



**COME!
ALIVE!**

-  **Seek God First**
-  **Love and Be Loved**
-  **Honor God with My Body**



Are you ready to “**Come Alive!**”? To be physically changed and spiritually refreshed?

We have a wonderful, amazing, and loving God! The **Come Alive!** program was created to be enjoyed within a group of seekers who are curious to know God more deeply and share their journey as part of a small group. Through the **Come Alive!** program, you will experience new perspectives about your relationship with God and how to honor God with your body. It is our hope that you welcome God’s presence as you explore the rhythms of your daily life. We pray that you will begin meaningful spiritual and physical practices that enrich your life and those around you.

The **Come Alive!** experience will help you clear away the obstacles that are preventing you from living an abundant, healthy, Spirit-filled life. In the eight sessions, you will experience daily practices which will prompt self-discovery and new ways of thinking. Keep doing the practices that fit your unique needs. Soon you will develop a rhythm that embraces the ebb and flow of God’s plan for you.

We move forward with boldness, trusting in the promise of Jeremiah 29:12-14. “Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD.

Let’s get started!

You are in our thoughts and prayers,



www.LivingAbundantlyMinistries.org

WAVE

ABOUT

LIVING ABUNDANTLY MINISTRIES

Living Abundantly Ministries is a nonprofit Christian ministry located in Wheaton, Illinois. Our mission is to activate Christians to live abundantly (John 10:10) by fostering small group experiences that share God's love and build community in a way that strengthens spiritual and physical health.

We affirm the Apostle's Creed as our statement of faith. Our desire is to strengthen churches and organizations from all Christian faith backgrounds in their efforts to create a culture of healthy living in their congregations and neighborhoods. Visit us at www.LivingAbundantlyMinistries.org.

I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly. (John 10:10 ASV)

WELCOME

COME ALIVE! PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

We're excited that you've chosen to join us on a journey to a more abundant, joy-filled spiritual and physical life. **Come Alive!** makes the connection between our spiritual and physical well-being. Our 8-session small group program helps participants learn and practice ways to seek God, support each other, and care for their bodies in the rhythm of their daily lives. The familiar small group format makes it simple for any church or Christian organization to include **Come Alive!** as part of their small group ministry.

A study of our pilot program was published in the CDC's *Preventing Chronic Disease* journal. Participants in the study experienced many positive health outcomes, including reduced risk of heart disease and diabetes, weight loss, and improved emotional well-being.

A faith-led, evidence-based program supported by published research is very unique. Our program has received strong interest from churches, Christian organizations, large cities, public health organizations, and hospitals seeking to improve the health of the populations they serve.

Our goal is simple. We want to help you grow in your relationship with God so that you can "**Come Alive!**" and fully live the life that God has planned for you spiritually and physically.

Come Alive! is based on three Biblical principles for daily living:

- 1. SEEK GOD FIRST**
- 2. LOVE AND BE LOVED**
- 3. HONOR GOD WITH YOUR BODY**

The program will guide you to adopt meaningful new practices within **the rhythm of your daily life**. These repeated practices will support you as you seek to grow in God, strengthen relationships, and care for your body in a way that gives you strength and energy, reduces inflammation, and improves health.

We understand that making changes can be difficult. Mere knowledge and willpower are not enough. That's why we need a new perspective and a new training partner. Nothing is too hard for God. We can be encouraged by this verse from our first Biblical principle, **Seek God First:** "*I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength*" (Philippians 4:13).

We pray that this verse (and others that we will study in weeks to come) will soak into your heart and inspire you to draw closer to God on your journey today and each day of your life.

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CREDITS

We are thankful for God's presence and patient guidance throughout the process of creating the **Come Alive!** small group program.

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Our thanks and prayers reach out to many supporters who work diligently in the area of faith and health. We pray that the **Come Alive!** small group study will be one of the tools that helps bring forth a greater understanding of God's love for us and God's love through us to others as we are mindful caretakers of God's gift of our bodies.

Finally, thank you to our friends and family who prayed for God to guide the development of this study. You encouraged us and journeyed with us through the process of praying, listening to God, learning, practicing, and growing in faith to create the **Come Alive!** program.

HOW TO USE THIS PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Before you start, it's good to know . . .

1. The study is designed for participants to discover for themselves what the Bible has to say and how they will apply spiritual and physical practices into the rhythm of their life. This method of learning, by practicing within a caring small group and repeating practices at home, is one of the best ways to nurture growth and make changes that last.
2. Participants will share in the experience of being part of the body of Christ. Every member in the group will experience God's love in some way.
3. This small group study relies on the Bible as our source of truth, wisdom, and inspiration.
4. Every session includes verses from the Bible. The Bible verses are from the New International version (NIV) unless otherwise noted. Having your own Bible handy is a great idea. Use a version of the Bible that you find the most meaningful and easy to understand.
5. Session 1 is an overview of the program. Sessions 2-7 each relate to a specific rhythm of the day. Session 8 is a celebration meal and a time to praise God for how He has changed group members spiritually and physically over the eight sessions.
6. The timing between each session is up to your small group. You may choose to meet weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. Choose the timing that works best for your group.
7. The Warm-Up section (or pre-reading) is designed to be completed before you meet with your small group. You will find that thoughtfully preparing will greatly enrich your group experience.
8. The Small Group section will be completed during the meeting time with your group. Do not answer those questions in advance. Dress in comfortable clothes so you can move. Group sessions are about 90 minutes in length, plus additional time to walk together afterward.
9. As you read the Warm-Up on your own, use the Beginning Prayer to help you disconnect from the demands and distractions of your day. Quiet your heart and mind so you can connect with God. Invite God to journey with you step by step.
10. This program is interactive! Take action and try the spiritual and physical practices with your group and at home. Discover your favorite practices and repeat them. Read Scripture passages, thoughtfully consider questions on your own, authentically discuss questions in your group, and try new ways of talking to God, eating mindfully, and moving your body more than before.

11. Expect God to teach you through the verses and the practices.
12. Two reasons for participating as a small group are support and accountability. Pray for one another and listen together for God's guidance. Encourage each other by sharing the ways that you applied the verses and new practices into the rhythm of your life.
13. Your facilitator will ask for volunteers to help with various group functions in session one. Be praying in advance about which role may fit your gifts and skills. Examples are:
 - **Music Coordinator:** 1-2 people who coordinate music each week as needed.
 - **Setup:** 1-2 people to prepare the room, make water available and arrange the "Savor the Flavor" table
 - **Cleanup:** 1-2 people who return the room to its original condition.
 - **Prayer Coordinator:** The person responsible for gathering joys and prayer requests and praying with the group. You may make a prayer request book available for participants to write in at any time. Items may be lifted up in prayer at the end of each session and/or emailed.
 - **Communications Coordinator:** 1-2 people who manage the communications in the group, via phone calls, e-mails, creating a Facebook page, etc.
 - **Question Follow-Up:** This person will contact Living Abundantly Ministries with questions that were not resolved within the group time or in some other way.
 - **Movement Coordinator:** 1-2 people responsible for leading movement each session by following the directions provided in the Participant Guide.
 - **Walk Coordinator:** The person responsible for coordinating a group walk after each session and/or between sessions.

Remember that everything said in the group is confidential, unless you have specific permission to share it outside the group.

Please go to go to www.LivingAbundantlyMinistries.org for frequently asked questions and other program resources such as: more healthy recipes added by staff and participants, how to share **Come Alive!** with your church and your community, inspiring Bible verses, and ideas for physical activity.