



Discipleship Group FAQ

Common Discipleship Group Questions

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What is a Discipleship Group?

Discipleship Groups help provide an essential environment for every believer to have intimate friendships, accountability, and, most importantly, a life deeply rooted in God's Word. As we strive to fulfill our God-given calling by following Jesus and making disciples every day, Discipleship Groups play a vital role in the process.

Discipleship Groups are gender-specific, closed groups of 3-5 believers who meet together weekly for the purpose of accelerated spiritual transformation. It is not evangelistic in its form or function, but in its fruit: It makes disciples who will then go on to make more disciples.

Why join a Discipleship Group?

According to Matthew 28:16-20, we believe disciple-making is a direct commandment from Jesus, not a suggestion. A recent study shows that only 17% - less than 1 in 5 - of churchgoers can describe what the Great Commission is.



Somewhere along the way, what was meant to be central became optional. What was meant to be clear became confusing. What was meant to be carried quietly was forgotten. Guess what? The mission hasn't changed!

Many congregations have discipleship classes or small groups (and those are GREAT), but any discipleship effort that is not replicating itself cannot truly be labeled as disciple-making. Most of what the modern church refers to as discipleship is, in fact, the transmission of information through teaching. Discipleship by its very nature is intimate and organic. It is not a class or a program, but a way of life modeled by Jesus Himself. Jesus did not take his disciples to a class or a program; He lived life with them. We believe true biblical discipleship must be intentional, transformational, and reproducible.

What is the difference between a Community Group and a Discipleship Group?

Make-Up of Community Groups: Composed of believers and non-believers

Make-Up of Discipleship Groups: Composed of believers

Size of Community Groups: Varies, but usually 10-20

Size of Discipleship Groups: 3-5 people maximum

Dynamics of Community Groups: Co-ed or gender-specific

Dynamics of Discipleship Groups: Gender specific

Purpose of Community Groups: Pursue and build biblical community together in order to follow Jesus. Bearing one another's burdens, praying, providing meals, and spending time together, etc.

Purpose of Discipleship Groups: Intentionally entering into someone's life to help them know Jesus through scripture and teaching them to obey his commands and to make disciples.

Time-Frame of Community Groups: A community that exists with the intention of launching new groups.



Time-Frame of Discipleship Groups: Smaller groups that exist for 12 months.

Expectations of Community Groups: Flexible expectations of members, largely dependent upon the Community Group as a whole.

Expectations of Discipleship Groups: High expectations of participants, upheld by covenant commitments and consistent accountability.

Leadership of Community Groups: One or more leaders who facilitate a biblical community where people can grow in their relationship with Jesus and each other.

Leadership of Discipleship Groups: One leader who helps participants grow in spiritual maturity and prepares them to lead future groups.

Outcome of Community Groups: Designed to grow and multiply biblical community.

Outcome of Discipleship Groups: Designed to replicate disciple-makers.

How do I join a Discipleship Group?

This is a common question, and the short answer is that you don't join a Discipleship Group; you start one. Becoming a member of someone else's discipleship group is by invitation only. However, you can place yourself in a biblical community like a Community Group, out of which Discipleship Groups often form.

For more information or help in this matter you can always contact Michael Miller, the Discipleship Pastor to help you get connected. Michael@grabillmc.org

How do I lead a Discipleship Group?

The only absolute requirement for leading a Discipleship Group is that you be intentionally pursuing Christ. You do not need to be a master teacher or have all of the answers. If you can say, "Follow me; I'm pursuing Christ," you have the tools you need to lead a Discipleship Group.



As a Discipleship Group leader, you set the tone for the group's atmosphere. You are not lecturing students; you are cultivating an intimate, accountable relationship with a few close friends.

What curriculum does a Discipleship Group use?

The focus is on engaging with and discussing the Bible. Every Discipleship Group will follow a Bible reading plan that we will provide.

How do I choose someone to be in my group?

The first step in establishing a formal disciple-making relationship is choosing disciples. Jesus, our example in selecting disciples, spent time in prayer before selecting men (Luke 6:12-16). The word "disciple" means learner. Begin by asking God to send you a group of men or women who have a desire to learn and grow.

Your Discipleship Group should consist of F.A.T. believers: Faithful, Available, and Teachable. A faithful person is dedicated, trustworthy, and committed to their values. Consider a potential disciple's faithfulness by observing other areas of their spiritual life, such as church attendance, involvement in Community Groups, or service within the church. A commitment to spiritual things determines faithfulness.

Do your best to discern an individual's availability by their willingness to meet with and invest in others. Does this person carve out time to listen, study, and learn from others? Are they accessible when called upon? Do they have a regular quiet time with God that consists of reading the Word and praying? Availability is measured by a willingness to serve God.

Not everybody who attends a Community Group is teachable. A teachable person has a desire to learn and apply what is taught. One who is teachable is open to correction. Recognize teachability by observing one's response to God's Word. For example, after hearing a sermon on prayer, do they start praying more regularly? Or after a lesson about the dangers of the tongue, does the person implement



changes in their speech? A teachable person not only listens to what is taught but also applies it to their life.

After discerning that an individual is faithful, available, and teachable, prayerfully approach him or her and ask, “Would you be interested in studying the Bible, memorizing Scripture, and praying together?” Many people are open to that. All you have to do is ask! We don’t recommend saying, “Would you like for me to disciple you?” as this question may come across in a derogatory manner. Keep in mind that men should disciple men, and women should disciple women.

How often should we meet?

Ideally, you should meet once a week or every other week for about an hour to an hour and a half. You can meet more frequently, but the most important thing is maintaining consistency on what you agree upon. It is important to remember that discipleship is about the relationship between you and your group members, not about checking a requirement box. Disciple-making is a way of life, **not a program**.

Is there an attendance requirement?

Yes, there is. The first time you meet with a potential group, explain the Discipleship Group Covenant with them. Some people may say after the initial meeting, “This isn’t really for me. I’m not interested.” That’s okay. Allow potential disciples to opt out of the group on the front end, after understanding the expectations outlined in the Discipleship Group Covenant.

What is a H.E.A.R. Journal?

A critical component of Discipleship Groups, the H.E.A.R. journaling method promotes reading the Bible with a life-transforming purpose. No longer will your focus be on checking off the boxes on your daily reading schedule; your purpose will instead be to read in order to understand and respond to God’s Word.

The acronym H.E.A.R. stands for Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond. Each of these four steps contributes to creating an atmosphere in which we can hear God



speak. After settling on a reading plan and establishing a time for studying God's Word, you will be ready to H.E.A.R. from God.

Is there a time I should ask someone to leave the Discipleship Group?

There are several reasons for asking someone to leave the group: they are not consistently showing up, they are not consistently completing assigned work and putting in effort, and they are living a lifestyle of blatant and unrepentant sin, etc.

Sometimes, these challenges can lead to a sense of complacency within the group. Missing meetings or forgetting to make journal entries can affect overall morale. It's essential to address these issues with care and understanding. Consider meeting privately with the individual to discuss their attitude and actions gently, and to remind them of the commitment made at the beginning of the discipleship journey.

Just as Jesus' relationship with His disciples was built on mutual commitment, our relationships within the group are also important and meaningful. While not everyone may be able to follow through on their commitments, addressing these concerns with compassion can help encourage growth and accountability.

What if I don't know the answer to a question?

There is no shame in not knowing all of the answers to every question. Simply confess that you may not have all the answers, but we will find them. Then do so before the next meeting. Ask your pastor or another spiritual leader for guidance on the answer. Never give the impression that you have all the answers.

It is less important to know answers than it is to know how to seek them. It is better to say, "I am not the smartest man/woman in the world because I know all the answers, but because I know where to find the answers." You may not have total recall when it comes to biblical history, theology, and doctrine, but with time, you can locate them!

How do I send out disciples to make disciples?



Always begin with the end in mind. Your group should meet for 12 months, and they should expect that final date from the very beginning. Some groups develop a closer bond, resulting in accelerated growth, while others take longer. We do not recommend meeting for longer than 12 months. Some group members will desire to leave the group and begin their own groups, but always remind them of the commitment to the original group. Encourage them to use that excitement and energy to start praying about who they will invite when the time comes.

Others, however, will want to remain in the comfort zone of the existing group. Some will not want to start another Discipleship Group because of the sweet fellowship and bonds formed within the current group. Remember, the goal is for the men and the women of the group to replicate their lives into someone else.