



FAMILY SHARE LIFE TOGETHER

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LifeGroup is not just a group meeting at a home, it is family sharing lives.

Over the last 30 years we have had the privilege of being part of many different LifeGroups where memories have been made and hearts have been joined together. These life changing moments with people we love impacted our lives profoundly. In order to share these treasures, we need to take you back.

Twenty years ago, the LifeGroup was relentless in pushing in. Our eldest daughter was born with many medical challenges, so we spent the first three years of her life in hospital. We didn't have a penny to our names and in this dark time the LifeGroup was the very hand of God to us. We remember receiving meals, people popping in at hospital and when we protested, we were told that that is what family does, family share life together.

The LifeGroup did not just carry us, they carried each other. As young couples with toddlers running around, the place looked like a war zone and everybody developed selective hearing. We had no idea how to raise children, but we discovered it together. We made memories by camping together, sometimes upsetting the whole campsite by our noise level and sheer number of people. We played tennis and watched an ostrich swallow a ball. The fascination of the children watching the ball go up and down in its throat, will stay with us for years.

On my 30th birthday my unsaved friend couldn't believe that the LifeGroup guys could have so much fun without being drunk. The men of the LifeGroup stood together helping when a factory was flooding, bucketing water out in the pouring rain. Couples were helped when they couldn't afford food and even when they lost everything through liquidation, the home group stepped in. We remember the time when a husband was shot and killed and how the LifeGroup built a flat for the widow

and child.

There were people who visited the LifeGroup sheepishly, too scared to pray, but a year later we couldn't keep them quiet! They grew spiritually and many are still serving the Lord and some are even leading churches today. It is wonderful to see.

The secret fear in us when we handed over CityHill Pinetown was that we would drift away from family. We moved to Johannesburg and immediately searched for a church, a family to belong to. We arrived at Cornerstone Church on a Sunday morning and met Wayne in the visitors' lounge. He invited us to their small group on Sunday afternoon and the feeling of déjà vu hit me. There were sixteen adults and about 24 children under the age of 10. Would it be the same as we experienced before? Yes, the LifeGroup was the evidence of God in our time of transition. We might have been in a different province, but the family - God's church - just surrounded us and made us feel loved, accepted and at home.

We have learnt over the years that you reap what you sow. Give of yourself in friendship, time and love and you will receive what you have sown. Build relational bridges, because those are the bridges that support you when you have physical, emotional or spiritual needs. Invest into these relationships by being open and willing for God to use people to shape you and you will look back and see spiritual growth.

Today we find ourselves, by God's leading, in New Zealand and true to what we have learnt, we have started a LifeGroup as a base for a church plant. God has a plan for our lives and He brings it to fruition through the church. LifeGroup is not just a group of people getting together, it is the family of God, sharing lives, celebrating Jesus.