



# Life Groups – Doing Life Together

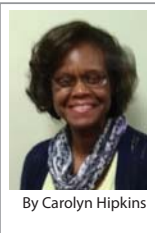
Last fall, Pastor John K. Jenkins Sr. preached and taught a series on discipleship and evangelism, expressing that God was calling First Baptist Church of Glenarden to another level, and that our church members need to be better connected to each other and to those outside our church. He emphasized that we need to take our ministry beyond the church walls. FBCG's mission and vision is "Developing Dynamic Disciples through Discipleship, Discipline and Duplication." God showed Pastor Jenkins that the church was not doing a good enough job of living up to its mission. The solution was to form small fellowship groups which Pastor Jenkins calls Life Groups.

The goal of the Life Groups concept is: "To engage people with whom we have some level of relationship that we can share the gospel of Jesus Christ and build relationships within our homes and other non-church settings." An effective way to share the gospel with others is to form relationships with them. This allows a person to see the Christian faith at work in everyday life. Relationships are key in

teaching others and in being an effective disciple yourself. People grow and stay strong in their faith when they are connected to other believers.

Carolyn Temple, a writer for *Vision Magazine*, has participated in Life Groups at other churches. Those churches assign new members to a Life Group upon first joining. FBCG won't assign members to a Life Group, but is working on procedures to provide guidance for joining Life Groups. Temple had a positive experience with Life Groups. Some highlights she experienced were fellowship, learning from other believers and being blessed to know others were praying for her. These prayers helped her through challenging times. She looks forward to joining one of FBCG's Life Groups.

Life Groups will function as follows: 1) Each group will have 6-12 members; 2) A trained moderator will lead each group; 3) Life Groups will aim to meet weekly for a prescribed period throughout the year; 4) The group will meet in someone's home or in a location outside of the church, as the goal of Life Groups is to move ministry outside of the walls of the church; and 5) Weekly Life Group discussions will be based on FBCG Sunday sermons.



By Carolyn Hipkins



Any FBCG member can be a Life Group moderator if they meet the following criteria: 1) Be a member of FBCG in good standing; 2) Have a heart for evangelism and discipleship; 3) Have excellent people skills; 4) Have the ability and willingness to lead a group of 6-12 people; 5) Be a certified Altar Counselor; and 6) Complete the Life Groups moderator training.

Becoming a certified Altar Counselor requires successful completion of the six-week course “How to Share the Gospel,” offered by The Institutes.

To be a member in good standing you must: 1) Regularly attend worship and prayer services; 2) Faithfully attend Communion services; 3) Financially support the church through tithes and offerings; 4) Actively participate in one of the church’s teaching ministries; and 5) Be involved in and committed to at least one of the church’s ministries.

The next Life Groups moderator training will be held in two sessions on March 23 and March 25, 2019. Future training sessions will be announced as they become available.

Believers are meant to live in a community. We are not meant to be lone wolves of faith. We are meant to be con-

nected to each other. A faith community enhances believers’ strength and power. We see this principle of connection played out in nature. The giant California redwood trees (a species of the sequoia tree) have grown to tremendous sizes and formed vast forests. The trunks of some redwoods are so thick that passages must be cut in them to allow vehicles to drive through. You might think that the roots of such massive trees would grow deep into the soil. That is not the case. The roots are very shallow. What gives redwoods their strength is the bonds formed by the intertwining of the roots. This makes it difficult for anything to shake, uproot or even topple an individual tree.

God wants us to be as connected and immovable as redwoods. He wants us to be strong in our faith and effective witnesses for Him. We strengthen our faith by being connected with each other as we “do life together.” In our connection, we are better equipped to accomplish God’s goals. Get connected to an FBCG Life Group in 2019!

**Note:** For more information on Life Groups, go to <http://fbcglenarden.org/inside-fbcg/life-groups.html> and click on “FAQ.”