intimacy with God is crucial in preparing for, identifying and treating these moments correctly so that you get the most out of them, make the right decisions and grow that step closer into all God has for you.

God promises that if we stay close and connected to him that he will infuse our lives with power, creativity, courage, and whatever it takes for us to bear fruit for the glory of God. We are all different, and our pathways to closeness will be different too. An intimacy pathway is like a door that opens into a room where we can feel and be close to God. It is often in this place that we hear God the best and draw near to Him.

We need silence and solitude. Often. This is how we guard our heart. Jesus modelled that, though few of us ever follow his example. God created us for union with Himself.

*“Failure to recognise the value of mere being with God, without doing anything, is to gouge the heart out of Christianity” Edward Schillebeeckx*

Conscientiously “wasting” time with God enables you to speak and act from greater strength, to forgive rather nurse the latest bruise to your wounded ego, to be generous in spirit during the petty moments of life. It empowers you to lose yourself, at least temporarily, against a greater background than the picture of your fears and insecurities, to merely be still and know that God is God.

## **WEEK 3**

### **FAITH (*belief development*)**

Well here we are again ... and I am so excited about what we are getting a hold of in this time of training and imparting. Last week we looked at the first to keys to transformation in our LG's ... Lifestyle and Intimacy with God. So I want to jump straight into the next one which is Faith ... our belief development. This, like the others, is huge and I want to look at it tonight on its own and next we will look at the last key ... ENGAGEMENT our missional development.

The area of belief development is critical to our journey as a group of individuals who are part of something bigger ... His church. Our alignment and unity depends upon it ... but I also believe it presents many challenges ... particularly with leaders of our LifeGroups who have incredible influence in this area.

#### **BACKGROUND EXERCISE**

That small exercise shows us the one way our beliefs are developed and why in some case need to be modified or developed. One of the things I want to be clear about before I would put someone on staff or in a key leadership, is that I have some understanding of someone's core beliefs ... otherwise it's just a recipe for disaster.

I know that I could go around the room here and there would be story after story about how over time their beliefs have been developed, modified and changed. For me I was brought up in a fairly religious and traditional C of C ... no teaching on the Holy Spirit, the gifts, baptism of the spirit ... blab la bla

So where do our beliefs comes from?

#### *Understanding where beliefs come from*

- Significant others – *key influences / parents / school teachers / pastor / LifeGroup leaders / church / denomination etc*

We need to be careful as leaders, teachers and influencers that we stick to teaching absolutes as absolutes ... this is primarily what our world and disciples need. There are then interpretations of non absolutes, personal deductions, personal preferences, feelings and subjective opinions. We need to be careful we don't teach these as absolutes ... because it is very easy to be wrong. This will breed disunity and even false teaching when people claim that their interpretation or deduction is the only truth. Let's focus on the absolutes ... sure discuss and interact and healthily debate others ... but be careful what you preach as truth ...

- Experience – *experience can determine belief ... healing etc. Raise experience to Word ... don't lower Word to experience*

- Instruction – *what you have been taught*
- Revelation – personal or prophetic ... again this needs to be checked and double checked ... it is easy to get it wrong along the pipe line of revelation.

### *Dangers to “belief system” development*

- **Internet**
- **“Christian” books**
- **Religious spirit**
- **False teachers**

### *Beliefs critical to Christian growth and development*

#### **Theological**

- The nature of God
- The reality of grace / sin / salvation
- The power and hope of the resurrection
- The authority of Scripture

#### **Functional**

- The purpose of the church
- What is church?
- The supernatural and spiritual gifts
- Ministry and servanthood

#### **Leadership**

- Visionary
- Enabling/servant
- Empowering
- Sole or shared
- Congregational/democratic
- Men/women

#### **Methodological**

- Buildings
- Programs
- Services
- Cell groups
- Missions
- Evangelism
- Discipleship
- Counselling

## *Changing beliefs*

### **What is at stake?**

- Pivotal anchors – *people / family / movement (my experience with beliefs about HS and rejection etc)*
- Rejection by peers – *peer acceptance*
- Fear of the unknown
- Desire for success
- God's approval

## WEEK 4

# ENGAGEMENT *(missional development)* WRAP UP, AFFIRMATION AND COMMISSIONING

God has a Plan A for reaching the world, and it includes the involvement of every Christian. The generation wandering our planet today is on an aggressive search for purpose ... but they can't find it. In the hearts of men and women there is a yearning to live the quest. We are all haunted with the fear of living lives of insignificance.... Somehow we all know that to play it safe is to lose the game. The reality is that God isn't interested in joining your journey, you were created for His. The problem sometimes arises because we God the wrong questions ... instead of asking "*what is your will for my life?*" we should be asking, "*How can I give my life to fulfil your will*".

I believe it challenges even the prayers we find ourselves praying ... trying to get God to do what we ask or even asking God what he wants us to do ... instead ... just maybe, we should be asking God to give us the courage and strength to do what we already know.

Our first three key priorities in our LifeGroups have been focused internally ... on our spiritual development, our character development and our belief development ... but this week our focus is external ... the reason we focus on the first three is ensure we are healthy and growing as disciples of Jesus. The truth is though if we only focus inwardly we would be out of balance and ultimately we would just be fat little Christians with nothing better to do than complain about each other and our issues and problems.

Being missional, creates environments for Christians to flourish. It takes the abstract, unfamiliar concept called "mission" and transforms it into a life-changing, personalised core of a person's life. We influence people in how they see their role as parents, employees, church partners, neighbours and even members of the global human race.

If God is building His church, what is He asking us to do? The church needs to be the centre of our mission; Jesus is the hope of the world and the church is the hope carrier and solution established by Him for the world crisis. We need to move from supporting, encouraging, attending and agreeing with this mission, and engage in it at all levels. This takes us beyond the mindset that church is in here and mission is out there, because when God is building His church it is all encompassing ... in here and out there become united into everywhere. God building His church engages both those already in the church and those yet to arrive. Our focus is not either or, but both and ... because that's what it means to see God build His church.