


HILL COUNTRY BIBLE CHURCH
PFLUGERVILLE



**SHEPHERD
MANUAL
2020 - 2021**

OUR MISSION

REACHING EVERY MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD
WITH THE LIFE-CHANGING REALITY OF JESUS CHRIST

REAL LIFE GROUPS MINISTRY PURPOSE

**RLG's exist
to multiply disciples
by equipping
and empowering people
to connect relationally,
grow spiritually,
and live missionally,
for the sake of EMWC.**

WHAT IS A REAL LIFE GROUP?

An RLG is a life-giving community focused on following Jesus Christ into spiritual transformation through embracing these core values:



DEFINITION of CONNECT, GROW, LIVE

What do our core values mean?

CONNECT RELATIONALLY with each other in close, Biblical relationships; know and be known

- Spend time together – within and outside of group time
- Transparency – open and honest sharing
- Trust – vulnerability with confidentiality
- Care – serve each other and meet needs
- Fun – learn to enjoy each other's company

GROW SPIRITUALLY in our relationship with God; understand, embrace, and apply God's Word

- Worship God together (praise, thanksgiving, confession)
- Spend time in God's Word together
- Pray together
- Encourage each other to take spiritual next steps
- Deal with personal sin
- Promote personal disciple making

LIVE MISSIONALLY with people far from God with the love of Jesus.

**BLESS is an acronym for each individual's missional strategy.*

- Begin with prayer (develop a heart for people, praying regularly for people far from God)
- Listen with Care (entering spiritual conversations, asking questions and listening)
- Eat Together (building relationships while sharing a meal or coffee)
- Serve with Love (serving people and inviting them to help you)
- Share Your Story and God's Story (sharing your own spiritual story and sharing God's story – the Gospel)

WHEN & WHERE DO RLG's MEET?

RLG's meet throughout the week at a time that is most convenient for participants and at one of the following locations:

**COVID-19 - In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, we are recommending that groups choosing to meet in person do so with ten people or less while practicing social distancing (this is subject to change.)*

HOMES - Either the Shepherds home or a Host home will be selected as the primary meeting location.

ONLINE - Because of COVID-19 or ease of meeting, groups are able to meet online through a platform like Zoom.

CHURCH CAMPUS - During COVID-19, there are specific rooms on the church campus that may be requested for use by groups of 10 or less on Sunday evenings. If interested, please contact Chris Vogel at cvogel@hbcpcf.com to request a room. The Sunday evening only is subject to change during the year based off of COVID-19 reopening procedures.

CHILDCARE - If child care is needed for groups to meet, members are able to select their own child care workers and can be reimbursed up to 25\$ a week. If your group desires to take advantage of this please fill out the form on our RLG website <https://www.hbcpcf.com/leader-resources>.

On-Campus Sunday night group childcare is available for a fee of \$35 per child for the semester.

ANOTHER OPTION - If childcare or the size of your group is a barrier to meeting in person and you don't want to meet through Zoom, you may want to consider having the men in the group meet one week and the ladies the following week and alternate accordingly.

KEY DATES

- **Connect meetings** - 3rd Sunday of the month at 11am. Either through Zoom or in room 206.
- **Fall semester** - September 20th - December 13th
- **Drive** - Sunday, September 13th at 5pm.
**Drive is an annual church meeting that celebrates what God has done during the previous year and launches our annual goal for the upcoming year.*
- **Winter/Spring semester** - January 17th - May 2nd
- **Shift** - Sunday, January 10th at 5pm
**Shift is an annual church meeting that designed to check-in with the church and build momentum around our church goal moving forward.*
- **Summer semester** (optional) - June 13th - August 8th

**WE GROW BEST
WHEN WE GROW
TOGETHER**

HOW TO SHEPHERD AN RLG

KEYS TO SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

WALK WITH GOD

Grow in a close personal relationship with Jesus Christ; grow in Biblical character; live out the Greatest Commandment (LOVE GOD)

WORK WITH PEOPLE

Lead and serve incarnationally; live out the 2nd Greatest Commandment (LOVE PEOPLE)

ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION

Lead people into **CONNECTING RELATIONALLY**, **GROWING SPIRITUALLY**, and **LIVING MISSIONALLY**.

Live out the Great Commission (MAKE DISCIPLES)

LIVE AS LEARNERS

Be self-aware; pursue personal growth and improvement in leadership position skills; humbly accept feedback from people at any level – superior, subordinate, or peer (CONSTANT EVALUATION).

KEYS TO PERSONAL MINISTRY

In personal ministry and leading people, our approach to ministry is to ask and answer three basic questions:

1. WHO ARE YOU PERSONALLY?

2. WHERE ARE YOU SPIRITUALLY?

3. HOW CAN I HELP YOU TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP?

1

Who are you personally? – Get to know a person through personal conversation and asking questions.

2

Where are you spiritually? – Don't make assumptions about where anyone is spiritually. Ask meaningful, non-threatening questions to find out what a person is really thinking and feeling about their spiritual life.

3

How can I help you take your next step? – Determine how you can help a person grow spiritually. Understand the resources you have available both in the church and in the community to refer people to for help.

KEYS TO SHEPHERDING A GROUP

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

- HCBCPF Membership (HCBCPF doctrine, mission, vision, values)
- Grow in personal spiritual life
- Grow in Biblical character
- Submit to a background check
- Grow in leadership and discipling skills
- Embrace and implement the RLG definition

EMBRACE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Enter a discipling relationship with a coach/elder as the first phase of leadership development (*if not previously disciplined to be a disciple maker*).
- Pray daily for your group and the group members.
- Know the personal and spiritual condition of your people. Shepherd your people well.
- Prepare well for your group time and pray prior to the meeting.
- Develop a healthy, life-giving community.
- Focus on spiritual transformation through **CONNECTING RELATIONALLY, GROWING SPIRITUALLY, and LIVING MISSIONALLY.**
- Seek 2-3 people within the group to personally disciple. Identify disciple makers in the group & have them disciple other group members.
- Identify potential new Shepherds & develop them through shared responsibility. Have at least one apprentice.
- Manage any transition out of your leadership role.

MANAGE YOUR TIME

- Once per week – group time preparation (1+ hour per week)
- One night per week – group time (2 hours per week)
- Engage with weekly communication through email and social media.
- Every month – Attend Shepherd Connect meetings.
- Annually – Attend and be involved with Church-wide events (ex. Drive, Baptism, City-wide campaigns, Shift....)
- Summer months – Reduce group meeting frequency and rest if desired.

SUCCESS

What are the measures of success for a RLG?

- RLG members are experiencing spiritual transformation through **CONNECTING RELATIONALLY, GROWING SPIRITUALLY, and LIVING MISSIONALLY.**
- RLG's are open and the members invite and welcome new people to the group.
- The group is seeing people come to faith in Jesus Christ through intentional Gospel Influence Plans and the witness of individual group members.
- Potential new leaders (apprentices) are being identified and developed as leaders through opportunities to lead. The group has a plan to multiply through branching or sending out new leaders to start new groups.

THE CURRICULUM QUESTION

WHAT DO I CHOOSE AS THE CURRICULUM OR STUDY FOR THE GROUP?

- Your “default” should be the sermon notes and the weekly discussion plan found online at our website: www.hbcpcf.com/sermons. Click on the download button next to the sermon you are wanting to discuss. We can use this as a basis for personal spiritual growth by focusing on how we apply truths and principles from God’s Word each week. Sermons are planned strategically so following the sermon content in RLG’s brings great alignment in the church.
- Often, we will have a church-wide focus during the course of the year. Whenever we do this we will always provide a short-term curriculum for all RLG’s to use. We ask that all RLG’s follow any church-wide initiative, or campaign.
- We provide a library of recommended small group resources that cover essential topics of Christian faith and growth as well as a subscription to Right Now media where you can find incredible resources for your group. You can get access to our library or Right Now media subscription by emailing our RLG Administrative Coordinator Chris Vogel cvogel@hbcpcf.com.
- Finally, Shepherds should know their people. Based on their needs, feel free to provide a curriculum that will meet them where they are to help them grow. For example, read through a book of the Bible together and discuss it or study it. Pick a book on Marriage, Parenting, or Apologetics and discuss it each week.

GROUP MEMBER COMMITMENTS

Review these commitments at the beginning of each semester.

- **Confidentiality** – What’s said here, stays here. I will never repeat what others say unless given permission.
- **Openness** – I will strive to reveal who I am—my hopes, hurts, joys, and struggles—as well as I am able. I will help others by risking to be known and sharing my thoughts, feelings, and experiences.
- **Sensitivity** – I will refrain from sharing my thoughts, feelings, and experiences in a way that causes discomfort or embarrassment to others in the group. I will refrain from gossiping or criticizing others. This includes sharing political opinions that would tend to be divisive. I don’t want to drive off people I am trying to impact for Jesus Christ.
- **Courtesy** – I want everyone to share. I will keep others in mind, allowing time for each person to speak. I will limit my time and will not interrupt when another group member is speaking.
- **Acceptance** – I realize that we are all works in process. We are all at different places in our spiritual journey, come from different backgrounds, and the Holy Spirit works in us in different ways. I will not be judgmental or offer unsolicited advice.
- **Prayer** – I will pray for the other members of this group and rejoice in the confidence that they are praying for me.
- **Commitment** – I will make a diligent and sincere effort to participate in the discussion each week. I will make group attendance a priority.
- **Accountability** – In all of these commitments I invite my fellow group members to hold me accountable, as I will do for them.

DEALING WITH POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN DISCUSSIONS

Maintaining discussions often means dealing as smoothly as possible with the problems that arise.

Here are some common problems, with suggestions on how to deal with them.

THE MEMBER WHO TALKS TOO MUCH

- Redirect the discussion to a less talkative person or to another question.
- Watch for a pause in what they are saying, thank them, and ask if someone else would share.
- Have a one-on-one conversation with the talkative person and ask them how they could work with you to draw others into the conversation.

THE MEMBER WHO WILL NOT TALK

- Ask opinion questions occasionally (e.g., “How do you feel about this?” or “I’d love to hear your opinion on this.”) to reduce the members fear of answering incorrectly.
- Have a one-on-one conversation with the shy person and assure them of their value in the discussion.
- Ask them if it would be all right if you called on them to speak occasionally. Give them the freedom to decline if they have nothing to share.

DISCUSSIONS THAT GET OFF TRACK

- Deal with a rabbit trail by acknowledging what the member said and bringing the interaction back to the main focus of the discussion.
- Invite members to stay after the session to talk about what they’re saying, and then move the discussion back to the main focus.
- The Shepherd could take a strong position as moderator, preventing participants from interrupting each other or speaking simultaneously.
- Ask member to focus any conflict on ideas rather than people and to resist being judgmental. If a conflict is one of values, the facilitator can help participants become aware of the values involved, admit differences, and redirect to the main topic.

CREATE A GREAT ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

ENSURE YOUR TECHNOLOGY WORKS CORRECTLY

You don't want to create confusion or have to delay your group because you didn't prepare properly.

BE ON TIME

While you might be able to get away with sneaking into a physical meeting late, everything is more visible in a video conference.

MUTE YOURSELF WHEN NOT SPEAKING

Even though you may not be speaking and think you're being quiet, most microphones can pick up minor background noises, like coughs, sneezes, or typing. These sounds can easily distract other video conferencing participants and potentially even cause annoyance.

FRAME THE CAMERA CORRECTLY

We've all been on video calls where we end up looking up people's nostrils or seeing the side of their face. When you're on video, make sure you frame your camera in a way that feels natural and allows you to look at the camera. Sit at eye level to the lens and try to position yourself so that it shows midsection up. Placing it too high leaves other participants staring down at you like a bad TV show. Putting a camera too low can lead to unflattering and awkward angles.

HAVE THE RIGHT LIGHT

Poor lighting conditions have an enormous effect on the video quality that you send. You'll want to make sure that there is enough light in the room you're in so that your video isn't grainy and unwatchable.

LOOK INTO THE CAMERA

A common mistake is looking at the video feed instead of the camera when speaking to a remote participant. While it may seem like the right thing to do, it actually makes it appear as if you're looking off and not paying attention. Looking into the camera lens is the equivalent of looking into the person's eyes, so practice doing so until you're comfortable with it.

PAY ATTENTION

Don't check emails or browse the internet while your group is meeting. Stay engaged.

SAMPLE GROUP MEETING OUTLINE

TAKE OFF

- If you are meeting in a home please make sure some light snacks and refreshments are available and allow time at the beginning for people to socialize.
- First meeting: If there are new people to your group take time to introduce yourselves. You may want to say something like, “As we begin our group lets take a moment and introduce ourselves by sharing who you are, one interesting fact about yourself, and why you decided to be apart of the group this semester.
- First meeting: set expectations by reviewing the Group Member Commitments. You may want to print off a copy for every group member and have them sign it as a form of agreed expectations and accountability.
- Regular group time: You may want to start this time by asking a question like, “What has been the best part of everyone’s week so far?” Or, “What has been the most challenging part of everyone’s week so far?”

IN FLIGHT

The questions below are from our “Move to Normal” series going through the book of James. Remember, questions are written each week that go along with the sermon of the week to help your group go deeper into the text and application if you should so choose to go this route.

- *What was your original reaction to hearing we should consider it joy when trials enter our life? Are trials normal, or abnormal in your life?*
- *What is one example where God used a trial in your life to develop character in you, or deepen your dependence on Him, or increase your intimacy with Him, etc.?*
- *When you need wisdom in a trial, how do you discern that the wisdom is coming from God? See James 3:13-18.*
- *Oftentimes trials involve waiting. How can the temporary, transitory nature of life on earth help you persevere through trials? What might someone say to himself/herself, or to others, that would reflect such a perspective?*
- *How would you distinguish between a trial, a test, and a temptation? What part does God play in any of these, and what part does our flesh play?*

LANDING

- What trial are you going through for which your group can pray? Take time to pray together.
- Thank everyone for coming. Give any instructions for your next meeting time.

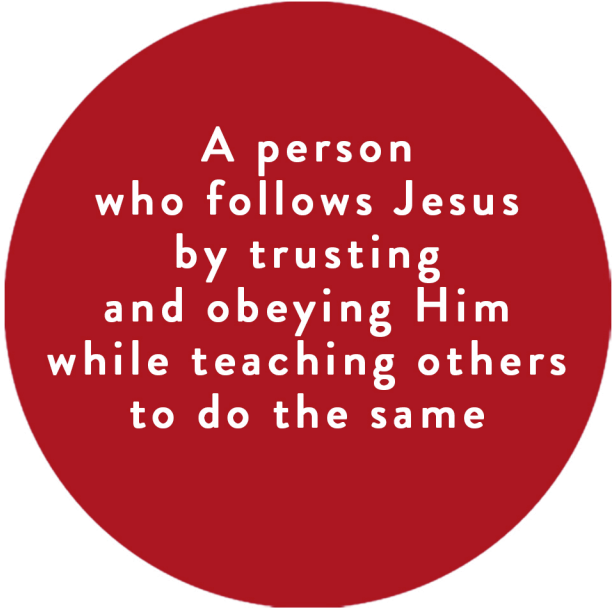
RLG's & DISCIPLE MAKING

INTERSECTION OF RLG's & MAKING DISCIPLES

- RLG's do not make disciples – only disciples can make disciples
- RLG's are similar to the larger church. Not all who attend will want to commit to become a disciple of Jesus Christ at the same pace. The RLG focuses on being an environment for spiritual transformation through the core values of **CONNECTING RELATIONALLY, GROWING SPIRITUALLY, and LIVING MISSIONALLY.**
- Shepherd's are to use the group as a “pool” of people from which disciple makers select a few for more focused disciple making. Don't feel like you need to need to coax everyone along spiritually at the same rate. Disciple those who are ready.
- Shepherd's are vision carrier's of disciple-making by inviting people into the discipleship process as well as reinforcing the definition and key identities and life-patterns of a disciple during their group times.
- Shepherds are key leaders in building the movement of disciple multiplication: Whenever you start a new group, email us at disciple@hbcpcf.com to let us know who you are discipling so that we can celebrate all that God is doing.

HCBCPF DEFINITION OF A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

We believe that this Biblical definition leads us to understand our *identity* as a disciple of Jesus as well as develop specific *life-patterns* of obedience to Jesus.



A person
who follows Jesus
by trusting
and obeying Him
while teaching others
to do the same

5 CHARACTERISTICS OF A DISCIPLE

1 LOVE GOD

- MY IDENTITY (PSALM 95:6)
- MY LIFE PATTERN (1 THESS. 5:16-18; HEB. 10:24-25; COL. 2:7; PROV. 3:9A)

2 LIVE MISSIONALLY

- MY IDENTITY (2 COR. 5:20)
- MY LIFE PATTERN (GAL. 2:20; ACTS 1:8; MAT. 5:14-16; MAT. 22:37-39)

3 GROW TOGETHER

- MY IDENTITY (1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-20)
- MY LIFE PATTERN (EPHESIANS 4:1-16, 2 TIMOTHY 2:22)

4 SERVE SACRIFICIALLY

- MY IDENTITY (MAT. 20:26-28)
- MY LIFE PATTERN (1 PET. 4:10; GAL. 5:13-14; MAT. 6:19-20; PHIL. 2:4-8)

5 MAKE DISCIPLE-MAKERS

- MY IDENTITY (MAT. 28:19-20)
- MY LIFE PATTERN (2 TIM. 2:1-2; MAT. 16:24; MAT. 4:19)