



Cape Neddick Baptist Church

Serving Cape Neddick and the World

Guidelines for Life Together Groups

Fellowship
Service
Spiritual Growth
Sharing and Caring

Vision and Motivation:

The vision for Life Together Groups is taken from the foundation of the early Christian Church.

"They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people." Acts 2: 46-47

The motivation for forming Life Together Groups is in response to a Natural Church Development (NCD) survey conducted at the Cape Neddick Baptist Church. The survey results revealed that the "quality" of our church family would improve with the formation of Small Groups. The NCD Small Group guidelines stress that:

1. Groups should be small in number (typically eight to 10, after which a small group would divide and multiply).
2. Groups should focus on meeting the real questions and spiritual needs of their members.
3. Groups should aim at multiplying and including more and more people in their fellowship.
4. At the group level, nurturing the heads, hands and hearts of the participants should be at the heart of the small group.
5. In groups people share their personal lives and care for each other as a Christian family.

After careful study and prayer the Cape Neddick Baptist Church (CNBC) Health Team developed the concept of Life Together Groups. Life Together Groups follow the NCD guidelines and include service as important part of our small group ministry.

Life Together Group Goals:

The goal for each Life Together Group is to engage in activities that will promote Fellowship, Service, Spiritual Growth, Sharing and Caring.

- Fellowship is at the center of Life Together Groups. Group members should develop loving relationships with each other. Relationships bring togetherness as a community and should urge one another to continue their spiritual growth and service to God. Fellowship should be fun, relaxed, stress free, refreshing and bring a sense of "safe haven" in a world that sometimes seems chaotic.

Groups should always be open to new members. New members should be encouraged to join the group at anytime and lovingly welcomed into the fellowship.

Each small group shall have an activity related to the interests of the group members. The activity helps develop friendships centered on a common interest. Activities could include: bible studies, book clubs, studies of healthy living, parenting, grandparenting, exercising, sermon discussion, youth activities, etc.

- Service is an important component of Life Together Groups. Service involves bringing the love of our Lord Jesus Christ outside of the group and church environments. Those who do not know Jesus as their friend and savior can experience His love through our individual and group actions. We need to see people not as projects, but as *brothers* and *sisters* whom we commit to love. Serving Him by helping and caring for others shows that Jesus is alive and can make a difference in one's life. There are many ways to serve others including:
 - ✓ “adopting” families during holiday seasons
 - ✓ providing support for individuals and families in need
 - ✓ volunteering in local organizations such as food pantries, hospitals and service organizations
 - ✓ providing prayer and financial support for missions and missionaries
 - ✓ working with youth and young families
 - ✓ providing transportation and a helping hand to those who are homebound
 - ✓ visiting those in nursing homes and hospitals
 - ✓ other service where God's direction leads
 - ✓ sending cards

- Spiritual Growth is essential if we are to continue to develop and mature in our love for Jesus and love for our brothers and our sisters. Jesus taught His disciples not merely by lecturing to them, but also through applying the lessons in the real-life situations that they faced together. Spiritual growth should not only contain the lessons of the Bible and teaching of Jesus but how these lessons and teachings apply to our lives and the lives of others. Spiritual growth is not an academic process but a life-changing process, changing our lives and the lives of those God has placed in our paths.

- Sharing and Caring is a lifestyle that Jesus demonstrated throughout his time on earth. He cared for those close to Him, those who were sick or dying and those who needed “living water”. He shared the love of His father with those gathered to hear Him speak and shared His life-saving lessons wherever He traveled.

It is said that a burden shared is a burden lightened. Sharing with group members is a way to share the joys and ease the concerns and problems we all face. We will see that others face similar concerns and problems and we do not have to hide them and face them alone. Life Together Groups should be a “safe place” to share. As we share with others we are to care for others. Caring may involve praying, listening, friendship, compassion, guidance, wisdom, support, love and time. We are to care for others as God cares for us.

Guidelines for Life Together Groups and Group Leaders:

1. Groups will meet at least twice a month. The time and place of meeting is determined by the group members.
2. A host may provide a meeting place in his/her home in cooperation with the group leader. This will free the group leader to focus on leading the direction of the group and giving the leader time to prepare for meetings.
3. The meeting place shall be a prepared, relaxed, welcoming and safe environment. This will come through advanced preparation.
4. Each small group shall include elements of fellowship, service, spiritual growth, sharing and caring.
5. Each group shall periodically discuss and evaluate whether the goals of their Living Together Group are being met.
6. Group activities should be selected around the common interests of the CNBC family or group leader. A small group leader or the CNBC Health Team may propose a new Living Together Group.
7. The CNBC Health Team will select small group leaders.
8. The CNBC Health Team will conduct an orientation session with each new small group leader.
9. Issues, concerns or problems within a small group should be brought to the attention of and discussed with the CNBC Health Team.
10. The CNBC Health Team shall annually hold a small group leaders' meeting to discuss how their groups are functioning and share ideas for improving the Life Together Group goals and guidelines.