***Sharing the Good Life:***

***Starting a Christian study group***

Living the Christian life requires love, acceptance, forgiveness, role models, encouragement, and education that come from sharing our lives with others. You can make all these experiences part of a Good Life study group that you can start yourself. Below are some suggestions for putting a group together. Feel free to add your own ideas to make this group comfortable for those you invite.

1. Pick a **time and place for the group**, explaining that those who come to the first meeting will decide where and when the group will meet after that.
2. Describe what **refreshments** will be served. Think about what might attract the most people, and bother the least.
3. List **which people** you want to invite. Consider if there are any on this list you might want to approach as a **leader or coleader** for the group.
4. Decide on a **time frame** to suggest for the meetings, usually 75–90 minutes. For **an agenda**, outline how you think that time might best be spent. Open and close with prayer by different people. The most important part would be each person sharing how they have done since the last meeting relating to the materials assigned for study.
5. Choose a **curriculum.** You could ask everyone to take the CAS between the first and second meetings. You could use the 30 Learning and Problem Solving Tools found at ***mynewlife.com,*** or the blog articles and podcasts there, both entitled *Brain Food for the Good Life*.
6. **Guidelines for the sharing**: To keep the discussion respectful and kind yet honest, here are some recommended guidelines:
   1. Give **no advice** to others, unless it is asked for
   2. Keep your **sharing brief**, like around 30 seconds usually, and most always less than two or three minutes.
   3. **Don’t interrupt**, or talk over others when they are sharing.
7. Select a **chairperson or moderator** for the group, perhaps a rotating responsibility, to remind group members about these guidelines, and how best to share for the benefit of all concerned. That person is prepared to stimulate discussion if needed with a few of their own experiences and questions.
8. **Don’t confess juicy specifics** in your behavior, or other people’s. Protect the privacy of other people included. Leave out details like exactly where, when, who was there, etc. Just say *what types* of things you saw and heard, what you did and said, what you believe about it, what was in your heart at the time, and what remains in your heart now. E.g., *“I’ve been having some financial insecurity. I made some foolish and selfish purchases, and then lied about them. When my partner found out, I felt afraid and ashamed, and I still do.”* If people don’t mention specific things that were said or done, no one will be tempted to gossip, because what was confessed was vague enough it could have been done or experienced by most anyone.