

The Discipleship Group

Points to remember about the group studies and meetings

- This is a *commitment* to do the homework assignments and meetings for 26 weeks (six months). Everyone needs to get their own manual and supplemental books because each member in the group will need to underline and write out their own studies.
- It's important to establish and keep a steady, weekly schedule at the same location and time. Be prompt so the time of the others in the group will be respected.
- Pick people who are hungry for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom in the Word. People who are passionate for the Lord at their current level (that passion will increase exponentially as they progress through the books and assignments). Also, pick people you like and have a good chemistry with. It's a long commitment of time together so it helps to not be distracted by potential friction.
- Make your meeting place as central a location as possible where there is minimal distraction (cell i.e., phones and kids can be a distraction). Eating a meal and trying to fit in the study at the same time can distract and eat up your time to go over the material. Keep it to something simple like coffee, etc. (unless you want to make a meal part of your time together and extend your actual meeting time).
- The most effective time-frame for the group is approximately two hours.
- Ideally, do ten to fifteen minutes of the homework each day, rather than cram the night before.
- The homework assignments are a must. If someone wants to be a part of this journey, they must be committed to the work, and not just as a tag-a-long to listen in. The key to the group's success is that *all* participate in doing their homework so they'll have something to share from their homework at each meeting. If someone insists on not doing the homework, then it is best to ask them not to be in the group. They'll be clueless as to what you're talking about and disrupt with something else to talk about.
- Underline everything that stands out to you. These are the "aha!" moments the Holy Spirit will highlight to you. It's where your spirit connects with what's being said. These are the points you write in your areas provided for brief notes and/or the supplemental books that go with the weekly assignments.
- There are an average of *seven* tracks of weekly assignments. Do one of these tracks each day so you can take the time to consider and ponder what you're reading, looking for those Holy Spirit highlight (aha!) moments.
- The *first* weekly assignment track will be my introductory writings. These are meant to instill kingdom values, principles, discipleship thoughts, and inspiration to be like and think like a disciple who represents Jesus to the world.
- The *second* weekly assignment track will be reading from one chapter of a designated supplemental book that goes with each disciple manual (books displayed inside the back cover). These books have been carefully selected as the impacting tools and inspirational benchmarks you'll want to have on your bookshelf and read again. They're also books you'll recommend to others who need them in their arsenal.
- The *third* weekly assignment track will first be Psalm 119. It illustrates David's love for the scriptures he had access to as king. This is to illustrate to you, the disciple, the benefits that come from knowing the scriptures. I will show you how I have blocked and underlined the "aha" moments of scripture throughout my Bible. It is a proven way that causes your memory to better retain what you're reading, partly because you're actually reading to discover a "nugget of truth" directly related to your walk. Everyone in the group will have different nuggets, while some will pick the same verses you did. Most importantly, their sharing about why they picked their verse will teach you something you've never thought of or seen before. This makes each person's insight valuable to the group and the Holy Spirit uses it to give everyone an "aha" moment. It also validates the person who shares (even the most timid among you). After Psalm 119 is done, the Proverbs (instead of the Psalms) will become the *third* weekly track assignment (one chapter in the Proverbs each week), which is chock full of wisdom about life on all fronts.

- The *fourth* weekly assignment track will be a chapter in the gospels, beginning with Mark's gospel. By the time you've completed book four in the discipleship series, you will have read and marked all four gospels. Knowing the life of Christ, his kingdom values and teachings, his action among people, his compassion, his prayer life, his signs and wonders, his interaction with hypocrites and sinners, and most importantly the discovery of him as our King Messiah and the Lamb of God. Without the knowledge of these four gospels and Jesus' life, how can we become *His* disciples? He is our prototype, our model, our example of what a disciple is supposed to act like, believe like, and be like. As Paul said, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ."
- The *fifth* weekly assignment track will be a selected Psalm. As the Proverbs touches our mind and life habits, the Psalms addresses our soul and heart passions for God, as well as an insight into his nature and attributes.
- The *sixth* weekly assignment track will be a variety of studies ranging from spiritual disciplines, foundational truths, tools for study, word studies, and building blocks for interpreting scriptures effectively.
- The *seventh* weekly assignment track will be a selected devotional reading in the classic book, "My Utmost for His Highest" by Oswald Chambers. Oswald Chambers challenges and provokes us to not settle for mediocrity and provides tremendous insight to kingdom values.
- Each week is designed to build toward the next week, and the week thereafter until the entire book is completed. By the time you have finished as a group, the first book, you will have experienced measureable growth. The next book will build on the foundation of the first, and prepare you for book three's assignments. Each book builds on the foundation of the preceding books until the sixth book is completed.
- The most effective procedure for each group meeting:
 - open in prayer.
 - jump into the studies as soon as possible, don't over-fellowship or catch up on everyone at the beginning, wait until after the meeting for that. It is very easy to lose the first fifteen to thirty minutes.
 - start with the introduction and share briefly the most valuable thing you received from it. Go around the table (or room) and have each person add their insight. Having underlined the "aha" moment will help you go right to it.
 - after the *first* track of the introductory has been discussed, open the supplemental book and go over the most prominent highlights you've underlined and share your "aha" moments from the chapter. Each one in the group adds their insight, too. Do the same thing with the rest of the tracks.
 - When finished with sharing your insights on each track, ask for prayer requests and close out the meeting in prayer about the needs in the group and prayer about anything that the Holy Spirit highlighted during the meeting that needs to be prayed for the group.
 - If all the homework wasn't able to be covered due to the Holy Spirit's leading the group into a particular course of discussion sparked by the studies, then pick up on that week's track next week. It's ideal to finish each week, but not a law. The idea is that the Holy Spirit has full control in these groups. Be open for that.
 - Also, I have a cracker to break among ourselves, and give each member a small juice glass of grape juice to take communion before we part and go our ways. To remember the Lord's death, resurrection, and future coming (1 Corinthians 11:26).
- Things to avoid during the group meetings:
 - As mentioned earlier, don't eat up time fellowshiping at the beginning of your meetings. Jump into the assignments ASAP.
 - Don't** preach a message when it's your turn to share, just provide the insights you received. Be "*brief and amazing*" and leave time for the next member in the group so you all can have time to share. Remember, there are seven tracks of assignments with four voices to share on each one. So don't hog the meeting. As the facilitator, step in graciously at the finish of a thought by the one "preaching" by asking the next person to share their insights.
 - Don't** get off on a non-essential tangent to what's at hand. Stick with the material, it's designed to build something into your learning journey.
 - Don't** allow someone to hijack the meetings with their life issues. We all have them, but this is not the venue nor the place for a counseling session. It's a training session for growing in discipleship. If a life issue comes up (i.e., domestic, spiritual, emotional, or physical), then deal with that after the meeting if there's time, or schedule a different time and setting for prayer and counsel. If this becomes a chronic thing, weekly, advise the group member to take it up with their pastor or a counselor. This happened in a

discipleship group where an individual came every week with a life crisis and hijacked the meetings. Nothing got accomplished with the material and the group became discouraged eventually disbanded.

-Don't read large sections of the material in the books or chapters during the group session. They've all read it, just go with the highlights. If you spend too much time in one of the tracks, the rest will not get covered. Try to stay balanced and brief with each track so that you'll be able to cover the best of the best that each member in the group brings to the table.

-Don't stop the scheduled meeting if one person can't make it (if there's more than two of you). There's always the chance that something happens and someone can't make it. The absent person will just have to go to the next week's homework to share so the momentum will not be lost. We don't stop church service if some people can't make it. They just miss the dynamics of that specific meeting. It's part of what happens to keep the group going forward. Too many cancellations will cause a loss of progress, momentum, and morale in the group. Stick with it.

-Don't do these homework assignments like high school—that is, just enough to get by. This is not to impress anybody or pass a grade. There's no grading, no tests, no awards, and no diplomas. If you do the minimum, you'll get minimum results. This is for your growth and your ability to help disciple others. You'll get out of it how much you put into it. Remember, it's for the Lord and his kingdom and growing in intimacy with him. If you really want to grow, then be serious about this journey and the assignments. I suggest that you start each study time with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to show you something amazing and he will when you start looking for those nuggets you're going to get.

- Encourage the members in your group to be praying for potential disciples to recruit for their own group they'll facilitate. Ideally, by the time they begin Book Two, they'll have potential candidates lined up to start their own group (while they continue on in yours, going through the next Discipleship manual). This is where the real growth begins to take place for them. This is the purpose of this system—to reproduce ourselves by making other disciples. They won't have to prepare for those groups, either, because they have already done the homework and their notes are in front of them in their book. They've already been there, now they're taking their new recruits through it.
- In the back of each Book (in the six book series), there will be an addendum with charts, graphs, and other important reference tools to go back to when needed. All of these tools in the addendum are there to assist you as a discipler of others.
- Also in the back of each book is an index as a quick reference to the studies, themes and book references you've covered in your manuals.
- At the end of the 26th and final week, there's a list of all the things studied in the manual. You will be amazed at how much you've accomplished. It will be measurable evidence of an effort you made to grow in intimacy, understanding and knowledge of the Lord. It will also be evidence of a new lifestyle of discipleship you've inserted into your life. By the time you're done with Book One, you'll be excited and willing to start the next one, and the next one, and the next one until you've gone all the way. If you really give yourself to staying with this journey, your growth will be immeasurable and invaluable.
- Finally, it would be a good strategy to use some of these points to lay the ground rules for the meeting to keep the meetings flowing smoothly. Remember that after you arrive, exchange of greetings, chit-chat, and pulling out your material will eat up fifteen minutes of your two hours together. Let's do it!



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