



# Discipleship Group

STARTER GUIDE

START YOUR DISCIPLESHIP GROUP STRONG



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And what you have heard from men in the presence of many witnesses,  
commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

**2 TIMOTHY 2:2**

# DISCIPLESHIP GROUP DEFINED

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

A Discipleship Group 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.

On the other hand, a Life Group exists to pursue an authentic community where members gather, grow, and develop disciple makers. The chart below shows a breakdown of the differences of both groups and why they are both important.

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A LIFE GROUP AND A DISCIPLESHIP GROUP

|            | LIFE GROUP                                                                      | DISCIPLESHIP GROUP                                                                                      |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Model      | Open group                                                                      | Closed group                                                                                            |
| Make-up    | Composed of believers and non-believers                                         | Composed of believers                                                                                   |
| Size       | Varies, but usually 10–20                                                       | 3–5 people maximum                                                                                      |
| Dynamic    | Co-ed or gender-specific                                                        | Gender specific                                                                                         |
| Purpose    | Pursue biblical community together in order to follow Jesus and make disciples. | Intentionally entering into someone’s life to help them know Jesus and teach them to obey His commands. |
| Time Frame | 24 months                                                                       | 12–18 months                                                                                            |

## **YOU ARE ABOUT TO ENTER AN EXCITING SEASON OF ACCELERATED SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION.**

The Discipleship Group environment encourages us to engage with God's Word and His people in a way most of us never have before. As His Spirit works in our lives, it creates a passion to help others experience the same thing.

The Discipleship Group Starter Guide is an interactive booklet, introducing each element of the group and helping your group start strong. We encourage each member of the group to have a booklet and allow it to help guide you through the first four weeks of meetings.

## **THIS RESOURCE WILL HELP YOUR GROUP HAVE FOUR IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS:**

### **WEEK 1 GOALS & EXPECTATIONS**

In your first meeting, you will talk about your goals and expectations for the group. This booklet will give you a couple of simple exercises to help you set spiritual goals for the upcoming season.

### **WEEK 2 TESTIMONIES & IMPACT**

Before you look forward, spend time getting to know the stories of those in your group. The trust and empathy you develop by hearing each other's stories will increase the impact this group will have on your life.

### **WEEK 3 HEAR JOURNALS & SCRIPTURE MEMORY**

In the third week, you will begin to get into the rhythm of the five weekly disciplines. You will learn what a HEAR Journal is and why Scripture memory is so important.

### **WEEK 4 ACCOUNTABILITY & PRAYER**

During the fourth week, you will continue your weekly rhythm through the disciplines while also introducing your second accountability question and explaining how you will pray for one another.

## ARE YOU READY TO START A DISCIPLESHIP GROUP, BUT AREN'T SURE WHERE TO START AND WHO TO INVITE?

If your Discipleship Group isn't formed yet and you need help identifying and inviting people into your group, follow these steps:

### STEP 1

Pray and ask God to help you identify who you can invite to be part of your Discipleship Group.

### STEP 2

Invite each person into your Discipleship Group with a simple, "Hey! I'm starting a discipleship group and would love for you to join!"

### STEP 3

Set your first meeting by deciding when and where you will meet for the upcoming season.

Once you have the 3–5 people in your Discipleship Group committed and you know your start date, give everyone a Starter Guide and have each person complete pp. 8–9 before your first meeting.

*Our team has created a leadership page with training videos, handouts, and more to help you start and lead your group well.*

*Before each meeting, there is a video to help you prepare.*



### LEADER PREPARATION

#### SCAN THE QR CODE

and watch the video to prepare for leading Week 1's lesson

## WEEK 1

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# GOALS & EXPECTATIONS

For today's meeting, we will discuss where we are going as a Discipleship Group, how we will get there, and what we will expect from each other.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As you get started, each person should answer these questions:

- Why did you join our Discipleship Group?
- What is one thing you hope you get out of our time together?

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

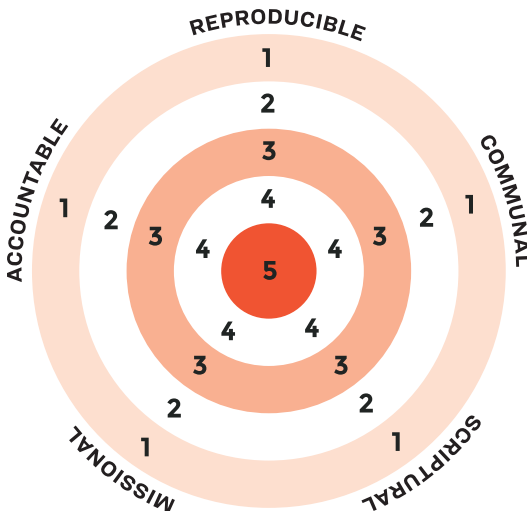
Discipleship Groups foster a season of accelerated spiritual transformation. As a highly relational and committed group of believers, Discipleship Group members challenge each other to follow Jesus more closely. Over the next season, this group is committing to help each other look more like Jesus in five key areas we refer to as MARCS.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

In the boxes below, rate between 1–5 how well each of these sentences describe your life today. (1 — This doesn't describe me at all; 5 — this definitely describes me.)

|  |                                                                                            |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>MISSIONAL</b><br>I am focused on God's mission to share the Gospel with others          |
|  | <b>ACCOUNTABLE</b><br>I am being held accountable for my spiritual growth and actions      |
|  | <b>REPRODUCIBLE</b><br>I can/should be easily copied or multiplied to create new disciples |
|  | <b>COMMUNAL</b><br>I have a strong, supportive community where we share life together      |
|  | <b>SCRIPTURAL</b><br>I base my life on the Bible                                           |

On the target below, circle the number you chose for each role of a disciple.  
When finished, discuss as a group.



- Which of the traits is closest to the bullseye? Why did you give it the score you did?
- Which of the traits is furthest from the bullseye? Why did you give it the score you did?
- When the Discipleship Group is over, what do you hope your target looks like?

## HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

## Read 1 Timothy 4:7-8

During the upcoming season, we will train in godliness by focusing on five weekly disciplines each time we meet.

- Bible Engagement
- HEAR Journaling
- Scripture Memory
- Accountability
- Prayer

Below is a picture of how the roles of the Disciple and the five Weekly Disciplines work together. This picture shows where the group is going and how we will get there.



### DEFINING MOMENTS

One of the most powerful things God gives each of us is our story. Your story is unique to you, and when you share it, your life can be a tremendous blessing and encouragement to others.

Maybe you've never taken time to think through how God has been active in the high points and hard times of your life. God has been writing a story through you, but have you ever connected it to God's mission?

To connect your story to God's mission, you should be able to share how God's story (the Gospel) has changed your story. Before your next Discipleship Group meeting, take time to reflect on the questions below and complete the exercise on page 11.

In the first section, you will identify Defining Moments in your life. A Defining Moment is an experience or season of time that has changed the trajectory of your life. Write down 10 High Points (times of success or joy) you can think of throughout your life. Then, write 10 Hard Times (times of failure or grief) you can think of throughout your life.

### DEFINING MOMENT REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What are my truly formative experiences in life — that is, what has made a lasting impact?
- Is there any common thread to my experiences?
- Why do I do what I do vocationally? Did one person or event significantly determine this?
- Who are my most meaningful friends?
- Who taught me how to live? How am I learning to live like Christ?
- How has God's grace been revealed in my life?
- How does my unique story bring God glory?
- What would my life be like without God?
- What may God be preparing me to do in my life?



#### LEADER PREPARATION

##### SCAN THE QR CODE

and watch the video to prepare for leading Week 2's lesson

DEFINING MOMENTS LONG LIST

TOP 10 HIGH POINTS

TOP 10 HARD TIMES

Once you have listed these moments, star the six most significant Defining Moments (high or hard) for your life.

TOP 6 DEFINING MOMENTS

Place your top six Defining Moments in chronological order in the boxes below.

1

2

3

4

5

6

- Think on each of these moments. Why did you choose these six? What impact did they have on your life?
- As you look at your story, how have you seen God active in the High Points and Hard Times?
- What is the biggest thing you have learned from this exercise?

## WEEK 2

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# TESTIMONIES & IMPACT

This week is all about getting to know one another's story. You may know each person's story, or think you do, but take the time to allow each person to share. This is a good exercise for every Christ follower to practice. Being able to share our stories helps us share the Gospel.

As each person shares, listen for how God has been at work in their story and what you are excited to learn from them in the season ahead.

### SHARE YOUR DEFINING MOMENTS

Once your group is settled in, transition to sharing your Defining Moments. Before the group starts sharing, identify how much time each person has to share. You want to be sensitive both to the person who is sharing and make sure the entire group gets to share.

Each member should share their top six Defining Moments of their life and explain why they chose those times. What impact did each of those moments have on their life? Each member should share what they learned from the exercise.

Either at the end of each person's story or after everyone has shared, take time to pray over each Discipleship Group member.

NOTES

Grid of dots for notes.



**LEADER PREPARATION**

**SCAN THE QR CODE**  
and watch the video to prepare for leading Week 3’s lesson

## WEEK 3

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# HEAR JOURNALS & SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Once all the elements are introduced, your group will follow a simple rhythm through the five weekly disciplines. Below is an example of a typical rhythm.

The pace and content of the conversation is set by the discernment of the leader. Times may vary depending on the personalities and number of people in the group.

Today, we will introduce HEAR Journals and Scripture memory. Spend the entirety of your time reading and discussing the sample HEAR Journal and Scripture memory process.

## EXAMPLE DISCIPLESHIP GROUP RHYTHM

### **Fellowship: 10 Minutes**

Spend the first ten minutes catching up. If you want, you can be more structured in this time and have each person share his or her “high” and “low” of the week.

### **Scripture Memory: 5–10 Minutes**

After everyone quotes the week’s memory verse, ask, “As you meditated on this verse, what stood out to you?” We want to hide God’s Word in our heart, not just be able to recite it.

### **Bible Reading & Hear Journals: 25–35 Minutes**

As you share HEAR Journals, a great question to ask is, “Which of your HEAR Journals stood out the most to you this week and what are you doing about it?”

### **Accountability: 10–25 Minutes**

In addition to our HEAR Journal question, choose a few accountability questions from page 20 to discuss with your group.

### **Prayer: 10 Minutes**

Finish the time by having each person share something specific and personal the group can pray for.

## WHAT IS A HEAR JOURNAL?

**A HEAR Journal is a simple way to help you read the Bible with the intention of applying it.**

By asking four simple questions, you can understand and apply any passage. In addition, journaling is a great discipline because it helps you retain three times more of what you read.

Every week, each member will share a HEAR Journal and discuss what we have heard from God's Word. There is not a set amount of HEAR Journals that you must do each week, but the goal with this discipline, as with all of the others, is to improve as time goes on. Consider how often you currently journal and try to do one more. So, if you have never journaled, just try to do a couple a week. If you journal occasionally, try to do three times a week. The hope is that as you get more comfortable with this discipline and experience its benefit, you will want to increase this number throughout the year.

**Take a look at the HEAR Journal example on the next page.  
As you read through your reading plan this week, create a HEAR Journal by using these four questions.**

### **H (HIGHLIGHT)**

What is a verse(s) that stood out in today's passage?

### **E (EXPLAIN)**

What is the author's intended meaning in the context of the passage?

### **A (APPLY)**

What is the principle to live by today?

### **R (RESPOND)**

How will I respond to the application in my relationships and/or situations this week?

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*When the group gets together next week, share your HEAR Journal, and discuss as a group how to best use this method.*

# SAMPLE HEAR JOURNAL

**DAILY READING:** Philippians 4

**DATE:** January 10

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## **H (HIGHLIGHT)**

“I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13

## **E (EXPLAIN)**

Paul was telling the church at Philippi that he has discovered the secret of contentment. No matter the situation in Paul’s life, he realized that Christ was all he needed, and Christ was the one who strengthened him to persevere through difficult times.

## **A (APPLY)**

In my life, I will experience many ups and downs.  
My contentment is not found in circumstances.  
Rather, it is based on my relationship with Jesus Christ. Only Jesus gives me the strength I need to be content in every circumstance of life.

## **R (RESPOND)**

Lord Jesus, please help me as I strive to be content in You. Through Your strength, I can make it through any situation I face.

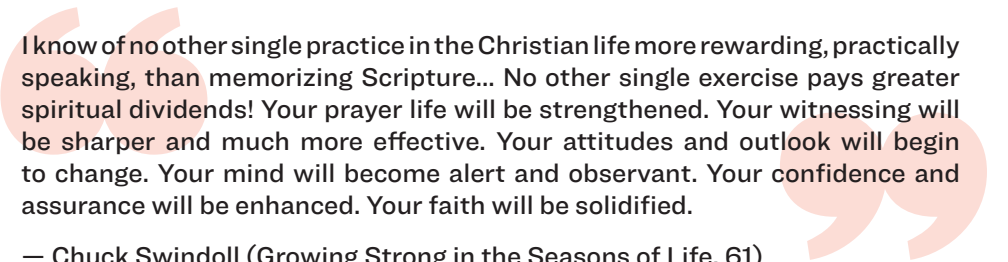
## HOW WILL WE DO SCRIPTURE MEMORY?

**Every week, we will memorize a verse together.**

This is a largely neglected discipline that has amazing benefit for the believer. The discipline's purpose is to hide God's Word in our heart (Psalm 119:11). For this reason, we do not want to only memorize verses, but to meditate on them as we do it. Once everyone recites the verse, the group will discuss what stood out to them as they meditated on it. (NOTE: The Reading Plans in the back of this booklet include weekly verses.)

**The more aligned our group is in this discipline, the more beneficial it will be.**

It is important to choose a Scripture memory plan together and stick to it. It will be helpful for everyone to memorize the same passages. Though it is not required to use the same translation, it benefits everyone when we are able to work as a team to say the same verse in the same translation.



I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture... No other single exercise pays greater spiritual dividends! Your prayer life will be strengthened. Your witnessing will be sharper and much more effective. Your attitudes and outlook will begin to change. Your mind will become alert and observant. Your confidence and assurance will be enhanced. Your faith will be solidified.

— Chuck Swindoll (Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life, 61)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What experience do you have with Scripture memory?
- How can you see Scripture memory being beneficial in your life?

## THIS WEEK

After choosing the memorization plan you will use, begin with the first verse this week. Additionally, keep working through your reading plan and complete a HEAR Journal.

NOTES

Grid of dots for notes.



**LEADER PREPARATION**

**SCAN THE QR CODE**  
and watch the video to prepare for leading Week 4’s lesson

# ACCOUNTABILITY & PRAYER

**As we continue to introduce elements of the Discipleship Group meeting, today we will focus on accountability and prayer.**

Below is the example Discipleship Group meeting flow. This is a helpful reminder of how what you learn today will be implemented in the future weeks.

## **Fellowship: 10 Minutes**

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## ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS

Even though the word "accountability" is not found in Scripture, the concept is seen everywhere. For example, consider Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:8-19), Samuel and Saul (1 Sam. 13:8-14), Nathan and David (2 Sam. 12:1-14), and Jesus and Peter (Matt. 16:21-23). In each of these cases, someone's actions are being held in check by God, a fellow worker, or a teacher. Chuck Swindoll described accountability as "opening one's life to a few carefully selected, trusted, loyal confidants who speak the truth—who have the right to examine, to question, to approve, and to give counsel."

Hence, accountability and praying for one another is paramount to our Discipleship Group model. Below you will find some helpful thoughts and questions to begin asking as you incorporate this element into your D-Group time each week.

### A Couple of Thoughts:

- These questions assume **trust**—build slowly if the group is new.
- Don't rush answers; silence often precedes honesty.
- Grace is the atmosphere; obedience is the aim.

### Core questions

Each week, we ask you to address these questions. It doesn't mean you have to ask them exactly, but covering these general categories will provide a foundation:

- Which of your HEAR Journals stood out the most to you this week and what are you doing about it?
- How have you fed your flesh? (sin struggles)
- How have you fed your soul? (time with Jesus)
- How have you fed others? (evangelism/discipleship)

# M

## MISSIONAL

- Who did you intentionally engage this week who does not follow Jesus? What was the context?
- Where did you sense God prompting you to speak or act—and how did you respond?
- How are your current rhythms (schedule, hobbies, work) helping or hindering mission?

# A

## ACCOUNTABLE

- What temptation felt strongest, and how did you respond in the moment?
- Did you experience victory this week that we should celebrate?
- Have you been fully honest with this group, or is there anything you're holding back?

# R

## REPRODUCIBLE

- Who are you intentionally investing in spiritually right now?
- Are you multiplying what you're receiving, or mostly consuming it?
- How am I leaving a legacy that matters?

# C

## COMMUNAL

- How did you experience biblical community this week outside of this meeting?
- Are there any relational tensions or unresolved conflicts you need to address?
- Which relationships am I currently investing in?

# S

## SCRIPTURAL

- What did God show you from Scripture that challenged or encouraged you?
- Where did Scripture shape your decisions, attitudes, or conversations?
- What is one passage or truth you're carrying with you into this coming week?

# DISCIPLESHIP GROUP EXPECTATIONS

## What do we expect?

- Devote myself fully to the Lord during this season as I prepare for a time of accelerated spiritual growth.
- Commit to this group and consider how I may best encourage and equip others in their relationship with Jesus.
- Meet regularly with my Discipleship Group (60–90 minutes). When unable, I will stay involved through sharing HEAR Journals and prayer requests.
- Commit to the five weekly disciplines: Bible Engagement, Scripture Memory, Accountability, Prayer, and HEAR Journaling.
- Contribute to a group atmosphere of confidentiality, honesty, and transparency.
- Pray every week for the other members of my Discipleship Group and those in my life who don't know Jesus.
- Pray and look for others in my life who I can invite into a new Discipleship Group when my current group decides to multiply.

---

NAME

DATE

LEADER RESOURCES

Scan the QR codes for additional resources and bible reading plans to help you as you lead your Discipleship Group.



LEADER  
RESOURCES



NT 260  
READING  
PLAN



OT 260  
READING  
PLAN



F-260  
READING  
PLAN





**LONG HOLLOW**  
CHURCH