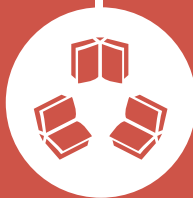


D-GROUPS



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A LIFE GROUP AND A D-GROUP

AND WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD
FROM ME IN THE PRESENCE OF
MANY WITNESSES, COMMIT TO
FAITHFUL MEN WHO WILL BE
ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS ALSO.

2 TIMOTHY 2:2

LIFE GROUP

D-GROUP

MODEL	Opengroup	Closed group
MAKE-UP	Composed of believers and non-believers	Composed of believers
SIZE	Size varies but usually 6-20 people	3-5 people maximum
DYNAMIC	Co-ed or gender-specific	Gender-specific
PURPOSE	<p>A community where people belong, believe, & become</p> <p>Belong: where people are welcomed and accepted</p> <p>Believe: where people encounter Jesus and His Word</p> <p>Become: where people become disciplinarians and group multipliers</p>	<p>Discipleship is intentionally equipping believers with the word of God through accountable relationships empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to replicate faithful followers of Christ.</p>
TIME FRAME	A community that exists for a period of time and then launches new groups	A smaller group that exists for 12-18 months
EXPECTATION OF MEMBERS	Flexible expectations of members, largely dependent on the Life Group as a whole	High expectation of D-Group participants, upheld by covenant commitments and consistent accountability
LEADERSHIP	2-4 leaders nurture spiritual growth within the group and develop future leaders	One leader who helps D-Group participants grow in spiritual maturity and prepares them to lead future groups
OUTCOME	Designed to grow and multiply biblical community	Designed to replicate disciple-makers

DEFINITIONS



DISCIPLEMAKING is intentionally entering into someone's life to help them know and follow Jesus (evangelism) and to teach them to obey His commands (discipleship).

EVANGELISM is sharing the Gospel (Good News) of Jesus Christ with someone to help them know and follow Jesus as Lord through repentance and faith.

DISCIPLESHIP is intentionally [equipping] believers with the Word of God through accountable relationships empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to replicate faithful followers of Christ.

WHAT IS A D-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 D-Group by invitation only.**

While Life Groups exist for the purposes of community growth and fellowship, they have an underlying additional purpose (or they should have): evangelism. Life Groups are designed to reach lost people by getting them involved in the group. A D-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 D-Group is not one of a teacher-student, but a round table 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.

WHY DISCIPLESHIP?

MAKING DISCIPLES: A COMMAND TO OBEY

As believers in Christ, we have been commanded to "Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

MAKING DISCIPLES: A WORK TO DO

God didn't just save us from something; He saved us for something. Paul wrote that we are His "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10). When we make disciples, we fulfill the purpose for which we were created and accomplish the good work God has planned for us to do.

MAKING DISCIPLES: A WORLD TO REACH

Malachi 1:11a says, "My name will be great among the nations, from the rising of the sun to its setting." A prerequisite to Jesus' return is that His disciples will share the Gospel with all the peoples of the world (Mark 13:10). We are to make Him known to all nations and this is best accomplished by making disciples who will make disciples (2 Timothy 2:2).

MAKING DISCIPLES: A LIFESTYLE TO MODEL

Jesus prayed for those who would be "with Him" and spent more time developing the twelve than He spent with the crowds (Mark 3:14). Jesus didn't just tell His followers to make disciples; He modeled discipleship for them. If devoting His life to the development of a few was important to Jesus, then it should be important to us! Jesus said, "My Father is glorified by this, that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples" (John 15:5).

Jesus came so that we might have abundant life (John 10:10). A part of the abundant life is the joy of sharing the love of Jesus with others and helping them to become fully devoted followers of Christ.

HOW DO I CHOOSE DISCIPLES?

As with everything in the discipleship process, we take our cues from Jesus Himself. Before He selected disciples, He spent time in prayer (Luke 6:12-16), so that's where we should begin, too. Remember that the word disciple means "learner," so begin by asking God to send you a group of men or women who have a desire to learn and grow.

When people approached Jesus about becoming His disciple, our Lord held a high standard. One man said, "I'll follow you, but let me go bury my father." The man's father hadn't died, of course; he was simply reaching for an excuse to postpone the kind of commitment that Jesus expected of him. Jesus responded with something the man would have understood to mean. "You can't do that. The Kingdom is too important."

So as you are praying about people to invite into your D-Group, look for the people whom Jesus pursued. We call these people of F.A.I.T.H. They should be Faithful, Available, Intentional, Teachable, and Hungry.

People who are faithful will persevere and endure through hardships. They are steadfast in their commitments and hold true in spite of circumstances. These men and women have proven themselves trustworthy.

Available people are always ready, willing, and able to do the work of God or to serve and minister to others.

Intentional people are not only ready, willing and able to do God's work, but they are actively searching out things to do. These are people who see opportunities for ministry and seize them for the glory of God.

Teachable people receive instruction with a glad heart, because they do not believe they've already arrived and know it all. Teachability may be the most important character quality of someone you will invest in.

Finally, your potential disciple should hunger and thirst for God. They pant for Him and will not be satisfied until they come to know Him in a deeper way.

Keep these qualities in mind as you pray for God to bring these people into your life.

HOW TO START A D-GROUP

- **Pray** about whom God would have you ask to be in your D-Group.
- **Approach** those individuals and invite them into your D-Group.
- **Covenant** with them to be committed and accountable to each other.
- **Invest** your life into your D-Group participants for the next 12-18 months.

WHAT DO D-GROUP MEETINGS LOOK LIKE?

Here are some elements that your weekly meetings can include:

- Open with prayer.
- Have a time of intentional conversation by briefly sharing the highs and lows of the week. You can also share celebrations and praises.
- Quote your Scripture memory verses for the week.
- Study the Word of God together by sharing 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.
 - ▶ **Good application questions to utilize in group discussion:**
 - 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?
 - ▶ **Good application questions for examining a text:**
 - What does this passage teach about God?
 - What does this passage teach about fallen humanity that requires the grace of God?
 - Is there a promise to claim?
 - Is there an action or attitude to avoid or embrace?
 - Is there a principle to apply?
- Spend a few moments asking questions and keeping each other accountable. You can't expect what you don't inspect. Remember, all accountability should be saturated with grace, not legalism.
- Share prayer requests and close with prayer.



SAMPLE H.E.A.R. JOURNAL ENTRY

READ: PHILIPPIANS 4:1 0-1 3

TITLE: SECRET OF CONTENTMENT

H (Highlight) - "I can do all things through Christ 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 must face.

THE M.A.R.C.S. OF A HEALTHY D-GROUP

How do I know if it's working? Here are five M.A.R.C.S. that you can use to assess whether or not the people in your group are growing in spiritual maturity:



MISSIONAL

D-Group participants should be living out the Gospel.



ACCOUNTABLE

You can't expect what you don't inspect.



REPRODUCIBLE

The discipleship process is complete when the mentee becomes the mentor.



COMMUNAL

Intentionally sharing your life is essential.



SCRIPTURAL

The Bible is the textbook.



DISCIPLE-MAKING COVENANT

I WILL COMMIT TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. I pledge myself fully to the Lord with the anticipation that I am entering a time of accelerated spiritual transformation.
2. I will meet with my D-Group for approximately one and one-half hours every week, unless providentially hindered.
3. I will complete all assignments on a weekly basis before my D-Group meeting, in order to contribute to the discussion.
4. I will contribute to an atmosphere of confidentiality, honesty, and transparency for the edification of others in the group as well as my own spiritual growth.
5. I will pray every week for the other men/women who are on the discipleship journey with me.
6. I will begin praying about replicating the discipleship process upon completion of this group.

Signed Mentee: _____

Signed Mentor: _____

Date: _____



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW MANY PEOPLE SHOULD BE IN A GROUP?

Because accountability works well in a smaller setting, the ideal size of a D-Group is 3 to 5 – you and 2 to 4 other people. We recommend that you do not have more than 5, and believe that a one-on-one relationship is not ideal (see Chapter 3 of Growing Up).

WHERE SHOULD WE MEET?

Find a meeting place away from the church. Restaurants, coffee shops, bookstores, diners, and homes are all good options. Meeting outside the church in the community encourages your group members to publicize their faith, teaching them it is okay to read the Bible at a restaurant or pray in public. Be sure to select a place that is convenient for all group members.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE MEET?

Ideally, you should meet once a week for about an hour to an hour and a half. You can meet more frequently, but it is important that you meet at least once a week. This schedule does not prohibit those you are discipling from calling you throughout the week or coming by for counsel when needed. It is important to remember that discipleship is about the relationship between you and your group members, not about checking a requirement box. Disciplemaking is a way of life, not a program.

IS THERE AN ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT?

Yes, and it is not negotiable. Since you will spend your lives together for the next twelve to eighteen months, commitment is necessary. Some people have said after the initial meeting, “Uh, this isn’t really for me. I’m not interested.” “That’s okay. I allow potential disciples to opt out of the group on the front

end after understanding the expectations of a D-Group. Remember, you are looking for people who want to be disciplined, people who have a desire to grow and learn. An unwillingness to commit reveals that they are not ready to be in a D-Group. It’s the example Jesus set for us.

WHO CAN LEAD A D-GROUP?

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

As a D-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. Joel Rosenberg and T.E. Koshy wrote in their book *The Invested Life* that the discipleship relationship is “more personal, more practical, and more powerful. A teacher shares information, 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.’”

HOW DO I CHALLENGE MY D-GROUP TO MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE?

Proverbs 25:11 says, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.” How many times has a Scripture come to mind when you needed just the right words in a situation? Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would bring to remembrance all that He said (John 14:26). Those passages of Scripture we have memorized will be brought to our memory at the right moment – but we must learn them. Group members will memorize Scripture if you hold them accountable through reciting verses to one another at every meeting. Chapter 8 of *Growing Up* contains a thorough explanation and a practical system for Scripture memorization.

SHOULD I DISCIPLE UNBELIEVERS?

The preferred method is a gathering of born-again believers seeking to grow in their faith. How can you determine if someone is saved or not? We recommend beginning every group by asking each person to share their testimony with the others. Next, ask them to explain the gospel. A great resource for anyone struggling with belief in Christ is Greg Gilbert’s book, *What is the Gospel?*

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 you will find them. Then do so before the next meeting. Ask your pastor or another spiritual leader to help you with 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 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!

WHEN DO I ASK SOMEONE TO LEAVE THE D-GROUP?

These are some reasons for asking someone to leave the group: they don't possess a teachable spirit, they are not faithful in attending meetings, they are not completing assigned work and putting in the kind of effort you require, they are living a lifestyle of blatant and unrepentant sin, etc. Teachability is an indispensable quality for growth. One situation where someone may be asked to leave is if he or she monopolizes the group discussion week after week. It will be obvious they want to demonstrate their superior knowledge of the Word rather than learn from interacting with others.

Additionally, laziness will breed complacency in the group. Missing meetings, refusing to memorize Scripture, failing to log HEAR entries, or sitting idly by during discussion times lowers the morale of the others in the group. This type of behavior must be addressed immediately. Meet with this individual privately to inquire about his or her attitude and actions. Remind him or her of the commitment made at the outset of the discipleship relationship. Like

Jesus' relationship with His disciples, ours is a serious relationship, as well: a relationship built upon a mutual commitment to Christ and each other. Tragically, some will not follow through with that commitment, forcing you to confront them about their unfaithfulness.

WHEN DO I SEND OUT DISCIPLES TO MAKE DISCIPLES?

Always begin with the end in mind. Your group should meet for 12 to 18 months, and they should expect that final date from the very beginning. Some groups develop a closer bond, which results in accelerated growth; others take longer. We do not recommend meeting for longer than 18 months. Some group members will desire to leave the group and begin their own groups. Others, however, will want to remain in the comfort zone of the existing group. Some will not want to start another D-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.

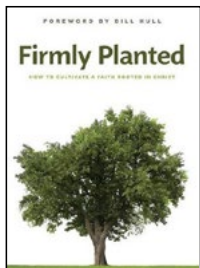
HOW DO I FIND A D-GROUP?

The D-Group is the third step on the Discipleship Pathway (Worship Gathering - Life Group - D-Group - Engage the World) because it flows out of the Life Group. Life Groups, which form out of the Worship Gathering, are the "fishing ponds" for D-Groups. As people form friendships and bonds in Life Groups, handfuls of them will decide to take the next step and begin a discipleship journey together in a D-Group.

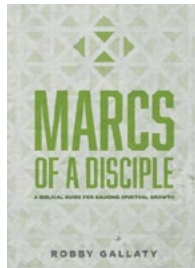




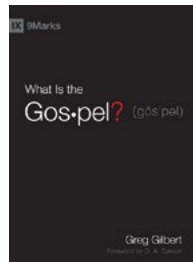
RESOURCES



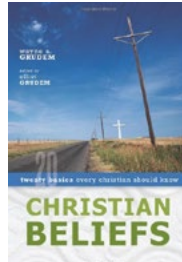
FIRMLY PLANTED
ROBBY GALLATY



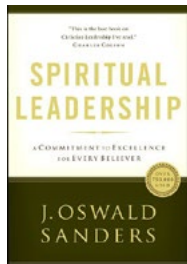
MARCS OF A DISCIPLE
ROBBY GALLATY



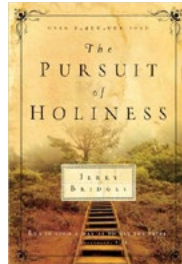
WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?
GREG GILBERT



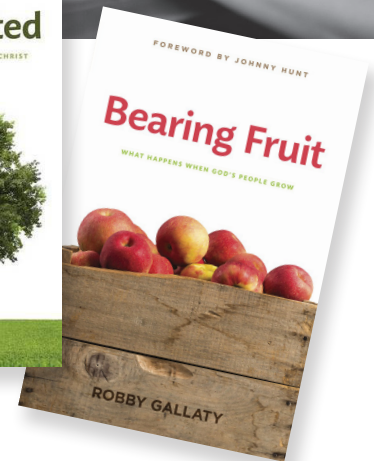
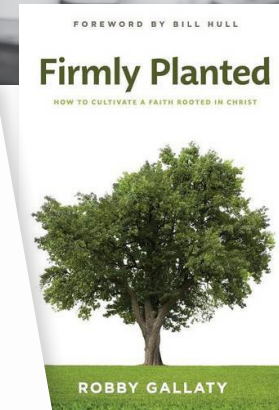
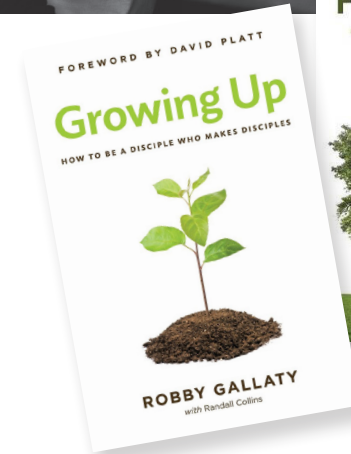
CHRISTIAN BELIEFS
WAYNE GRUDEM



SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP
J. OSWALD SANDERS



PURSUIT OF HOLINESS
JERRY BRIDGES



The Growing Up series consists of three books focused on core elements of the discipleship process. Growing Up, the first in the series, outlines what biblical discipleship looks like and helps readers understand the “why” and “how” of making disciples. Firmly planted, the second book in the series, provides a roadmap for spiritual maturity by bringing clarity on basic theological issues such as salvation and identity in Christ. The final book in the series, Bearing Fruit, helps disciples see the biblical fruit of the life of every mature disciple. Using the books over the course of the D-Group, The Growing Up series is a helpful tool to equip every believer to be a disciple who makes disciples.

KNOW GOD
through weekly *worship* and *teaching*

FIND COMMUNITY
in weekly *Life Group* gatherings



The
**DISCIPLESHIP
PATHWAY**

CHANGE THE WORLD
through *missions, evangelism, and volunteering*

MAKE DISCIPLES
in yearly *D-Groups* of 3-5



At GraceLife, our mission is simple: We want every person to **KNOW GOD, FIND COMMUNITY, MAKE DISCIPLES, and CHANGE THE WORLD.**

You may wonder what that looks like for you in a practical sense, so we put our mission into action in what we call "The Discipleship Pathway."

GRACELIFEFAMILY.ORG/PATHWAY

LEADERS, REGISTER YOUR D-GROUP TODAY!

GRACELIFEFAMILY.ORG/DGROUP

