

Under the leadership of the Discipleship Pastor, the First West Groups Team is responsible for discipleship and group multiplication on all First West campuses. The team includes the Discipleship Pastor and all adult discipleship and group pastors, as well as volunteer campus coordinators at First West.

Must Do:

- We will **start new groups regularly** and do group discipleship **anytime, anyplace and anywhere**. This means that adult groups meet on campus and offsite depending on the campus context.
- The **DNA of groups** at First West is built around community, spiritual growth, neighborhood reach and missional focus. New groups will start with this DNA and the clarity about our group multiplication strategy.
- Each campus will offer group **discipleship for all ages**. In the interest of maximizing facility space, adult groups will meet in homes throughout the week.
- **Groups for children and students** will be offered on Wednesday evening or at other times appropriate for the campus context.
- **LIFE Groups @Church** meet Sunday morning year-round on campus depending on campus facilities and context.
- **LIFE Groups @Home** meet 14 weeks in the fall, 16 weeks in the spring, with a 5 week term for electives in the summer, for a total of 35 weeks. For example, the 2016-2017 schedule looks like this:
 - Fall 2016 – 9/11 - 12/17 (14 weeks)
 - Spring 2017 – 1/8 - 4/9 (16 weeks)
 - Summer 2017 (Electives) – 4/23 - 5/27 (5 weeks)
- After weekly worship attendance, weekly group attendance is a vital step in the First West assimilation process.
- All groups will maintain **member records and attendance** via ACS and The City.
- Groups will use only **curriculum** approved by the Discipleship Pastor. At present, LIFE Groups use either “Bible Studies for Life” or “Explore the Bible” curriculum.
- Some groups will begin as **new leader incubators** and use spiritual growth development and group leader training curriculum from RightNowMedia.com. These groups will adopt standardized curriculum after one semester of development.
- **The Baptist Faith and Message** (1963) is our doctrinal standard as a church and serves as our statement of faith. All teaching should align with these doctrines.
- The Groups Team meets once a month for a **Cross-Campus Champion-led Meeting**. All adult discipleship and groups leaders are expected to attend this meeting.

Should Do:

- Each campus should have neighborhood and affinity-based groups.
- Spring and Fall **LIFE Group Link** connection points for groups should be planned. These initiatives are key moments to help new people experience community in a group.
- Identify new and open groups as intentional places to assimilate new people. Promote these groups to new members and regular attenders ready to take the next step.
- The **facilitator teaching model** is the preferred way to accomplish LIFE group objectives and discipleship outcomes.
- Campuses should launch with a **Groups Volunteer Coordinator** and then graduate to a part-time Associate/Groups Pastor once a campus averages 200 or more in weekly worship.
- The Discipleship Pastor will occasionally **call meetings** as needed for long-range discipleship planning, groups strategy or curriculum adjustments. It is expected that these called meetings are a priority.
- The Groups Team will work as needed to create and evaluate **sermon-guided resources**.

Nice to Do:

- The Discipleship Pastor reserves the right to request that the Groups Team attend **conferences, seminars or make visits** to area churches for professional development.

Discouraged – Don't Do:

- Don't allow open curriculum choices by groups or by group leaders.
- Don't start Sunday AM LIFE groups for adults if campus facility space is limited.
- Don't place age descriptions on new campus adult groups.
- Don't name classes or use pre-existing class names in public promotion.
- Don't encourage official, ongoing group funds, bank accounts and class treasurers, or allow church-administered group accounts. Tax exempt contribution credit for group-administered funds is not allowed under IRS rules.
- Don't do anything without asking the "why" question.

Groups Team:

- Discipleship Pastor – Dwight Munn
- Senior Adults and Pastoral Care Pastor – Woods Watson
- Young Married Adults Pastor – Nathan Neufang
- Young Adults Pastor – Jericho Jones
- Fairbanks Associate Pastor – Cody Keys
- Calhoun Groups Coordinator – TBA