

Women
AT OLIVE

D-Group
TRAINING

D-GROUPS EXPLAINED

What are D-Groups?

Discipleship groups are a gender specific, closed group of 3-5 believers that meet weekly for 12 months for spiritual transformation and community.

While small groups exist at Olive Baptist for the purpose of community growth and fellowship, they always have an underlying purpose: evangelism. Small groups on a Sunday morning are there to connect lost people to community and have a safe space to ask questions, a community to do life with, and a place for salvation.

While small groups do have their place, a D-Group; however, has the purpose of connecting 3-5 individuals who are Christ-followers and desire to grow deeper in their walk with Christ. It is not meant to be evangelistic in nature, but instead, make disciples who then go off and make disciples as well.

How do I find a D-Group?

Using D-Groups to make disciples is becoming a part of our DNA at Women at Olive. D-Groups are an outflow of being a believer, being involved in a small group, and in a serving capacity as a member of the church. As women form friendships and bonds through small groups or serving together on Sundays/Wednesdays, some will decide to go a little deeper with 3-5 and begin a discipleship journey together in a D-Group.

How do I facilitate a D-Group?

The number one requirement you have to have for facilitating a D-Group is salvation and faith in Christ alone. You don't have to be a theology guru, a teacher, or have all the answers, you aren't really even "teaching" in a D-Group. If you can say "let's do this together, because we are all pursuing Christ" then you can facilitate a D-Group.

As a facilitator of a D-Group you do set the tone and atmosphere for your group though, you are cultivating an open, intimate and accountable relationship with a few close friends.

How do I choose disciples?

You need to have members that are committed and are in agreement with the purpose of the discipleship groups. Remember, D-Groups do not need to be co-ed, women will invite women into their D-Groups.

F.A.I.T.H.

Replicate ministries has a really helpful acronym for deciding who should be considered for your discipleship group: F.A.I.T.H. A discipleship group that has maximum impact for the kingdom must have women full of F.A.I.T.H. Here's the breakdown:

Faithful

Your discipleship group is not a ploy to try to get someone to become more faithful to church. It is not an evangelistic tool to invite lost friends to. Obviously, we want people to be faithful in attendance to church, and we desire deeply for the lost to come to Christ, but that's not the point of a D-Group. Your discipleship group is designed to take individuals who are already disciples of Jesus, who desire to be formed into his image, and grow to make disciples of others. Some key questions to ask when considering who to invite would be: "Are they faithful to the weekly worship service?" "Are they part of a connection group?" and "Do they make an attempt to serve when given the opportunity?" You are looking for someone who takes their christian walk seriously and has shown a desire to grow.

Available

You might have found someone who is extremely faithful to church and looks like a prime candidate for your discipleship group, but they need to be available. Some people simply do not have time, or will not make time to be part of a discipleship group. This is very important to identify before you start. Not much is as detrimental to the life of a discipleship group than inconsistent attendees. If someone is not available, it is ok. Life has many seasons. Let them know that you would love to have them in the future if their schedule opens up to allow for it.

Intentional

Intentionality is not complicated, all it means is that they take the process in their life of being conformed to the image of Christ very seriously. Discipleship is not something that accidentally happens. Do they understand that this is a time of being intentional about growth as a disciple-making disciple or do they simply view it as a social hangout or an opportunity to debate scripture?

Teachable

Pastor Robby Gallaty says it this way: "you won't learn anything until you admit you don't know everything." This is so key! If someone is going to be a part of your discipleship group they must have a desire to learn, and a spirit that is open to learn from others. Having someone in your group who believes that they have arrived and just wants to flex their theological prowess will only frustrate you and the other members of the discipleship group. To be a disciple is to be a student of Christ. If someone is not ready to learn, they must not be considered as a candidate to your discipleship group.

Hungry

Spiritual apathy will destroy a discipleship group. Remember, a discipleship group is a means to the end of accomplishing God's mission for His church. Your members need to get comfortable being uncomfortable spiritually, it's in the uncomfortable places that we grow as believers.

Here is a friendly reminder that if you are going to lead a group of this nature, you must yourself possess all of these characteristics as a facilitator. Be warned: it may be harder than you think to find individuals possessing these characteristics, but it will be more than worth it. A discipleship group full of F.A.I.T.H. is a force to be reckoned with!

How many people should be in the group?

Because discipleship is better in small group settings (hello Jesus and his 3 closest disciples!), a disciple making group is best at 3-5 members. That means you and 2-4 other women. We do not recommend exceeding this number, and a one-on-one relationship is not ideal for the purpose of D-Groups.

Where should we meet?

Find a meeting place away from the church. Restaurants, coffee shops, bookstores, 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 to all group members.

How often should we meet?

Ideally you would meet once a week for an hour each time. Discipleship is about the relationships you are building between the facilitator and the group members and it's a way of life, not just a program.

How long should we meet?

Always meet with the end in mind, a discipleship group will meet for 12 months from your start date, so when you begin your group, you know when that end date is. The purpose when you get to that end date is to break off and replicate that D-Group. When you start, make sure every woman in your group understands that when the D-Group ends, it'll be time for each member to break off and create a new D-Group from there. One D-Group, after a year (with 5 people in it) will create 5 new D-Groups. As you are inviting women into your group, if someone is unwilling to break off and create their own, then you may not want to invite them into your group. The purpose is for discipleship, relationship, and replication.

D-GROUP SESSION LAYOUT

Your First D-Group Meeting:

Having a plan for your first group meeting will be extremely helpful for the group's health long-term.

Start by getting to know one another. Go around the group and ask a few simple questions to kickstart conversation:

1. *Info about the individual*
2. *When they came to know Christ*
3. *What excites them most about being part of this group*
4. *A couple of activities/hobbies they enjoy*
5. *What are they most passionate about?*

These questions will help individuals get to know each other on a few different levels and will be a great start to building community within the group.

Next, go through the group covenant together (you'll see this in a bit). This is important as some group members may have questions about specific parts of the covenant. It will also provide an intentional time to lay the groundwork for the commitment to the group.

After you have gone through the group covenant together, share the book you will be going through (Foundation). Then, take this opportunity to go to a passage and go through the HEAR method together. This will give each group member confidence that they can meditate and journal on God's Word throughout the next week in preparation for the next meeting.

Finally, ask each group member for one thing they are asking God to grow in them. Then, have each group member pray for one other member and their shared request. This will get your group off to a good start of caring for one another and intentionally praying for each other.

These intentional but straightforward steps will help your group get off to a strong start.

Sample Regular Group Meeting:

As you think through how each of your group meetings will take place, have two words in your mind: brief and replicable. If you keep the time brief, you will find that your group will be much more consistent. Sixty to ninety minutes at most is ideal for a D-Group meeting. And if you have a simple format and stick to it, the members of your group will feel like they can replicate a group of their own. Remember, simple and consistent is better than inconsistent and complex. With this in mind, here is a sample weekly group format. Feel free to switch the order, but this is a helpful way to think about framing your group meetings:

1. Review your week (10 minutes)

2. Bible Study (25-30 minutes)

Open in prayer. Go through the passage you are studying together. Everyone weighs in using the HEAR journal entry. Lean into life application from the text that the group can implement together.

3. Accountability (10-15 minutes)

Accountability can either be done together or broken up into pairs. First, use the questions on the accountability cards to help steer the discussion. Then, find actionable ways for the group members to hold each other accountable in the upcoming week.

4. Prayer (5-10 minutes)

Pray for group needs, pray in response to scripture passages, and for those the group is sharing the gospel with as they seek to live on mission.

**Another helpful alternative is to do accountability at the beginning of your group time, along with highs and lows. Following this with prayer is an excellent way to make sure you have plenty of time for accountability and prayer if you are feeling rushed doing it at the end.*

D-GROUP H.E.A.R. METHOD

H.E.A.R. Scripture Meditation Method

**Before reading the passage make sure to take a moment to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth to you. (Psalm 119:18)*

Highlight

After reading 1-2 chapters of scriptures, Highlight the verses that God spoke to you by writing the following:

- The chapter and verses that you are meditating on
- Write down a 1-3 word title. This will help you remember when you look back.

Explain

Engage with the text and wrestle with its meaning. Some possible questions to consider include:

- Who was the passage written to? Why was it written?
- How does it fit in with the surrounding verses?
- What may God be communicating through this passage?
- Who is God revealing Himself to be in this passage?

Apply

Consider how you may be able to apply the text in real life. Some possible questions to consider include:

- How can this passage help me?
- How can I apply this passage in my life today?
- How does this passage change the way I interact with others?
- What is God saying to me?

Respond

Respond to God based on how He spoke to you through His Word.

- Write out a prayer.
- Confess sin, praise God, or ask that the passage would become real in your life.
- Commit to a certain action.
- Who is God inviting me to be?

D-GROUP ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is a big part of why D-Groups are so effective. It's been found that when we "inspect what we expect" people will meet and exceed those expectations.

Accountability Questions:

- 1. Have you spent time in the Word and in prayer this week?*
- 2. Have you shared the gospel, shared your story, or taken intentional steps toward that end by building a relationship with an unbeliever this week?*
- 3. Have you spent quality time with your family this week? Have you been intentional with your spouse and/or children?*
- 4. Are you stewarding your finances well?*
- 5. Have you viewed, read, or listened to anything immoral this week?*
- 6. Have you had or have you entertained any lustful thoughts or tempting attitudes this week?*
- 7. Have you told any lies or half-truths to put yourself in a positive light before others?*
- 8. Have you participated in any divisive behavior that has caused relational strain or damage this week?*

D-GROUP COVENANT

I will commit to the following expectations:

I pledge myself fully to the Lord with the anticipation that I am entering a time of accelerated spiritual transformation.

I will meet with my D-Group for approximately one hour every week, unless providentially hindered.

I will complete all assignments on a weekly basis before my D-Group meeting, in order to contribute to the discussion.

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.

I will pray every week for the other women who are on the discipleship journey with me.

I will begin praying about replicating the discipleship process upon completion of this group.

Signed Disciple _____

Signed Facilitator _____

Date _____

“MARCS” OF A HEALTHY D-GROUP

Health of D-Group Members –the principles of a healthy D-Group are summed up in the acronym “MARCS”: *Missional, Accountable, Reproducible, Communal, and Scriptural.*

MISSIONAL – Healthy D-Groups find ways to meet regularly in places where they can form meaningful gospel relationships and they spur each other on toward sharing the gospel and making disciples.

ACCOUNTABLE – Healthy D-Groups foster authentic, honest, accountable relationships and hold members accountable to both their personal growth and to apply what they’re learning.

REPRODUCIBLE – Healthy D-Groups being with the end in mind. From the beginning their goal is to replicate the process at the end of the year by sending out each group member to start new D-Groups. This is possible because of the simple to replicate components of D-Groups.

COMMUNABLE – Healthy D-Groups are a community that practices the “one anothers” of scripture. They text throughout the week, meet weekly, and build Christ-centered friendships.

SCRIPTURAL – Healthy D-Groups have as their text book, the Bible. There is an epidemic of studies in the church that teach us a lot about the Word but don’t teach us how to engage the Word and hear from God on our own.

Health of D-Group Facilitator:

- 1.** *Are you abiding? (John 15v1-8) Are the rhythms of your life leading you into the power and presence of Jesus?*
- 2.** *Are you learning? (2 Timothy 2v15) Are you progressively understanding more of God’s character and His word?*
- 3.** *Are you serving? (Galatians 5v13) Are you using your time, resources, and gifts to serve others?*
- 4.** *Are you growing? (Galatians 5v22-24) Is the fruit of the Spirit becoming more apparent in your life?*
- 5.** *Are you going? (Mark 16v15) Are your abiding, learning, serving, and growing leading you into opportunities to share the Gospel?*
- 6.** *Are you resting? (Mark 6v31) Are you taking intentional time to rest and replenish your soul?*

D-GROUP RESOURCES

F-260 Bible Reading Plan, replicateministries.org/f260-bible-reading-plan/

Replicate Ministries, replicateministries.org

Growing Up: How to be a Disciple who Makes Disciples, by Robby Gallaty

Deep Discipleship, by J.T. English

Blue Letter Bible, “word studies throughout the Bible”, blueletterbible.org