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Introduction

Welcome to GroupLife at Los Altos United Methodist Church. It's about fostering community with real people, real lives, and real faith. Groups of 6 – 12 people will meet regularly in homes to share fellowship, mutual caring and support, and spiritual growth. The goal is that each member of a group feels genuine trust, love, and encouragement and is accountable in community. As we embark on this journey together, we realize that it is not just a program, it is not just an event, it is not just a class. It is a new way to do church and to be church: a new culture. A way for a big church to become small. Going through life's ups and downs with a group is how Jesus did it. It's how the early church did it. It's how John Wesley started the Methodist tradition. And now it's our turn: It's how we do life!

We are launching GroupLife through a church-wide campaign, in order for us to all experience the power of unity through a common experience. We will be using the material in Kirk Byron Jones' book *Addicted to Hurry* as our topic for sharing and discussion. This material will be the focus of sermons by our own Pastors for 6 weeks. During that time we will discuss slowing down and what that might mean in our individual lives. In community, we will share ideas and work towards savoring the gift of each day and growing in relationship with God and each other.

Our prayer is that through GroupLife, all of us become closer to living the abundant life that God has planned for us. We encourage you to use this workbook as a personal journal, a tool that enables you to discover more about what it means to Touch Heaven and Change Earth with Head, Heart, and Hands. Thank you for making this commitment to experience community. You have already taken the important first step! May God bless all of us on this journey.

Workbook created from *Addicted to Hurry: Spiritual Strategies for Slowing Down* by Kirk Byron Jones, copyright © 2003 by Judson Press. Used by permission of Judson Press.

Acknowledgements

Small group ministry, GroupLife, was initiated as the priority of Los Altos United Methodist Church by the Pastoral Staff, the Church Council, and the Vision Team in 2011. Arriving at our launch for this ministry in Fall 2012 has been a group process and effort with the contributions of so many folks.

We are deeply grateful to Pastors Mark Bollwinkel, Debbie Weatherspoon, Samuel Yun, Dirk Damonte, and Cate Noellert and the ministry staff at Los Altos United Methodist Church for their tremendous support and vision. The Church Council, headed by Margie Gong, has also been instrumental in generating the enthusiasm and resources needed to bring GroupLife to fruition.

We appreciate the wonderful assistance we have received from the church ministry and office staff – Hallis Ayres, Brittanee Bryant, Dylan Damonte, Cindy Golden, Meredith Kittle, Lynda Monari. Thank you for your cheerful help with all sorts of details.

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Judson Press was extremely helpful in collaborating with us to obtain Dr. Jones' books and permissions for generating this workbook.

Please contact us if you have comments or suggestions about GroupLife. We welcome your input and ideas!

Members of GroupLife Task Force:

Kim Jones, Chairperson

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Debbie Weatherspoon, Pastor

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GroupLife Commitment

While exploring *Addicted to Hurry: Spiritual Strategies for Slowing Down* by Kirk Byron Jones and the related sermon series at Los Altos United Methodist Church, small groups will foster community with real people, real lives, and real faith. To facilitate this endeavor, small groups hold the following values:

- R Take responsibility for what you say and feel without blaming others
- E Use empathetic listening
- S Be sensitive to differences in communication styles
- P Ponder what you hear and feel before you speak
- E Examine your own assumptions and perceptions
- C Keep confidentiality
- T Tolerate ambiguity and do not assume right and wrong

GroupLife is a safe place to express feelings and ideas without judgment, a place to receive encouragement and support. Out of respect for each other's time, meetings will start and end at the specified times. Please be prompt. If unable to attend, notify the HOST.

Note that the HOST has agreed to open his or her home for the duration of this group. Others in the group are welcome to take on other group responsibilities during this time, such as helping facilitate discussion, bringing refreshments, assisting with communication among the group, and planning any social or service events the group wishes to pursue.

Some GroupLife groups may elect to continue meeting after this 6-week series. Resources are available to support any groups who wish to continue. We encourage everyone to maintain an active support system in some form, because that is how we do life best!

How to Use This Workbook

For each small group session, read the assigned chapters in Dr. Jones' book before the meeting. We also encourage everyone to attend church worship on Sunday to hear a message about the weekly topic. (Sunday worship times at Los Altos United Methodist Church are 8:00am, 9:30am, 11:15am, and 5:00pm. You may also view live streaming online at www.laumc.org). Below is a general schedule groups will follow:

Week of Sept 23 rd	Session 1	Chapters 1-5
Week of Sept 30 th	Session 2	Chapter 6
Week of October 7 th	Session 3	Chapter 7
Week of October 14 th	Session 4	Chapter 8
Week of October 21 st	Session 5	Chapter 9
Week of October 28 th	Session 6	Chapter 10

An easy-to-follow format for each session is provided in this workbook. Those elements are listed below, along with suggested time allotments for a 90-minute meeting. Feel free to adjust the time segments if your group is meeting for a shorter or longer period.

Getting to Know the Group	15 min	This activity is designed to help the group get better acquainted with each other as people arrive. Good time to serve a snack as well!
Opening prayer	5 min	A scripture, poem, or prayer is provided. Try different ways to pray: one person read aloud, everyone take turns reading a portion, do it silently, or any other method you wish.
Video Introduction	15 min	Watch the appropriate session on the DVD, which is a reflection by our Pastors on the book, and is used to stimulate our discussion time together.
Discussion Points	40 min	Some suggestions for group discussion are provided. Feel free to do all of them, some of them, or none of them if you have other thoughts and ideas to discuss. You may break up into smaller groups for discussion as well.
Closing prayer	15 min	Spend some time allowing everyone to share praises or concerns. Close the group meeting with prayer – either one person praying, taking turns, praying silently, or even singing a prayer.

Options for Children and GroupLife

There are many ways to approach children and small groups. They are a valuable part of our community and benefit from experiencing genuine, Christian community in their lives. We can all learn from children, as well! Yet there are also situations where it is not appropriate to have children participate in order to allow deeper sharing among adults. Each group will decide how to handle this decision. Here are some suggestions:

- 1) Adult and children group – include children completely in the group the entire time, perhaps have potluck supper as part of the meeting.
- 2) Planned childcare group – anyone who has children works out their own childcare/babysitting needs
- 3) Share sitting group – more than one family can use the same babysitter for their children, either in another room at the HOST home, or at the home of someone else in the group. Or one adult can take turns rotating out of group meeting each week and watch the children.
- 4) Partial participation group – everyone, children and adults, starts together for a time of fellowship, food. There is a short time of spiritual interaction among the generations with music and/or an activity to engage everyone. Then the children go to a different room to play with supervision (babysitter or an adult rotating out of the group each week to supervise the kids.) The adults continue with deeper level of discussion.

Session One

Addicted to Hurry, Chapters 1 - 5 “Running”

1. Getting to know the group

Describe your hometown. What was the best thing about where you grew up?

2. Opening Prayer

Gracious God, I ask you to plant a seed of stillness in my soul. Everything in my life moves ever more quickly, and I am continually expected to fit more things into time that is already brimful with activity. Even when I have moments that require nothing of me, my mind races and I seem unable to locate a switch to turn it off. Give me, each day, the desire and capacity to breathe in the wonder of air, to envision a still lake on a windless dawn, to drop deep into the well of my own being and find there the peace of your presence. Amen. – explorefaith.org

3. Video Introduction (Duration: 4.5 minutes)

“How do we ever expect to know God more deeply if we are too busy to stop, notice, listen, and receive?” -- Addicted to Hurry, p.54

4. Discussion Points

- a. Would anyone like to share thoughts concerning Sunday’s sermon or anything related to the reading?

- b. In his introduction, Kirk Byron Jones (KBJ) acknowledges the role of speed in our lives. How does haste help you fulfill your responsibilities at work or at home?

- c. Of the “seven serious unnecessary sacrifices” mentioned in chapter 1, p. 8 (patience, judgment, depth, joy, dialogue, personhood, and spirituality), what suffers most in your life because of speed?

- d. Why do YOU run? Of all of the reasons mentioned in chapter 2 (out of enthusiasm, to get things done, to beat the clock, there is too much to do, to acquire prized possessions, to catch up, to avoid being late, because of your job, to remain in control, for success, to please people, for the rush, to be the first, to get your share, because you don’t know how to stop), which do you identify with the most?

- e. KBJ mentions a moment with a theology class of students where they spoke of having experienced God “in the grime and grit of life”. One student remembered how she had once “discerned God in the face of a Junkie” (56). Where have you discerned God in an unexpected “grime and grit” moment in your life?

- f. Exercise on pp. 60-61

5. Closing Prayer

Prayer concerns for this week:

- d. KBJ discusses some “belief switches” that need to be altered in our minds before our lifestyle and actions will change:

Belief switches we need to turn off:

- 1) you are what you do → worth comes from who you are
- 2) committed living demands your exhaustion → commitment doesn't have to be violence to self
- 3) don't deserve rest until ready to drop → rest is a gift from God

Are these belief switches an accurate description of our world view and society? Why or why not? Which one is hardest for you to overcome?

- e. KBJ states that the biggest foe to our living at a sacred pace is ourselves. Explain whether you agree or not.
- f. List 2 things you want to do this week to either imagine beating hurry or a specific way to choose not to hurry.

5. Closing Prayer

Prayer concerns for this week:

Session Three

Addicted to Hurry, Chapter 7 “Seeing More Clearly”

1. Getting to know the group

As a child, what did you wish to become when you grew up?

2. Opening Prayer

*Dear God,
Speak gently in my silence.
When the loud outer noises
of my surroundings,
and the loud inner noises
of my fears
keep pulling me away from you,
help me to trust
that you are still there
even when I am unable
to hear you.*

*"Come to me,
all you who are
overburdened,
and I will
give you rest...
for I am gentle
and humble
of heart."*

*Let that
loving voice
be my guide.
Amen.*

Henri J.M. Nouwen

*Comments about the past week concerning imagining and choosing?

3. Video Introduction (Duration: 6 minutes)

"The work will wait while you show the child the rainbow, but the rainbow won't wait while you do the work." - Author Unknown

4. Discussion Points

- a. Would anyone like to share thoughts concerning Sunday's sermon or anything related to the reading?
- b. At the beginning of chapter 7, KBJ describes a "marvelous picture": "[T]he sun's rays are adorning the small forest across the street like blinking lights on a Christmas tree" (73). Have you seen a "marvelous picture" in nature recently? Describe it.
- c. As KBJ discusses the importance of seeing more slowly, he emphasizes how "[w]e look past a lot of good stuff every day" (75). What do you think you miss most by seeing too fast?
- d. What keeps us from seeing reflectively with our minds and hearts open? What can we do to accomplish this each day?
- e. KBJ advises us to "[m]editate on the blessings in your life throughout the day and not just at special occasions or on holidays" (80). Can you think of two blessings in your life that you are willing to share with the group?
- f. List 2 things you want to do this week to notice things around you and be open to God's nudges.

5. Closing Prayer

Prayer concerns for this week:

Session Four

Addicted to Hurry, Chapter 8 “Listening More Carefully”

1. Getting to know the group

If you had to pick one song to play continuously, nonstop in the background of your everyday life, what song would that be?

2. Opening Prayer

Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will. All that I am and all that I possess You have given me: I surrender it all to You to be disposed of according to Your will. Give me only Your love and Your grace; with these I will be rich enough, and will desire nothing more. -Saint Ignatius of Loyola

*Comments about the past week concerning noticing God’s nudges?

3. Video Introduction (Duration: 7 minutes)

“Listening-less living is impoverished living. Too much is missed and lost when we do not give soulful ear to the sounds and silence around us – too much that can make a difference in the way we live our lives.”
-- *Addicted to Hurry*, p.84

4. Discussion Points

- a. Would anyone like to share thoughts concerning Sunday’s sermon or anything related to the reading?
- b. What noises/sounds appeal to you and why? What noises/sounds do *not* appeal to you and why?

- c. When it comes to voices, which ones should you be paying more attention to, and which ones less attention to?

- d. What is worse – hearing what we are not supposed to hear, or not hearing what we are supposed to hear?

- e. Take 1 minute to spend together in silence. Discuss reactions. How do we as a culture react to silence? What does that say about us, our priorities, our worldview?

- f. List 2 things you want to do this week to be more deliberate about listening.

5. Closing prayer

Prayer concerns for this week:

Session Five

Addicted to Hurry, Chapter 9 “Thinking More Deeply”

1. Getting to know the group

What is your favorite holiday tradition?

2. Opening Prayer

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.” Psalm 46: 10-11

*Comments about the past week concerning listening?

3. Video Introduction (Duration: 8.5 minutes)

*“Much of truth’s vast expanse is traversed best through mental surrender”
-- Addicted to Hurry, p.97*

4. Discussion Points

- a. Would anyone like to share thoughts concerning Sunday’s sermon or anything related to the reading?

- b. What is your first reaction to the idea of surrendering your mind as this chapter suggests? Do you think it’s possible? Or have you experienced this level of surrender and heard a Truth? Can you describe it to the group?

- c. Are there things that you wish you could think more deeply about that you just don’t have time to do?

- d. What's the point of thinking more deeply? What is the positive outcome?
- e. What can we do in our lives to make room to think more deeply?
- f. KBJ writes in his third exercise at the end of the chapter, "Begin paying attention to how your mind is changing on some issues, the ways you are becoming new day by day. Noticing your evolving spirit and mind is a way of nurturing positive transformation." Thoughts?
- g. List 2 things you want to do this week to think more deeply and to get lost in surrender.

5. Closing Prayer

Prayer concerns for this week:

Session Six

Addicted to Hurry, Chapter 10 “Savoring Pace Life Lines”

1. Getting to know the group

Has modern technology enhanced or complicated your life? Why?

2. Opening Prayer

A Prayer for Peace of Mind by Saint Francis Xavier Cabrini:

FORTIFY me with the grace of Your Holy Spirit and give Your peace to my soul that I may be free from all needless anxiety, solicitude and worry. Help me to desire always that which is pleasing and acceptable to You so that Your will may be my will.

*Comments about the past week concerning thinking deeply?

3. Video Introduction (Duration: 4 minutes)

Savoring Pace Life Lines – self-coaching to help each of us “counter the cues to move faster” and claim “power over the destructive forces of hurry and overload.” -- *Addicted to Hurry*, p.101

4. Discussion Points

- a. Would anyone like to share thoughts concerning Sunday’s sermon or anything related to the reading?

b. Some life lines from Dr. Jones:

Practice defiant gratitude
Welcome each new day
Be afraid; don't become your fears
Just to be is a blessing
Side with your soul
No sitting, no soaring
Take your time
Stop sleepwalking through life
Practice divine curiosity
You are a dancing spirit
Bless your boats
Attend to what is alive inside of you
Discover the fullness in being empty
Lean into your power

c. Which "life line" is most meaningful to you and why?

d. Take some time for everyone in your group to create your group's own lifelines. Share them.

e. Spend some time reflecting on this small group experience. What was the most valuable part of GroupLife or this study series?

f. Discuss as a group plans for the future. Fill out survey at the back of this workbook and return to your HOST.

g. Celebrate your time together!

5. Closing Prayer

Prayer concerns for this week:

Resources

“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

Psalm 46:10

“Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.”

Psalm 119:18

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Luke 10: 38-42

“Taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.”

Psalm 34: 8

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