

Part of building community and sharing life is sharing about your life, who you are, where you've been, and how you've changed by God's grace. Often times, it can take a lifetime to share what has happened in our lives but we don't want to take a lifetime to share it. One way to help the Life Group you are a part of is to share your story.

The idea of telling your personal story to the other members of your Life Group may seem a little uncomfortable, but it doesn't have to be a big production. The goal isn't to entertain. The goal isn't to be highly dramatic or comprehensive. It's to give the other people in your group a sense of what makes you uniquely you. **But what parts of your story should you tell?**

How to share our testimonies:

If you really think about your story, it's probably revolved around people, places, and events that had a big impact on you. Those three categories capture how we interact with the world around us. One way to organize your thoughts about your story is to make a short list of the things that have shaped you:

- **Three key people**
- **Three key places**
- **Three key events**

You probably won't have time to talk about all of those people, places, and events. But listing them is a good start. From that list, you can think through the parts of your story that are most important to emphasize. Maybe you'll talk about one item from each category, or two people and one event, or one place and two events. It's *your* story. You have the freedom to share what you want to share.

Your story has the potential to draw your group members closer together. Don't let that opportunity pass you by. The people of your Life Group will probably only be as open and transparent when they tell their stories as you are when you tell yours. So, go personal, for the glory of God.

Don't sugarcoat your story. Don't try to present yourself as a perfect Christian (you're not a perfect Christian and neither is anyone else). If there's sin in your story, go there. If there's loss in your story, go there. If there's tragedy in your story, go there. After all, there's sin, loss, and tragedy in everyone's story. None of us lives a charmed life.

Romans 3:23: *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (All includes all of us in the Life Group!)

Transparency is a priceless relational commodity in our culture. People rarely feel free to *really* be themselves among others. If you're brave enough to be open with your story, you'll give your Life Group members a great gift: an invitation to be open with theirs.

1 Thessalonians 5:10-11

10 [Jesus] died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

But before we can encourage and build one another up, we have to be honest with one another about who we are. Telling each other our stories can be a huge step in that direction.

So go there; tell your story; for the spiritual good of others and for the glory of God.