



Discipleship Group Participant F.A.Q.

What is a Discipleship Group?

A Discipleship Group is gender-specific closed group of 3 to 5 believers (including the leader) who meet together weekly for the purpose of accelerated spiritual transformation. A person joins the Discipleship Group by invitation only.

While Connection Groups exist for the purposes of community growth and fellowship, they have an underlying additional purpose (or they should have): evangelism. Connection Groups are designed to reach lost people by getting them involved in the group. A Discipleship Group, on the other hand, consists of believers who desire a deeper walk with Christ. 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.

The format of a Discipleship Group is not one of a teacher-student, but a roundtable discussion. In their book *The Invested Life*, Joel Rosenberg and T.E. Koshy suggest that a discipleship relationship is “more personal, more practical, and more powerful. A teacher shares information, while a discipler shares life; a teacher aims for the head, while a discipler aims for the heart; a teacher measures knowledge, while a discipler measures faith; a teacher is an authority, while a discipler is a servant; and a teacher says, ‘Listen to me,’ while a discipler says, ‘Follow me.’” This blueprint, sketched by Jesus Christ through His personal example, is how discipleship is accomplished in the lives of believers, and, ultimately, within the local church. When this plan is followed, those involved will participate in three dynamics that result in growth in their personal lives, as well as in the Kingdom: community, accountability, and multiplication.

How do I find a Discipleship Group?

Making disciples in a Discipleship Group is the third step on the Discipleship Pathway because it flows out of the Connection Groups. Connection Groups, which form out of the Worship

Gathering, are the “fishing ponds” for Discipleship Groups. As people form friendships and bonds in Connection Groups, handfuls of them will decide to take the next step and begin a discipleship journey together in a Discipleship Group.

If you would like to be in a Discipleship Group, generally the first step on the pathway is to join a Connection Group. If you are currently in a Connection Group and desire to be in a Discipleship Group, talk to your Connection Group leader.

Where do we meet?

You can meet anywhere that is convenient for all group members. Ideally, find a meeting place away from the church if you can. Restaurants, coffee shops, bookstores, diners, and homes are all good options. Meeting outside the church in the community encourages group members to publicize their faith, and understanding it is okay to read the Bible at a restaurant or pray in public.

How often does the Discipleship Group meet?

Discipleship Groups meet once every two weeks for about two – two and half hours. If schedules allow, meeting once a week for an hour to an hour and a half would be best. This schedule does not prohibit you from calling each other throughout the week or meeting for counsel when needed. It is important to remember that discipleship is about the relationship between you and the other group members, not about checking a requirement box. Disciple-making is a way of life, not a program.

Is there an attendance requirement?

Yes, and it is not negotiable. The first time you meet with your potential group, your facilitator will present a disciple-making covenant that outlines the expectations. Since you’re going to spend your lives together for the next six months, it is important all members are committed. Some people have said after the initial meeting, “Uh, this isn’t really for me. I’m not interested.” That’s okay. There is an allowance for potential disciples to opt out of the group on the front end after understanding the expectations spelled out in the disciple-making covenant. Discipleship Groups are for people who want to be discipled, people who have a desire to grow and learn. An unwillingness to commit might reveal that you may not be ready to be in a Discipleship Group. It’s the example Jesus set for us.

What do Discipleship Group meetings look like?

Discipleship Groups have the following structure:

Open with prayer.

Memorization: Quote your Scripture memory verses for the week(s).

H.E.A.R. (Highlight, Explain, Apply, Respond): Studying the Word of God together. Each person shares from their F260 HEAR journals from the week. The goal of studying the Bible is to apply the Word of God. Remember, knowledge without application is useless information.

Accountability: A time of intentional conversation by briefly sharing the highs and lows of the week. You can also share celebrations and praises.

- Here are some good application questions:
 - What are you hearing from God, and what are you doing about it?
 - What is God teaching you, and how is it affecting your life?
 - Is there a promise to claim?
 - Is there an action or attitude to avoid?
 - Is there a principle to apply?
- Ask each other questions and keep each other accountable. All accountability should be saturated with grace, not legalism. You can't expect what you don't inspect.

Prayer: Share prayer requests and close with prayer.

What's the goal?

Always begin with the end in mind. The group should meet for at least 6 months, and you should expect that final date from the very beginning. At the end you may want to remain in the comfort zone of the existing group because of the sweet fellowship and bonds formed.

However, the goal is to replicate your life as a disciple into someone else. At the end of your time together, you will be challenged to facilitate another group. If you are not ready to facilitate a group, the hope is that you would at least wish to join another Discipleship Group to continue the process of discipleship.