



Life Groups at Coro Uniting

In his word, God puts out a compelling vision for what the church should be: a gathered community of believers who love each other, build each other up, serve together, proclaim the word, seek justice, are family to each other, etc. A church of our size will struggle to express that full picture of what church should be just with Sunday worship.

At Coro, one of the complementary structures to our Sunday worship is Life Groups. We meet in smaller groups, often in people's homes, to fully be and behave as a church, so that we can know, love, welcome, serve alongside and edify each other. It's also practically helpful to meet in smaller groups where we can be aware of other's needs and meet in ways that suit people at different stages of life and growth.

At Coro, we seek for Life Groups to be

Focused on Jesus and building each other up by

- **Loving and welcoming each other:** meeting regularly, respecting, listening, accepting each other
- **Practically caring:** being aware of needs, offering time and energy to serve each other
- **Encouraging one another from the Bible:** listening to what God has to say in his word, growing towards greater Biblical literacy, considering God's words in light of our culture
- **Praying:** for each other, for our church, our local community, opportunities to share Jesus with others, justice in our world
- **Looking outwards in justice-seeking and proclaiming the good news:** praying for opportunities and issues, supporting group members as they engage, growing in skills and passion for these

Role of Life Group leaders

Life Groups are a significant part of the church's life, and their leadership is spread amongst members of the congregation. It is an important role, and one which we are keen to support you in fulfilling faithfully and fruitfully! There are a number of aspects to leading a group, although there will be a beautiful diversity in both the way leaders fulfil these and in the groups that result:

1. **Being an example to your group.** This is not a seeking of perfection, but modelling a joy and commitment to following our Lord, growing in love and obedience, prayerfulness, repentance, knowledge of his word, developing gifts and capacity to serve, etc, and continuing to trust in his grace in the face of your weaknesses

2. **Setting the culture of the group:** modelling and cultivating an atmosphere of love, welcome, respect, listening, openness, sharing, growing, prayerful, etc (although this will look different in each group!)
3. **Praying regularly** for your group and your leadership of it
4. **Using the Bible to seek growth** in your group, since it is 'inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.' (2 Tim 3:16-17)
5. **Agreeing with and supporting our core beliefs** at Coro, as expressed in our doctrinal statement:
<https://corouniting.org/d/dZzJ3Me9VlhNZfIY9QPoW338O>
6. **Using your influence as a leader wisely**, to build up the church: As someone entrusted with a leadership position, be godly and mindful of how you speak to your group about church leadership and their decisions. This is not to say you cannot disagree, but that this should be raised in an appropriate setting. More positively, in your group context, this may mean being aware of what the church leadership is currently trying to achieve and seeking to support that in your groups: giving time for people to read or ask questions about communication from the church leadership, encouraging group members to raise any concerns directly with leaders, praying for church initiatives, etc. We are one body, and seek to be united in heart and mind even as we meet in a diversity of Life Groups.

Support for Life Group leaders

Life Groups at Coro are overseen primarily by the Elders, including the Senior Pastor, who have delegated that responsibility to the Life Groups ministry team.¹ Each Life Group has a linked member of this team who will connect with you, ask how we can be praying and try to stay aware of how your group is going.

We seek to meet as a community of Life Group leaders at least twice per year for a celebration-style gathering, when we enjoy each other's company over food, hear from church leaders about what is happening, share with each other and pray for our groups. We'd love all leaders to set aside time to join us at these occasions.

The Pastoral Care team is also an excellent resource for Life Groups. Life Groups are obviously front-line in the pastoral care of the congregation, and yet sometimes issues arise that are beyond the scope of Life Groups and our leaders. If you are struggling or unsure how to deal with a particular situation, please be in touch with one of the staff, a member of the pastoral care team (pastoralcare@corouniting.org) or a member of the Life Groups team.

¹ At Jan 2022, that team is led by Cat Patrick, and includes Paul Hughes, Heather Cheesman, James Francis, with Sam Cheesman as elder for small groups, and Jethro Buxton as a staff liaison.