



Coaching Handbook

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What To Look For In A Coach

The Word of God makes it very clear as seen below, that God will provide capable men and women from our congregation to lead and teach the people God has entrusted to us at NLC.

II Timothy 2:2 “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”

Exodus 18: 21 “But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.”

Ephesians 4:11-13 “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

I Timothy 3
Titus 1

Below are the six attributes that should exist in each Life Coach’s life.

1. Character—Do people respect them?

- Influencers without character lose their influence quickly or influence in the wrong direction.
- Honesty, humility, stability, dependability, selfless.
- Jethro told Moses to select “men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain” (Exodus 18:21)
- No major sin issues.
- **EX:** Billy Graham’s Modesto Manifesto. Graham’s goal in creating it was so he and his associates would live above reproach. It had four main areas:
 - Integrity – Graham put others in charge of the financial oversight of his ministry and had an “open books” policy for anyone who wanted to see how monies were spent.
 - Purity – Graham never traveled alone and was never in a room alone with a woman who was not his wife.
 - Honesty – Graham resolved never to exaggerate figures or numbers of attendees at his meetings.

- Humility – Graham vowed never to criticize local pastors or churches from the pulpit, regardless of differing theological views.
- What you keep in the dark God will bring to the light.
- Will their character be able to sustain their influence?
- Do people respect them?
- Are they a servant?
- What are their convictions?
- Are they in leadership for the right reasons?

2. Competence—Can they get the job done?

- Not everyone is qualified. Some are willing but not able. I used to promote everyone who was willing.
- Not everyone is reliable. Some are able but not willing.
- Leaders must be willing AND able.
- Paul told Timothy to: “entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others”
- Jethro told Moses to select “capable men.” (Exodus 18:21)
- **Exodus 18: 21** “But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.”
- If they are just a cool person it may end up wasting your time.
- Look for people that have great work ethic because God’s mission requires great work ethic.
- Self disciplined in their emotions and in their time.
- Set them up to succeed.
- Will they accept ownership?
- Do they want to do something for God?
- Is anyone following them?
- Are they influential?
- Can they build up other leaders?

3. Chemistry—Are they easy to work with?

- At NLC we call this: “Divine flow”
- We love everybody. We love the flock.
- But Jesus CHOSE his disciples. Wonder why?
- We are in this for the long haul. Ministry is not a sprint but a marathon.
- God will bring you leaders that end up being like family.
- Do you like being around them?
- Do they energize you?
- Are they easy for you?

- Does the relationship feel natural?

4. Calendar—Do they have the time?

- Leadership takes time. It is a sacrifice.
- Not everyone is willing to put in the hours that it takes to lead.
- Can they meet the time commitment?
- Can they fulfill their role with excellence?
- Is it realistic what they are saying they can accomplish?

5. Charisma—Are they great with people?

- Dictionary.com definition: “spiritual power or personal quality that gives an individual influence or authority over large numbers of people.”
- Merriam-Webster definition:
“a special magnetic charm or appeal”
- People skills are essential. We only take leaders who are warm and with good people skills OR they are willing to work on it like crazy.
- Can they hold a conversation with anyone?
- Can they light up a room?
- Can they focus on others?
- The second greatest commandment is to love people. How can we love people when we can’t win people?
- Do they work well with people?
- Do they have a genuine concern for others?
- Are they intimidated by people?
- Do they attract other leaders?
- A positive attitude is a must.
- People with a positive attitude make a team irresistible.

6. Compliance—Are they teachable?

- Being teachable should be a non-negotiable.
- People skills, a positive attitude, and other qualities can be learned if you are teachable.
- Leaders can only be in authority when they are under authority.
- Can they receive correction, criticism, and instruction?
- Can they admit weakness?
- Do they have mentors?
- Do they ask questions?
- Do they get advice on big decisions?

Leadership Structure

Our leadership is structured in an organized way where we can reach more people than a pastor can on his own. By empowering leaders we can reach hundreds of people in a demographic ministry. A Life Group coach is instrumental to reaching our goal of pastoring large groups of people.

Demographic Pastor (1)

|

Lay Pastors (2)

|

Life Group Coaches (10)

|

Life Group Leaders (50)

|

Attendees (500)

Life Coach Job Description

Personal Ministry

- *Objective:* To maintain a strong personal walk with the Lord by continuing in the spiritual disciplines that are necessary for spiritual fitness and growth in the grace and knowledge of God.
- *Goals:*
 1. Spend time in the Bible each day, pursuing personal growth and maturity.
 2. Have a consistent prayer life that focuses on praise, thanksgiving, personal needs, the needs of believers, and the needs of the lost.
 3. Spend time in spiritual fellowship with others for the purposes of mutual love, encouragement, and growth.
 4. Be involved in fulfilling the Great Commission by reaching out to the lost, both in word and deed.

Life-Group Ministry

- *Objective:* To shepherd and equip 4-8 life-group leaders within our church body, building relationships with those leaders and offering support and assistance as needed.
- *Goals:*
 1. Pray daily for your small-group leaders.
 2. Have personal contact with each leader in your area each week (i.e. phone, e-mail, note, lunch meeting, and so on).
 3. During each semester, visit your assigned Life-Groups at least twice.
 4. Be a “life coach”—providing inspirational leadership, continual training, support, and accountability to your small-group leaders.
 5. Provide quarterly training sessions for small-group leaders that will help them improve in a specific area.
 6. Identify and mentor small-group leaders to be future coaches.
 7. Assist your small-group leaders in identifying and mentoring their assistant group leaders.
 8. Assist your small-group leaders with curriculum requests and questions as needed.
 9. Initiate the flow of important information or requests for volunteers to small-group leaders.

Questions to your assigned Life-Group Leaders

- These are some sample questions you'll want to ask your group leaders when you contact them.
 1. How is the group bonding?
 2. What is your group studying right now?
 3. What is one thing about the group so far this year that has really encouraged you?
 4. Have there been any “challenging group member” situations?
 5. Are there other aspects of group leadership that you are finding challenging this year?
 6. Are you taking steps to share the load by asking group members to bring refreshments, lead the prayer time, host the group in their home, and so on? (Remind them that this takes weight off the shoulders of the leader and also gives others a chance to minister.)
 7. How are you doing personally? How is your family, work, and so on? How are you doing in your relationship with the Lord?
 8. Have you identified someone in your group who might be a future co-leader or leader-in-training? If so, do you have a strategy to bring them along?
 9. Do you have any scheduling, leadership, or other changes that we should let the office know about?
 10. What can I, as your coach, do to help you as a leader?
 11. What can I pray with you about?

The Proper Care and Feeding of Life-Group Leaders

Create a Culture of Proactive Care

- Sometimes our leaders are so busy with life and ministry that they don't even think to bring up the fact that they are running on empty. As coaches, we have to engage them through a variety of vehicles in order to give them ample opportunity to stay healthy. Of course, meeting over coffee or lunch is a great way to stay connected. Our church has multiple services on Sunday morning, and since your small-group leaders are already at the church, you can also meet with them before or after a service.
- There is no right or wrong way to connect with your leaders, just make sure you are proactive. Don't wait until they breakdown in your office before stepping in to offer help.

Commit to Priority Follow Up

- After you create a culture of proactive care, you need to place a high priority on your leaders' needs. Some people ask us at times why we don't lead a Life-Group. The truth is, we do—sort of. Our Life-Group consists of the small-group leaders under our care. While we may not get together weekly, we are certainly a community. They get our first and our best when it comes to ministry time.
- When a group leader raises a flag, we coaches need to respond quickly and appropriately. This has a twofold benefit. First, it allows you to help them overcome the challenge, and it helps them stay spiritually healthy. Second, it encourages them for the next time they face a challenge. Consistent priority follow up creates a consistently healthy ministry.

Consistently Strive for Confidentiality

- Without confidentiality, you will not get to the heart of the matter when group leaders do interact with you. Your small-group leaders need to know, without a doubt, that you will hold their confidence. This doesn't mean we gloss over sin when it's present, but it does mean we help them overcome the challenges they face in a God-honoring way. If your leaders cannot trust you, they will not come to you. Let them know in no uncertain terms that connecting with you is safe and healthy. This will help you meet their needs and keep them going strong in ministry.
- It's sad to think that many small-group leaders feel overwhelmed and under-fed, especially when they consistently care for their group members week after week. It's time they had someone to lead them well, so let's make sure we coaches are there when they need us.

Asking Good Coaching Questions

Important Principles for Good Questions

- Using an icebreaker or an opening question is a great practice for a Life-Group, but it also works effectively in one-on-one conversations. Icebreakers in coaching conversations should be both open and safe. For instance, if you want to talk to a group leader about their personal devotional life, you might start by asking questions like: What's been some of your most memorable times with God in the past? What frustrates you the most when trying to spend quality time with the Lord?
- After listening to the leader's responses, it's time for some follow-up questions. For example, if you sense that time pressure and a hectic lifestyle are limiting factors to this individual's devotional life, avoid coming right out and telling them to change their lifestyle. Instead, some strategic follow-up questions are likely to be more effective.
- Of course, thinking of those follow-ups can be easier said than done. Here are some tips for doing this:
 - Ask follow-up questions that begin with "what" or "how." They usually help people become motivated to discover solutions to an issue.
 - Questions that start with "should you," "could you," "will you," "can you," "are you," and so on tend to put people in a defensive posture. Basically, if you ask a question where the second word is "you," you're probably in trouble.
 - Questions that begin with "why" also tend to put people on the defensive. For instance, which of these questions would leave you more open to change: "Why did you say that?" or "What was your thought process that led you to say that?" It might seem subtle, but I would be more open to the second, and I believe most people would, as well.

Good Coaching Questions Start with Good Conversations

- Shaping our conversations is vital to helping people change and moving in new ministry directions. Here are five questions to build normal conversational dynamics, and that should make a significant difference in the life-change and leadership development of the congregation. Those questions are:
 - 1. Where do you see God at work right now?**
 - 2. What would you like to see God do in your life over the next 6–12 months? How can we help?**
 - 3. How would you like to serve other people? How can we help?**
 - 4. How can we pray for you?**

When it's time to Correct a Life-Group Leader

Accept and Implement the Biblical Model

- Here's what God's Word says on the subject of correction: "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector" (Matthew 18:15–17).
- That's pretty clear. Go to him or her—but before you do, call and set up an appointment at a time that is convenient for them. Ask them to come to your office. Never correct in front of a group or within hearing distance of group members. Initially, meet with the person in question by yourself, unless you feel the person is prone to misuse, misunderstand, or distort what you say and how you said it—in that case, have a co-worker meet with you on this first visit. If, over a period of time (usually a month), the issue has not resolved, reschedule another appointment. This time, do include another co-worker. If that doesn't resolve the concern, bring it to the church's attention. Such drastic action should only happen with issues of major consequence. Teaching false doctrine or heresy would fall in this category.
- These meetings should include the following:
 - Prayer, both opening and closing. Open to ask for God's wisdom, and close to thank God for resolving this issue in accordance to his will.
 - Sit directly in front of or to the side of the group leader. Never sit behind your desk.
 - Affirm their contribution. Be kind, considerate, and to the point. State the issue as soon as possible in the meeting. Allow them feedback to assess how they perceive the problem. They may have information you don't.
 - Steer them away from peripheral issues unless they directly impact the problem under discussion.
 - Emotions may surface throughout the discussion, but shift some of that by sharing how you feel.

Use "I feel" Statements Instead of "You" Accusations

- Whenever you talk to a group leader in a corrective setting, consciously try to use "I feel" statements—things like, "I feel disappointed that you've chosen to ignore our policies in this regard." Such declarations help connect the person with your feelings and allow for reflection.
- When you use "You" accusations, however, it puts the person on the defensive and almost always causes them to rebel at any correction. For example, compare the

statements above with the following: “You chose to ignore our policies.” “You make me angry because you violated confidentiality in your group.” See the difference? Especially avoid statements such as, “You messed up,” “You destroyed unity in the group,” or, “You are to blame for people leaving the group.” These only rev up the rhetoric, and don’t really address the leader’s mistake or failure.

- Consider using the following technique to probe the “why” behind your group leader’s mistake, and to begin identifying solutions going forward:
 1. Ask them to share what they want for themselves in regard to the resolution of this given problem, action, mistake, or accusation.
 2. Ask, “What emotion were you feeling when the situation occurred?” This helps them sort through the emotions behind their actions.
 3. Ask, “What are you presently doing to resolve this problem?”
 4. Ask what they are going to do the next time an issue like this arises. [They will most likely know the correct response, but give them some possibilities, if necessary.]
- When correcting or disciplining small-group leaders, also take into account the following:
 - Treat every group leader like you would want to be treated if you had messed up.
 - Tame the anger within you. Never address a leader’s failures when you’re mad. Keep in mind these Scriptures: Ephesians 4:26; Proverbs 13:10; 28:25.
 - Test the word of testimonies. Eyewitness accounts can be bogus.
 - Tackle conflicts when you’re rested. You will be emotionally exhausted after addressing the issue, so make sure your body is ready to take on the stress.
 - Tread softly. More damage results from mishandling a leader who is loved by group members than any one minor offense for which the leader is guilty.
- Correcting errant small-group leaders begs to be addressed by someone else. Unfortunately, that someone is you. But consider the perk involved: Who else gets to do this in a Christian setting? Just imagine saving a fruitful leader who, by correcting their mistakes, becomes a champion for the gospel for the rest of their lives. What a challenge! What an honor! May God use you to perpetuate positive discipline and correction that results in amazingly restored leaders.

Common Obstacles of Life-Group Coaches

A Lack of Leaders

- A coach must understand that potential small-group leaders will rarely self-select and volunteer to lead. For that reason, part of the coach's job is to identify and encourage individuals who might be good leaders to consider taking on the ministry—just like in athletics, small-group coaches are responsible for both on-field coaching and recruiting.
- One of the main reasons potential group leaders don't volunteer is that they aren't familiar with what is involved and they aren't aware that training and mentoring is available. Therefore, the most helpful guideline for coaches in this regard is to meet with potential leaders and explain the benefits of small-group life, of leadership, and of the coaching process.

Telling Instead of Showing

- Writers are familiar with this basic instruction: Show, don't tell. The idea is to help the reader experience the emotion of a scene through powerful imagery and dialogue, rather than spoon-feeding descriptions about what is going on. In education, too, teachers are understanding more and more that people almost always learn better by demonstration than by lecture.
- And yet, too often coaches imagine they can train a group leader through one-on-one instruction—or worse, by lecturing to a group of leaders—when in fact the best way to learn how to be an effective small-group leader is to participate in a real and active group. Theory is fine, but the true formation of the leader takes place when he or she is able to experience and observe the work first hand.
- For that reason, a coach does well to train new leaders by gathering a group of them together and conducting that training in a group setting. And coaches can best use their one-on-one training time with veteran leaders by discussing what is actually happening in their groups.

Misunderstanding Modeling

- Coaches will get into trouble very quickly if they view their function as conveying information, rather than modeling what it means to be a leader. It is always more tempting to teach than to exhibit, but group leaders will learn more by watching how you guide and inspire others than by listening to lectures on how to *do* groups.
- This is another reason why gathering a group of potential leaders together for training is so important. In scenario, the coach can serve as the group leader, modeling what to do (and what not to do). Role-playing is a powerful tool here. Ask your potential leaders to play out different situations that might arise in the groups they are hoping to lead, or in groups currently underway.

Confusing Style and Substance

- It is a given that every small-group leader will have different approaches to guiding and shepherding their groups—different from each other, but also different from what their coaches might think is best. But “different” is not always bad, and in many cases is actively good.
- A coach must never imagine that his or her way is *the* way of doing things. Coaches must be open and willing for group leaders to develop their own style, which means they must give those leaders time and space to grow. Of course, it is still the coach’s job to make sure the group leader does not wander off course in that growing process, so coaches must also possess a keen eye for discerning whether a group leader is making bad decisions, or is just doing something “different.”
- When you find yourself in such a situation, ask the following questions to gain some extra clarity:
 - **Is God being glorified in the Life-Group?**
 - **What is the general climate of the group? Is it wholesome and constructive?**
 - **Are members attending and growing?**
 - **Is the leader open to coaching and willing to consider others’ ideas?**

Theological Differences

- It is important to remember that there are no two people on the planet who understand the Christian faith and doctrine in precisely the same way. There will always be differences in understanding and insight, and on matters that are not of great importance, these must be accepted and used as inspiration for debate and conversation.
- However, coaches will sometimes encounter a group leader whose teaching is at variance with basic Christian doctrine. It is the responsibility of the coach to prayerfully discern the core issues of faith in the community of the church and to both teach and shepherd the group leader. It is a good idea to consult the church’s doctrinal statement when these kinds of situations pop up.

Neglecting the Source

- Coaching small-group leaders can become a mechanical process if you’re not careful. There are routine issues and problems, routine solutions, routine periods of inactivity, and routine periods of busyness. With all of that going on, it’s possible to lose sight of the fact that Life-Groups are a spiritual endeavor ordained and empowered by the Holy Spirit. This is work which must be originated and sustained by prayer, and one of the primary tasks of small-group coaches is to pray daily for their group leaders.

Advice from an Experienced Coach

What are three key skills that a coach needs to develop?

- You just want to help people, first of all. Coaches need compassion and love. Their main job is being a teacher, a mentor, and caring about their leaders. And just think about the big picture. For every leader's life that you touch, you are also impacting, at the minimum, the eight to ten people in their group. Make that contact count!
- Second, a coach needs to be able to speak the truth in love. You're kind of a friend. You're kind of a teacher. Usually you're a fellow leader. However, as a coach, you're also the accountability person. You need to be able to go to your leaders in truth when something needs to be fixed and then hold that person accountable.
- Third, coaches need to be spiritual partners for their leaders. Leaders are part of the Lord's troops on the front lines. You need to help your leaders remember to always rely on God and make sure he is leading the way in all aspects of their lives.

Talk a little more about that partnership role. How do coaches walk the fine line between teammate and coach?

- In dealing with group leaders, you're going to be working with people who are doing more than receiving, but you have to treat that coaching relationship more as a partnership because you've walked in their shoes and know what they're going through. The coach steps up into the mentor role and becomes the person who is giving back to the leader and filling up that spiritual cup through encouragement and support. The coach helps the leader stay balanced.
- It's also okay to say, as the coach, "I don't know the answer to that problem/situation/question. Let me talk to someone who can help you with this." You have to learn how to say that! The coach then becomes the resource person who can put the right information in the leaders' hands.

How do you get your coaching relationships off to a good start?

- Ask more questions than you answer and listen more than you talk. Watch your leaders' facial expressions, and put on your compassion hat. You could be the first person in five to eight months that this leader has been able to talk to about his or her joys and frustrations. Always be positive and always encourage prayer in your leaders' lives.
- Also, as I mentioned before, be consistent with ongoing contact. A couple of times a year, you should meet with all of your leaders in one place. However, most important is the one-on-one time with your individual leaders. You shouldn't go more than a month or two without touching base, depending on your leaders' personal needs.

What has surprised you most in your work as a Life-Group coach?

- Probably that there are some very deeply committed leaders that take very seriously the job that they're doing. I don't mean to say that I thought that leaders wouldn't be responsible or care for their Life-Groups. It's just that the level of compassion that I've

seen demonstrated for the members—it never clicked with me that the leaders I coached would be so devoted to their people.

- I was also pleasantly surprised to discover that the leaders are looking for help. They're usually open to suggestions. They have so much passion for their groups. You just get the sense that they're crying out, "I want to make this work!" It's been a joy working with people who feel that way about Life-Groups.

Speaking of difficulties, what might be some obstacles that a new coach will face?

- First of all, don't get frustrated when it's hard to connect with people. Accept it. Use your creative juices to figure out a way to establish and maintain contact with your leaders. I'm not a big email fan, but there are email people out there who will only be accessible that way; same thing for text messagers or Facebook fans. Use technology in a way that works to meet your leaders' needs—or don't if it doesn't. Some folks will need the good, old-fashioned personal meeting. Just be available.
- Second, know that it's okay to fail. You have to get over the fact that you don't know it all and you haven't seen it all. You're not going to be as biblically sound as your pastor is. You need to have a kind of servant mindset. The question you want to be asking your leaders is, "How can I serve you?" If you feel like you're not qualified to handle a situation or need advice, there are going to be a lot of people over and around you who can help you with that. Seek that help if you start feeling ill-equipped.
- Third, once you're into it, you never know what's going to show up at your door. Expect the unexpected! But if you're listening and compassionate, those are the key coaching skills. You can do it!

What are some of the joys of being a Life-Group coach?

- Hearing the stories from group leaders when they say, "This amazing thing happened in our group last night..." Those are the kind of conversations that make you leave coaching meetings with a big smile on your face. So much of what goes on in small-group life, you just don't see or know about as a coach—like the whole group taking meals to a new mom or making weekly visits to a member with cancer. As a coach, when you start seeing the kind of Christian love you want to see developing in groups, that's powerful.
- And I've been at some baptisms where I'll know the person getting baptized and I'll be there to support that person. I'll see that individual sitting there, maybe with his or her family, and then I look in the row behind and that person's whole Life-Group is there witnessing the event. Wow!

Leadership Development

- The first misunderstanding I had about coaching was that coaching is primarily about leadership skill development. I thought that all I needed to do was pass along everything I knew about leading a Life-Group—like how to facilitate a discussion, or

how to have prayer time, or how to birth a new group. But, although leadership skill development is an important part of coaching, it's not the only thing.

- What I learned was that coaching is also about personal development. As a coach, I can't just worry about a person's leadership skills. I need to also make sure the leader's personal and spiritual lives are being developed at the same time as their leadership skills. As I was focusing on their skill development, I was neglecting their spiritual and personal development. Consequently, leaders were starting to feel used and devalued. I have found that having a plan to develop all areas of the leader's life helped me make sure one area wasn't over-emphasized (or over-drained).

Time Investment

- The second misunderstanding I had about coaching was that coaching would not take much time. I used to think 15 minutes every so often with a leader would be enough time to do the job. I would get an update on what material they were going through, how their apprentice leader was doing, and if they needed me to help in anyway. What else was there to do?
- The truth is that coaching takes a lot of time. Time is a valued and often scarce commodity in today's society. When I spend time with a leader, they know that they are important and what they are doing is important. When I sit down with a leader and listen (instead of me doing all the talking) to what's going on in their lives and in their groups, I'm making deposits into their emotional bank accounts. I'm filling them up so they have something to give back to their group members. I've learned it's best to schedule these times weeks and months in advance so they don't get overwhelmed with their schedules.

Leader Commitment

- A third misunderstanding I had about coaching was that coaching is easy. I thought my leaders would have the same level of passion for Life-Groups that I had. Why weren't they filling up my inbox with requests for more information and responsibilities? Looking back, I would say that most small-group leaders do want to become more effective in their ministry. However, I've learned that it is my responsibility as their coach to create a hunger and thirst in the leaders I serve.
- A coach can create this appetite by casting a compelling vision. Now, every time I meet with a small-group leader, I recast the vision of Life-Groups. Actually, I try to recast the vision every 14 to 21 days. I never want them to forget what God has called us to accomplish. When a leader understands and owns the vision, they will devote their lives to establishing biblical community in their Life-Groups. The best way I have found to cast vision is through testimonies. I get group members to tell how being in a Life-Group has changed them, and I get leaders to tell how they have been changed through leading a group. I don't know of anyone who gets tired of hearing how God is working in peoples' lives.

Individual Effort

- The fourth misunderstanding I had was that coaching is an individual effort. I love football! My favorite coaches in football are the guys who are natural leaders with strong personalities. Everyone knows they are the true leaders of their teams. Unfortunately, this attitude has carried over into my coaching of small-group leaders. I want to be the coach that everyone looks to. I have a desire to be known as the leader.
- The truth is, coaching should be done in community. I need to set aside the urge to do everything on my own. Instead, I need to include others, just as I ask my group leaders to have someone they are preparing for future leadership. I also need to have someone I'm mentoring that will be a coach one day. The trap I fell into was believing that my apprentice coach had to be someone who could take over my role tomorrow. I now plan to spend six months to a year with my apprentice, so I know they will be fully equipped when they are on their own.
- I know I've made my share of mistakes. Probably in another year, I could write another four misunderstandings I've had about coaching. But once I got over these hurdles, I started to see growth in our leaders and in our Life-Groups. Hopefully, you can learn from my mistakes so you will be that much farther ahead of the game.

Life Coach Self-Evaluation Form

1. How well have I listened to the leaders under my care?

2. Have I done a good job of celebrating victories with my leaders?

3. How (specifically) have I demonstrated personal care and concern?

4. Do I have a strategic plan for where each of my leaders needs to go and grow?

5. What am I doing specifically to help my leaders develop in knowledge, skills and character?

6. Have I helped my leaders develop measurable, achievable goals for their lives, families and groups?

7. Am I living up to the covenant I agreed to with my leaders?

8. What makes my group leaders tick? What do they need from me?

9. Are the groups I'm overseeing growing (qualitatively and quantitatively)?

Coaching Appointment Checklist

Leader/Group: _____ **Date:** _____

Meeting Place: _____ **Time:** _____

Use these questions to prepare for your coaching appointment:

1. Have I prayed for this leader?
2. Have I reviewed my notes (mental and/or written) from our last meeting?
3. What personal/marital/family needs am I aware of?
4. What ministry/group issues do I need to inquire about?
5. What core value (theological truth, ministry skill, or character quality) will I focus on with this leader during our time together? What is the most effective way I can pass on this concept or training?
6. How, practically speaking, can I encourage this leader?
7. What information do I need to convey in the way of church-wide philosophy of ministry, vision, and/or events?

Assignment(s) for the leader:

Specific things I need to do as coach as a result of this meeting:

Next Meeting

Date: _____ **Time:** _____ **Place:** _____

Life Group Leader Selection Process

1. Fill out the online application (see sample attached).

2. Interview with staff in a laid back but serious atmosphere

- We schedule an interview with the potential leader with the hope that we will know how to help them find their place serving in the church.
- We have a list of questions. Some are very easy questions and some are very direct. **(See sample)**

3. Placement

- There are typically three different outcomes after the staff interview:
 - They are immediately placed into a leadership position in the ministry that they have applies for.
 - They are asked to shadow another leader in that ministry for about 4-6 months to gain some experience. This is sort of like a trial period to see if they would be a good fit for in the future.
 - They are encouraged to serve somewhere else in the church.

Benefits of this process:

- It filters out people that are not serious about becoming a leader. Sometimes people have motives that will not line up with the leadership team core values.
- It gives the staff a chance to see face-to-face who the potential leader is and how they respond to the interview questions. This allows the Holy Spirit and intuition to show the staff who is ready to be a leader in that particular ministry and who is not.
- It reveals the potential leader's strengths and weaknesses. This allows the staff to profile and assess if they would be better suited for a different ministry.
- It allows the staff to communicate their expectations up front and in person.
- Although the interview itself can be intimidating to some, it can also add a personal touch and show how much the staff cares about the quality their leaders. It validates how important leadership is to the staff and to the church.
- It allows staff to choose their leaders.

Choosing Your Leaders

- We feel that it is very important that the staff feels the right to pick and choose who their leaders are.
- Jesus chose his disciples.
- There is a significant difference between a believer and a leader. Every believer is important. Pastors should care for and believe in every Christ-follower or member of the church.

- However, when it comes to leading the ministry with excellence we should allow ourselves the right to pick and choose how to structure the ministry the best way possible.
- Don't feel sorry for being exclusive and handpicking leaders.
- Jesus was inclusive with his message but exclusive with his leadership team.

Why is it so important that you choose the right leaders?

- A leadership team full of the wrong people equals regression.
- A wrong person in the wrong spot brings pain.
- A leadership team full of followers kills momentum and crushes sustainability.
- A leadership team full of followers will repel other potential leaders.
- What you allow is reproduced. Eventually the wrong people that you put in the wrong place recruit their friends to be leaders too.
- Your leaders need to be men and women that you want to see multiplied and reproduced. You should be proud of them.

TIPS:

- We encourage the leadership interviews to be conducted by staff or lay pastors. They need to be leaders that you trust to represent you and your team completely. They must be able to have the same standard that you have set for the leadership team.
- You have to be able to tell a potential leader that it is not a great fit for them at this time. This takes a lot of courage especially since most pastors believe in everybody. Just remember, there is a big difference between a believer and a leader.

Leadership Interview Questions

Introductory Questions

- Why do you want to be on a leadership team?
- Are you sold out on the vision of New Life Church?
 - Member?
 - Tithing?
- Explain vision
- What do you feel like your role would be on the team?
 - What are your strengths? Weaknesses?

Value Questions

- Talk about confrontation and covenant.
 - What do you do when you are frustrated with someone?
 - How do you handle confrontation?
 - Does it intimidate you?
 - Explain how hard-core we are about this.
- Explain coaching structure.
 - Is there anyone that you would naturally want to be your coach?
- Talk about intentional interaction.
 - How do you feel meeting new people that you don't know?
 - Are you generally intimidated by talking to people?

Resources for Life-Group Leaders

- www.SmallGroups.com
- **Coaching Life-Changing Small-Group Leaders** by Greg Bowman and Bill Donahue. The must-have resource for coaches who shepherd and care for Life-Group leaders (Zondervan, 2006; ISBN 978- 0310251798).
- **Making Small Groups Work** by Henry Cloud and John Townsend. This book provides small-group leaders with valuable guidance and information on how they can help their groups to grow spiritually, emotionally, and relationally (Zondervan; ISBN 978-0310255123).
- **Successful Life-Groups: From Concept to Practice** by Teena M. Stewart. A solid and practical book that covers all the bases (Beacon Hill Press, 2007; ISBN 978-0834122373).
- **The Connecting Church: Beyond Life-Groups to Authentic Community** by Randy Frazee. This book paints a beautiful portrait of biblical community and talks about the sacrifices we will have to make in order to experience life together (Zondervan, 2000; ISBN 978-0310233084).
- **The Seven Deadly Sins of Life-Group Ministry** by Bill Donahue. A troubleshooting guide for church leaders. Assessment and solution for seven common obstacles to building Life-Groups (Zondervan, 2005; ISBN 978- 0310267119).