

GBC LIFE GROUP RESOURCES 2024

Series: Our Extra Ordinary Life Together

Introduction to GBC Life Group Resources

Life Groups are a critical ministry of our extra ordinary life together at Gymea Baptist Church. These resources are produced each Monday as a companion to the sermon series. Choosing to use these resources facilitates our sense of community as we share together around common themes and passages.

Each week's resource includes a brief overview of the sermon series and of the sermon (which can be accessed on GBC's YouTube channel or via your favourite podcast platform), along with a series of activities to do together. Don't forget that The Big Ill podcast comes out mid-week as another companion to the sermon.

These range from questions to ask, prayers to pray, practices to try, and biblical passages to read (usually in the time between Life Group meetings). Feel free to pick and choose what will work well for your group – you don't have to do everything!

In 2024 we have also begun to include some additional information that we are encouraging our Life Group leaders, as leaders of GBC, to be sharing with your group. These include reflecting on a particular mission commitment of GBC, promoting and praying for GBC initiatives, and celebrating what God is doing in and through our community of faith.

If you have feedback on these resources, please email Nicole Jones: office@gymeabaptist.org.au.



Our Extra Ordinary Life Together

This is the final Life Group Resource of 2024 and is not linked to the sermon on Sunday, but rather, is a retrospective of the year.

A Brief Reminder of This Year's Sermon Series

Key Text(s): 1 & 2 Chronicles

The following are a reminder of the sermon series we went through over the course of 2024.

Jesus and the Sydney Morning Herald.

- In this January series we covered a series of individual topics from the perspective of faith. This year's topics were: Why is Israel so important to Christians? Should the Church be Woke? The Taylor Swift Effect. Shifts in Secularism.

Good Job.

- In this four-week series we explored the theology of vocation (anything we do with intent and purpose; including paid and unpaid work). In particular, the central concept that vocation is a gift from God in which we participate within the creation mandate (apart from any evangelism we may or may not do).

While We Wait: Studies in Chronicles

- This series, which stretched over the course of the year, considered the lessons from the Chronicler's account of the monarchy. Written to a group of people who had been waiting so long for the promises of God to be fulfilled that they had begun to give up, the Chronicler writes to provide them with a model for living while they wait. The accounts of the kings of Judah demonstrate a life of seeking the Lord with a focus on right worship; a faithfulness that persists based on God's character.

Learning to Pray with Jesus

- This series was focused on Luke's gospel and the lessons we glean about prayer.

Sabbath: Learning to Rest with Jesus

- This short series, light on application, dove into the biblical teaching on Sabbath and its importance for us.

Questions to Ask

1. What are you most thankful for over the last year?
2. Andy Stanley identifies five catalysts for growth in faith: practical teaching (e.g., sermons, books, podcasts, Life Group studies; private devotions; personal service; providential relationships; pivotal experiences (often crises). Over the course of 2024 have you experienced one of these catalysts in a particularly significant way and, if so, how has it contributed to your faith?
3. If your group is at a point where this would work, encourage them to share with one another ways they have witnessed growth in each other.
4. What is one area you believe God may be inviting you to allow him to bring transformation in 2025?

A Prayer to Pray

1. Commit the lessons learned in 2024 to the Lord with gratitude and pray for each other that the Lord would continue to bring transformation in 2025.

A Practice to Try

1. Audit your growth as a follower of Jesus. Consider the skills you have learned, the attitudes that have been shaped, the relationships that have been formed, and the knowledge that has grown. Are there areas of particular strength? Weakness?

Readings to Read This Week

These readings provide opportunities to reflect on the life we have been invited into.

1. Deuteronomy 5:6-21
2. Psalm 1
3. Psalm 15
4. Mark 4:3-20
5. Galatians 5:13-26

A Mission Commitment to Reflect on

We hope that our Life Groups help people feel connected to one another and committed to our mission together as a community of faith. To that end, we encourage Life Group leaders to remind your group about our mission commitments. Each week we'll draw attention to one or more of those commitments that fits neatly with the topic or theme. (See "GBC Mission Commitments" document for an overview of our commitments.)

Our vision is that we would see "Lives changed by Jesus"; our own and those of our friends and families. This retrospective is a chance to reflect on the transformation we have experienced and seen.

A GBC Initiative to Promote/Celebrate

Each week we will provide you with a key aspect of our community news that we would encourage you to remind your Life Group about.

1. This year, as a way to engage our community at Christmas, we are hosting what we are calling "A Festival of Christmas". This includes the Christmas lights and window boxes which will be lit up by this coming weekend as well as a three-day period – December 20, 21, 22 – in which we will be opening our buildings up with a live-nativity walk-through, craft activity for kids, live music, and, of course, the lights. All of this leads up to our Christmas Eve Carols Service and the Christmas Day services.

To do this well, and safely, we need you to do two things:

1) invite somebody to it; and

2) volunteer to help on one of the nights. You can look at the volunteer needs by following the link on [Link Tree](#).

Additional Resources:

The mission commitments of GBC

We have made several references to the mission commitments of GBC. This is the title we have given to our vision, purpose, and values. These will no doubt be familiar to you, but we thought it might be helpful to provide a clear overview of them.

Our mission commitments begin with John 20:21, “As the Father sent me, I am sending you.”

These words contain a central belief about what we are called to as a community of faith: that we are to continue the ministry and mission of Jesus to restore and renew everything according to the will of the Father and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we reflected on this commission, we formulated a mission statement to attempt to summarise what we wanted to do. While we don't refer to it very often, it is helpful to see the progression of our thought. **The mission we formulated was:**

Everywhere we go and in everything we do, we will invite everyone to follow Jesus.

Taking the pattern we find in the Gospels we affirm that anyone can begin to follow Jesus; regardless of what they believe about him, what they know about him, and without changing their lives. When Jesus called his first disciples, he demanded none of these things; only inviting them to follow him. Over time they learned about him which challenged their beliefs about him and raised the implications for their lives, but initially, they only needed to be willing to follow.

The individual transformation that comes as people place their trust in Jesus and the commission that he has sent us to participate in led to a simple **vision statement; what we want to see. *We want to see lives changed by Jesus.***

All of this took shape in our purpose as a community of faith – our “why”. ***To be a community of faith who courageously take up the invitation of God the Father to participate in His grand plan to restore and renew all things in Christ Jesus through the enabling presence of the Holy Spirit.***

It was only as we gained clarity on our purpose that we identified a set of values that we believed were aligned with these mission commitments. The five values we identified are:

- To be ***On-Purpose***. Intentional to create margins in our lives to participate in God's mission.
- To be ***Big-Hearted***. Generosity in all our resources as a reflection of God's own generosity to us is a central value.
- To be ***Whole-Life Learners***. As followers of Jesus we are called to ongoing transformation of our lives; learning to be more like Jesus. This also invites humility as we recognise our ongoing need of change.
- To be ***Others-Focused***. To demonstrate love and care to others, over and above ourselves is a key characteristic of followers of Jesus.
- To be ***Trust-Worthy***. We don't want to get in the way as people begin to follow Jesus. We want to reflect this value in our commitment to being a Safe Church.

These are the mission commitments that we hope will serve to give us some common language that reminds us of our unity together as followers of Jesus and the community of faith here at GBC.