



Being Real Being Light

A six-week taster experience

What is Lightwave?

All over the county of Suffolk, there are churches with services each Sunday. Lightwave is a Christian community, meeting in small groups in homes, pubs, offices, schools and other places which works alongside more traditional ways of doing church. The name comes from the idea of lightwaves being the way in which light spreads into dark places.

Lightwave is committed to shining the light of Jesus in Suffolk through acts of kindness and practical service as well as worship and witness.

Lightwave groups do the essential things of church - but in a whole variety of different ways, suited to the needs of their members and the context of a small group who get to know each other well. So, there are no sermons - but we read the bible and try to put it into practice in our lives. There may be no singing (unless the members are musical) but we find other ways to worship and pray for each other and our local community. We eat together and share the Christ-focused meal often called "communion" or the eucharist. We have fun, support each other and try to put faith to work in practical care for friends and neighbours and the most needy in our society. Each group is part of the great wave of God's love which brings light to our county.

Who can be part of Lightwave?

Anyone who wants to join one of our small groups. You do not need to be a Christian or have faith to be part of Lightwave - if you'd like to explore with us what it means to experience and speak God's light in our communities that is enough. Having said that, many Lightwave members are also very active members of another church (most often Church of England but other kinds too) and find that being part of a Lightwave group helps them with the everyday putting faith into practice. Others would not be part of a church at all if it were not for Lightwave. Lightwave enable those who cannot get to a Sunday Service to be fully included in a community based on Christian faith. Our aim is also that people who find Sunday worship too formal or structured for them, especially younger generations and those unused to traditional forms of church, will find Lightwave to be somewhere where they can find friends to explore the journey of faith with them.

What happens in a Lightwave group?

They're all different - but most meet weekly and follow the typical pattern used in these notes:

Welcome - time to chat and generally "catch up" over coffee or a meal. At some point an ice-breaker question or activity introduces the theme of the meeting. This gives everyone a chance to join in and gives a relaxed feel to the group.

Worship - time to focus on God and become aware of his presence, giving thanks, leaving behind the business of our day, and allowing him to touch and refresh us and realign our will to his.

Word - This is the Bible Bit. We typically use discussion and activities to help us understand a passage or a subject. Our emphasis is practical - what difference will what we learn make to our lives?

Witness - Showing God's love for our friends and neighbours. This includes praying for the needs of people, giving practical help and providing opportunities for people who want to explore faith. Many lightwave groups will be the team for a fresh expression of Church such as Messy Church or Cafe Church which provides these opportunities.

Lightwave groups have a lot of fun together - barbeques, bonfires, Traidcraft parties, children's events, youth lazerquest, bowling or cinema. These are great times to invite friends and neighbours who might not normally feel comfortable to get involved with church events. Three times a year, a county-wide worship and teaching event called 'The Gathering' gives all the small groups the opportunity to meet.

Transforming Values

"The most important commandment," said Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself. " Mark 12.29-31

These commandments reflect Jesus' values - what was important to him: - a high view of God, a high view of others, a high view of ourselves, and sacrificial love. We believe that these values can be used to set a life-giving framework in which people can grow and help others to do the same. In Lightwave, they are reflected in a simple "rule of life" for the small groups: -

All Involved - Everyone is included and valued, whoever they are. Everyone has a role to play.

Becoming Disciples - The purpose of the group is to encourage us to love and live more like Jesus.

Creating Community - We will "be real" with each other - honest about the things we go through ourselves and to respond in a loving way to each other. Caring for each other enables us to care for our wider community too.

Doing Evangelism - Being as well as telling good news together. Giving other people the opportunity to learn about Jesus (Not everybody likes the word "evangelism" but really it is just about being the very best of good news for people in what we do and say - so we think it is important to understand this word - it does not involve bible-bashing!)

Encountering God - Meeting with God It is God who helps us and changes us.

This introductory course takes us through this simple "rule" and seeks to explore how this can help us to "be real" and "be light" in everyday life.

Week 1: Being Real. Being Light. Taster Session

Welcome (15 mins)

If your group is meeting for the first time, introduce yourselves to each other - and get the facilitator to tell you a bit about the group and what it's all about. For example, everyone is respected in a Lightwave group and if there is any activity or conversation which you don't want to join in, it is fine to pass. Disagreement within the group is fine and normal - we learn more from each other when we share what we really think.

Introductory Question

(Good for a pancake breakfast if you're doing this course for Lent)

What is the most interesting thing you've ever done (or tasted) with a pancake?

OR

If someone said that they thought it was important to "be real" what would you take them to mean? (Do you think "being real" is important?)

Worship

Play some quiet music and take time to remember God is with you. Each light a candle as a sign of gratitude. As you light it name something or someone for which you are truly thankful.

Every good and perfect gift is from above,
coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights,
who does not change like shifting shadows.
James 1.17

Word

1. Start with a prayer, inviting God's Spirit to guide your hearts and minds as you listen to the reading from the bible.
2. Begin with one person reading the bible passage below aloud to the group.

Matthew 5.13-16

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

3. Allow some silence to unfold as people let the words have their impact and to allow people to reread the passage to themselves again. All are invited to identify a word or phrase which stands out to them or speaks to their imaginations.

4. Find a person in the group you know least well. In pairs listen to each other as you tell each other the phrase which struck you and why. (Any reason is ok. There are no wrong answers here if it is real to you.)

Listen well, because your job will be to report to the rest of the group what your partner has said, not what you yourself said. Note-taking is OK.

5. Draw back together as a whole group and each tell what you learned from your partner.

6. Wrestle together as a group. Ask, "What might God might be up to in the passage for us today?"

Witness

Offer to God in a time of prayer or silence anything practical you identified about how God's light could shine brighter in your community through the witness of a small group like yours

Finish with a prayer such as

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

Growing in God

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