



LEADER HANDBOOK



Hope

Accepting

RELATIONSHIP

UNITED IN PRAYERS
BETTER TOGETHER

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WELCOME!

Thank you for your willingness to lead a NLGroup at New Life! You are the heart and soul of the New Life Family. This handbook is designed to equip and empower you with the resources you need to provide an environment for people to experience everything that God has for them. Thank you for being on the team!

FULLY DEVOTED

NL Mission: *Leading people into a fully devoted relationship with Jesus Christ.* One way we do this is by creating relational small group environments. While you're not responsible for the growth of others, your leadership can provide an environment where people have the opportunity to pursue healthy relationships and spiritual growth.

NL Model: Gather. Grow. Go.

1. **GATHER:** Warm Environments, Engaging Worship and Biblical Authority
2. **GROW:** NLGroups and Growth Classes
3. **GO:** Dream Team and Kingdom Builders

WHAT DO WE LOOK FOR IN A GROUP LEADER?

A group leader does not have to be a Bible scholar! But they do have certain characteristics and gifts that equip them for their role in leading a group of people. Here is what we look for in a group leader:

1. People who love Jesus.
2. People who love New Life.
3. People who love people.
4. People who love to create an environment for authentic community, spiritual growth, and intentional discipleship.
5. People who have joined the NL Family.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ROOTED AND NLGROUPS?

Rooted is the on-ramp to NLGroups. At the end of the 10 week experience, your Rooted Group will become a NLGroup and begin meeting offsite, so we encourage you to go through Rooted instead of an existing NLGroup.

- Rooted will be offered in two sessions throughout the year (Fall and Spring). All Rooted Groups will be hosted on their individual campuses. Rooted meets for 10 weeks, 6:30pm - 8pm on Tuesdays.

Register to lead at nlchurch.com/rooted Discount Code: LEADER

- NLGroups have 3 different seasons; Fall, Spring, Summer.

Register to lead at nlchurch.com/groups

These seasons have specific launch dates so that all our groups start at the same time. Many NLGroups go for 8-10 weeks and take a break for the next season.

HOW TO LEAD A SUCCESSFUL ROOTED GROUP?

Lean on your team!

- Communicate with your co-lead and come up with a plan for leading the group. Knowing your co-leaders communication style, interest, and personality can help you navigate the best ways to **facilitate** alongside one another.
- Regularly reach out to a Rooted Coach or the Discipleship Pastor for ongoing support.

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HOW TO LEAD A SUCCESSFUL ROOTED GROUP (CONTINUED)

Get to know your group members!

- Connect with your group beyond Rooted to build rapport.
- These small interactions help build trust and connection, making it easier to dive deeper into lived experiences, desires, challenges, faith goals, etc.

Be empathetic and trauma-informed.

- We have people in our Rooted groups from all walks of life, with varying experiences. Traumatic experiences can change the tone of a group session. As leaders, we want to be mindful of the traumatic experiences people are carrying and how those experiences may shape a discussion or a person's personality.
- Offer support to group members before, during, and after sharing testimonies. If you're not sure how to navigate hearing a traumatic story or are worried about how you may be impacted, check in with a coach and/or the Discipleship Pastor for resources/support.
- Be a good listener and try not to do all the talking, but facilitate conversation, encourage your members to interact, join in discussions, answer questions. If they aren't comfortable, don't force it, just gently move on to the next person.

Let the Lord lead you!

- Remember Jesus is with you and will help you guide your conversations. You don't have to have all the answers or hit every checkbox on the curriculum. The best group sessions are ones where the Holy Spirit takes the lead.

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HOW TO LEAD A SUCCESSFUL ROOTED GROUP (CONTINUED)

Pray

- Pray for God to move within your group, that He opens hearts, minds, and sets the tone for a great Rooted season, as well as pray over each meeting.
- Pray for your co-leader/leader (if you have one, if not pray for yourself); that God help strengthen you both to support you, soften hearts to work together and build great communication between you both.
- Pray over your members daily
- Pray for you next leaders, we are always wanting to grow God's kingdom and we want to build up new leaders for the next season.

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE MEET?

Most groups meet for 1 1/2 - 2 hours per week. Here's what a typical NLGroup meeting might look like:

Refreshments and Socializing (15 Minutes):

Both fellowship and food help create the environment in which people will connect in building relationships. Create environments where group participants have fun talking to each other.

Ice Breaker (15 Minutes):

Ice Breakers are non-threatening conversation starters and are effective when utilized at the beginning of group time. If your group is new, use questions and icebreakers that focus on information about people's lives (where they grew up, where they went to school, how they came to your church, where they work, etc.). As intimacy develops in a group, begin to challenge people with more in-depth questions that evoke feelings, thoughts, and insights.

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE MEET?

(CONTINUED)

Study (45-60 Minutes):

Don't teach; **facilitate**. Create an atmosphere that is conducive to discussion. Be the most prepared person in the room. As the leader, make sure you know the material. Create environments where group participants give meaningful input during group study.

Pray and Close (10-15 Minutes):

The heart of a NLGroup is standing together in support and prayer both during group time and throughout the week. Create environments where NLGroup participants care and celebrate with each other through prayer and personal encouragement.



DOS AND DON'TS FOR NLGROUPS

5 Dos of NLGroups:

1. Do prepare in advance for each session.
2. Do start on time.
3. Do use icebreakers.
4. Deal privately with problem people.
5. Do communicate frequently using text, email, your NL account, and the NLChurch app.

5 Don'ts of NLGroups:

1. Don't allow negative talk.
2. Don't dominate the conversation or allow others to.
3. Don't allow small group time to become story-telling time.
4. Don't allow people to sell items, promote business or discuss politics.
5. Don't argue over doctrine. Keep the main thing the main thing.

PLANNING YOUR GROUP

How do I fill my group?

With Rooted, we fill your group for you! Those that register for Rooted can put specific members or leaders down that they want in a group.

With NLGroups, if you went through Rooted already, invite your Rooted Group to become a NLGroup!

Needing to add a few more people to your group?

1. Make it a priority to be at Group Launch to promote your group
2. Post on social media and tag @nlchurch
3. Invite people to join your group at a connection event

New Life intentionally has connection events throughout the year for the purpose of creating community. These events are great to meet people and invite them to your group.

Yearly Connection events we hold:

- *Women's Events*
- *Men's Breakfasts*
- *Young Adult Nights*

4. When someone signs up for your group, don't just expect them to show up, send a welcome email to each person who joins your group, and send an intentional text. You will receive an email when someone signs up, click their name or find their contact in the NL Church app.
5. Invite people outside the walls of NLChurch!



WHAT DO WE STUDY?

Rooted has a specific curriculum we go through for 10 weeks that covers the 7 rhythms of faith.

NLGroups can choose a specific **curriculum** (approved by Discipleship Pastor) or become a “**sermon based**” group.

Sermon Based Groups:

These groups study the same topic or passages of scripture that were covered in the weekend’s message, diving deeper into areas not covered in detail by the pastor. We have designed weekly content for these groups.

Email ebaca@nlchurch.com to receive the weekly message notes and questions.

Curriculum Based Groups:

These groups can cover a wide range of topics. With the large amount of books, DVDs, and online media driven studies available, it makes it possible to bring well known speakers into our group settings. We encourage these groups stick to a 8-10 week study and break until the next group launch.

New Life Church does not have a library of curriculum but can provide recommendations for group discussion content. New Life Church can reimburse the group leader for their curriculum.

HOW TO NAVIGATE HARD CONVERSATIONS

1. What is a difficult or hard conversation?

A difficult conversation is any topic or concern that comes up that either the group leaders or members of the group feel uncomfortable about. Fortunately, it does not happen too often. Some subjects that may come up deal with doctrinal issues or comments about the church or individuals, etc. But take heart, you don't have to have all the answers!

2. What is Active Listening? Why do we do it and how do we do it?

Active listening is making a conscious effort to hear and understand comments being shared without passing judgment. The goal is to understand.

It involves more than listening to the words they say. Instead, you consciously analyze what you hear, and try to pick up on intent, content, and emotion from the speaker.

3. Express empathy and understanding while you listen. Do not problem solve or give advice unless it is genuinely asked for.

4. Avoid becoming defensive.

Key scripture:

1 Peter 3:15 - But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord....But do this with gentleness and respect

Jude 22 - Be merciful to those who doubt

HOW TO TRANSITION FROM ROOTED TO A NLGROUP

1. Be open and honest and build a relationship with each person in your Rooted Group.
2. Communication during the week is vital to building your relationships in your Rooted group to transition to a NLGroup.
3. Week 5 of Rooted, start discussing starting a NLGroup when Rooted ends.
4. Start coming up with a plan for the NLGroup. Think about how often you will meet, what time you will meet, what kind of group you will be, etc.
5. Week 10 of Rooted, discuss the next time you will meet as a NLGroup.



NL CHURCH APP

GETTING STARTED

The NL Church app equips NLGroup leaders with the information and tools they need to know their people. The mobile app makes it easy and intuitive to interact on the go, where authentic community really happens!

From the NL Church app, you can take attendance, send group and individual messages, let us know when details of your group (location, time, etc.) have changed, pass along prayer requests, and so much more!

- Search for “NLChurch” and download through your app store.
- You will be prompted to enter in your phone number to directly connect to your NL Account. If you don't yet have a New Life (NL) Account, go online to nlchurch.com/login and create an account. It's very easy and having a NL Account is the best way to interact with your group. After creating your account, then you can follow the remaining steps in the NL App!

USING THE APP

After you have successfully logged into the NL App, you will be met with an interface fairly easy to navigate. You can select the area titled “My NL” and then select “My NL Groups.”

The only step that may take a few minutes is adding a new member who does not yet have a NL Account. First, ask them to create an account. After they've completed that step, click on “view/edit members” within the specific group in the app, type in their name, select their profile and click “add”. It's really that easy!

The additional capabilities for your group can be found at the top of the page such as messages, calendar, needs, and attendance!

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FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

@NLCHURCH