

# ***D-Group*** ***Starter Guide***



***You're passionate about  
disciple-making and are  
ready and committed to  
leading a discipleship group!***

**However, one question remains.**





## ***HOW DO I DO THIS?***

While leading a group may sound great in theory, we often find the time awkward or walk away feeling deflated because we did not feel like it went well. This short and practical guide was written to answer your questions, to give you some tips on how to ideally run your group, and to inspire confidence that you can do this!

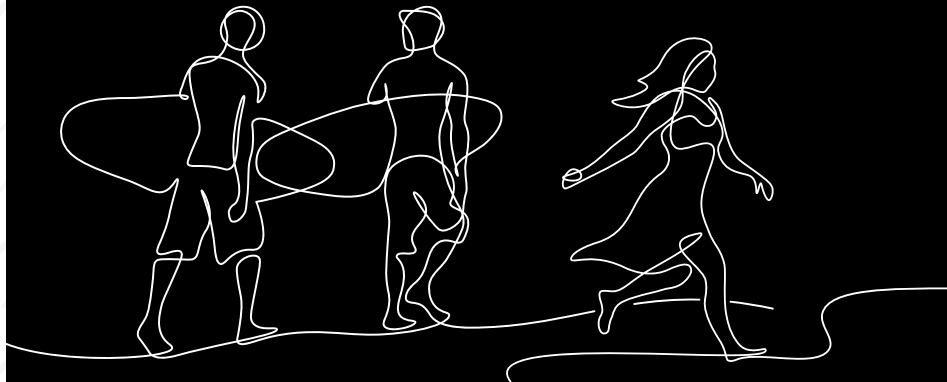
# FORMING YOUR GROUP

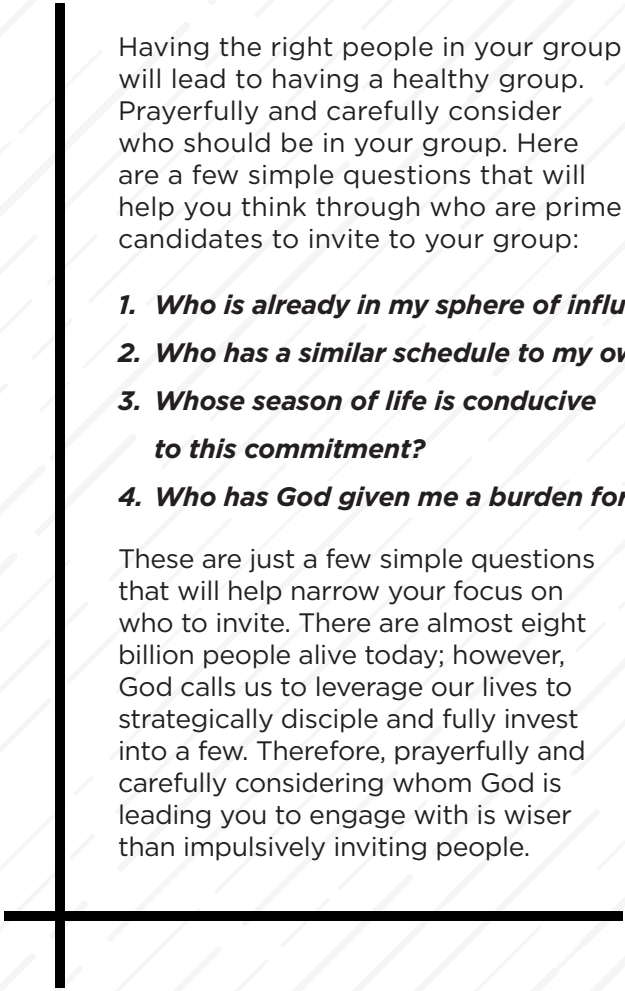
**EVERY GROUP HAS ONE THING**

**IN COMMON: PEOPLE**

The first step to getting your D-Group off the ground is having the right people be a part of it. *Replicate Ministries* has a helpful acronym for deciding who you should invite to be a part of your group: **F.A.I.T.H.**

**F.A.I.T.H.** — **Faithful** church attendees; **Available** scheduling-wise; **Intentional** about their growth; **Teachable** spirits; and **Hungry** for growth in their discipleship to Jesus.





Having the right people in your group will lead to having a healthy group. Prayerfully and carefully consider who should be in your group. Here are a few simple questions that will help you think through who are prime candidates to invite to your group:

- 1. Who is already in my sphere of influence?***
- 2. Who has a similar schedule to my own?***
- 3. Whose season of life is conducive to this commitment?***
- 4. Who has God given me a burden for?***

These are just a few simple questions that will help narrow your focus on who to invite. There are almost eight billion people alive today; however, God calls us to leverage our lives to strategically disciple and fully invest into a few. Therefore, prayerfully and carefully considering whom God is leading you to engage with is wiser than impulsively inviting people.



## ***GROUP COVENANT***

A helpful tool that you can leverage to raise the level of your group, to maintain commitment, and to cast a vision to your group members of the purpose of the group is called a **COVENANT**.

***A COVENANT IS A TREMENDOUS TOOL TO UTILIZE,  
NOT SOMETHING TO BE AFRAID OF IMPLEMENTING.***

A covenant is not intended to intimidate group members but to invite them into a commitment to each other and Jesus. A Covenant invites you to be part of a small, tight-knit community for approximately a year; deepens discipleship; strengthens their faith; and starts a life journey of being a disciple who makes disciples.

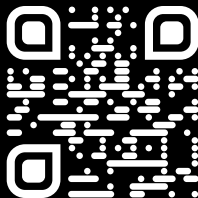
**IF SOMEONE IS NOT WILLING TO SIGN A  
COVENANT FOR YOUR GROUP, THAT IS OK!**

It may mean that they are currently not ready to commit to this kind of discipleship. Most have found that people are excited to be a part of a group that takes discipleship seriously enough to have a covenant to sign upon joining.

**A COVENANT WILL ALSO PAY DIVIDENDS FOR  
YOU IN THE FUTURE.**

A covenant leads to intentionality in a group. Each member says: *I am committed to my growth, I am committed to each person in this group, and I want to follow Jesus intentionally.* If a group member is not faithful or consistent, you graciously yet firmly point to your Covenant as a reminder.

**SEE A SAMPLE  
COVENANT HERE**



# **PILLARS OF A HEALTHY GROUP**

*As you begin to lead your group, there are a few cornerstones that you will want to make sure are taking place at each meeting...*





# **1** ACCOUNTABILITY

The group asks and holds each other accountable for questions surrounding spiritual disciplines, holiness, and mission. The group is also multiplying their joys and dividing their sorrows by celebrating wins and by helping each others through their struggles. (*Proverbs 27:17, James 5:16, 1 Corinthians 12:26-27, 1 Thessalonians 5:11*)

# **2** PRAYER

The group intentionally spends time each week in prayer together. Your prayer time is focused on praying for each other's needs, praying through Scripture, and praying for the unbelievers that the group will have the opportunity to reach. (*Colossians 1:9-12, Philippians 4:6, Colossians 4:2-4*)

# **3** SCRIPTURE

The group systematically reads and meditates through Scripture together. The HEAR Method is a recommended method for doing this. Each group member is an active participant in the discussion of their HEAR journal and is growing in their love and knowledge of Scripture. (*Psalms 1, 2 Timothy 3:14-17, Matthew 4:4, 1 Peter 2:2*)

# ***YOUR FIRST GROUP MEETING***

How you start your group meeting will determine the direction for the duration of the meeting. Having a plan for your first group meeting will be extremely helpful for the group's long-term health.

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

***1. ASK BASIC INFO ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL.***

***2. WHEN DID THEY COME TO KNOW CHRIST?***

***3. WHAT EXCITES THEM MOST ABOUT BEING A PART OF THIS GROUP?***

***4. WHAT ACTIVITIES/HOBBIES DO 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 are a great start to building community within the group.

Next, *go through the group covenant together.* This step is important as some group members may have questions about specific parts of the covenant. Reviewing the Covenant also provides an intentional time to lay the groundwork for the group to make the commitment.

After you have gone through the *Discipleship Group Covenant* together, reveal the book of the Bible that you will be studying alongside the group. Then, go to the chosen passage and use the HEAR method together as a group. 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 to share one thing that they are asking God to grow in them through being a part of this D-Group. 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 GROUP MEETING***

As you think through how each of your group meetings will take place, keep 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.* If you uphold a simple format and stick to it, the members of your group will feel more confident that they can replicate a group of their own. Remember, simple and consistent is better than inconsistent and complex.

***WITH THIS IN MIND, THE FOLLOWING PAGE HAS A SAMPLE “WEEKLY GROUP FORMAT.” FEEL FREE TO SWITCH THE ORDER, BUT THIS IS A HELPFUL WAY TO FRAME YOUR GROUP MEETINGS.***

## **ADDITIONAL OPTIONS**

- **Alternative Format:** *Accountability, Review Your Week, Prayer, Bible Study*—this can maximize time for prayer and accountability.
- Work a time of Scripture memory into your HEAR Journal Time.
- Read through an additional book outside of Scripture together. This could another 10-15 minutes at the end of the group.

## **1** REVIEW YOUR WEEK (*Highs-lows*) (10 Min)

## **2** BIBLE STUDY (25-30 Min)

Open in prayer. Go through the passage you are studying together. Go around and ask about their HEAR journal entry entry for the week. Lean into life application from the text that the group can implement together.

## **3** ACCOUNTABILITY (10-15 Min)

Accountability can either be done together or broken up into pairs. 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.

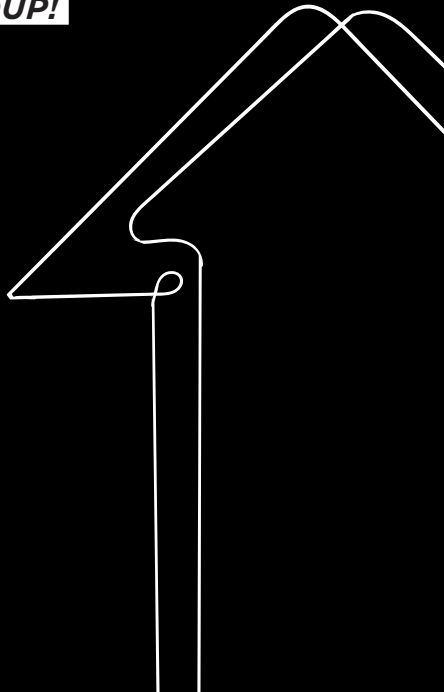
## **4** PRAYER (5-10 Min)

Pray for group's needs. Pray in response to scripture passages. Lastly, pray for those who the group will reach by sharing the gospel as they seek to live on mission.

# ***TAKE YOUR GROUP TO THE NEXT LEVEL***

***WITH THIS SIMPLE GROUNDWORK LAID  
OUT, YOU HAVE THE TOOLS IN HAND TO  
START LEADING YOUR GROUP!***

Remember, formats and systems are helpful, but nothing can take the place of the work of the Holy Spirit. Rely wholeheartedly on Him throughout this whole process. With that in mind, here are a few additional tips that will help you take your group to the next level.



- 1. Be consistent.***
- 2. Maintain contact outside of the group.***
- 3. Pray intentionally for the members in your group.***
- 4. Partner intentionally on mission.***
- 5. Empower group members.***
- 6. Meet at a strategic proclamation point.***

# ***TIPS EXPLAINED***

## **1** **BE CONSISTENT**

Meet with each other, hold each other accountable, read Scripture together, and pray together—rinse and repeat! Faithfully encourage the basics in your group. God can work supernaturally through your faithfulness to meet consistently with your group. Take a couple of weeks off throughout the year because of holidays or other circumstances, but stay consistent with keeping your group meeting.

## **2** **MAINTAIN CONTACT OUTSIDE OF THE GROUP**

*Live life together!* Share meal times, get involved with activities together, have a group chat, and keep in touch! Discipleship cannot occur just in a group meeting; relationships will build over time. The “Twelve” App is a helpful resource to hold each other accountable and share what each person learns from the Scriptures.

## **3** **PRAY INTENTIONALLY FOR THE MEMBERS IN YOUR GROUP**

Take time each day to intentionally pray for a different member in your group. Text them and let them know that you are praying.



## **4** *PARTNER INTENTIONALLY ON A MISSION*

Groups who live on mission together, grow together! Think through how you can evangelize to others, bless a missionary, care for the needs of others in your church, or volunteer somewhere as a group. There are many ways your group can live on a Gospel mission together; pick one and do it! Growth and community will deepen as you live on mission together.

## **5** *EMPOWER GROUP MEMBERS*

Remember the goal with a D-Group is the multiplication of disciple-making disciples. To empower the others in your group occasionally hand over leading a group meeting to someone within your group. Take time to pour into those and develop each of your group members into future D-Group leaders!

## **6** *MEET AT A STRATEGIC PROCLAMATION POINT*

Choose a visible spot in the community to hold your meetings. This could be a coffee shop, a restaurant, a park, or anywhere you choose. The goal would be to be at the same place, at the same time praying for opportunities for which to pray, to bless, and to proclaim the Gospel to unbelievers. Meeting at the same location for a year in the community is likely to open amazing missional opportunities!

# FAQs

## **1) HOW OFTEN SHOULD MY GROUP MEET?**

We recommend meeting weekly or bi-weekly (every other week). Weekly is ideal because the consistency and the regularity are higher. However, bi-weekly is a good option as well because bi-weekly meetings can be longer than the weekly meetings allowing more time for the group members to spend and grow together.

## **2) AT WHAT PACE SHOULD I GO THROUGH SCRIPTURE?**

We recommend tackling a chapter a week together as you work through a book of the Bible together. Pace can differ; nevertheless, a chapter a week is a good baseline as it allows for good meditation while not being overwhelming. However, challenge your group members to read and study Scripture outside of just the passage for the group. Some groups choose to go through a Scripture reading plan together—this is another helpful alternative.

### 3) COULD MY D-GROUP BE CO-ED?

Your D-Group should consist of members of the same gender. This setup allows for unique accountability in ways that aren't possible in other settings.

### 4) WHAT ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS IF MY GROUP WANTS TO GO THROUGH A BOOK IN ADDITION TO THE SCRIPTURE WE ARE STUDYING TOGETHER?

While there are hundreds of other great options, but this is an excellent place to start:

- ***The Master Plan of Evangelism*** by Robert Coleman
- ***Rediscovering Discipleship*** by Robby Gallaty
- ***Deep Discipleship*** by J.T. English
- ***Disciple Her*** by Kandi Gallaty
- ***Habits of Grace*** by David Mathis
- ***Disciplines of a Godly Man*** by R. Kent Hughes
- ***Disciples of a Godly Woman*** by Barbara Hughes
- ***Celebration of Discipline*** by Richard Foster
- ***The Cost of Discipleship*** by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- ***Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus*** by Mark Dever

# FAQs

## **5) HOW DO I BUILD UP THE OTHER GROUP MEMBERS TO BE FUTURE GROUP LEADERS?**

Give them opportunities to lead the discussion; have one-on-one talks; ensure them that they can do it; and make sure to be available to answer questions and equip them. Most of all, pray intentionally and consistently for the Holy Spirit to work deeply in their lives. We will also have periodic training opportunities for those who wish to sharpen their disciple-making skills. Point them to those as they come up.

## **6) WHAT IS A MEANINGFUL WAY TO END MY GROUP?**

*Make it memorable for the group members!* Have meal times together, go on a trip together, or do an activity together. Make it meaningful and official to launch them from your group into their disciple-making journey! A helpful way to end a group meeting is to have everyone affirm each other's gifts and pray for God to use their gifts in the church and in the world.

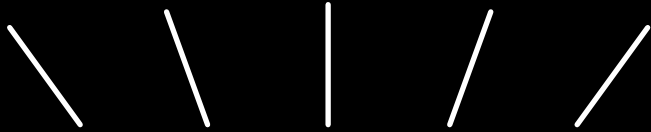
## **7) HOW LONG SHOULD MY GROUP MEET?**

***Nine-to-twelve months is the recommended amount of time.*** This allows for relationships to deepen and time for God to work in lives while also being brief enough to keep an end date for multiplication in mind. There is room here to take it longer if that is what you feel the Lord is leading. However, it is best practice to set an end date that you clearly communicate to the group before you even begin.

## **8) WHAT ARE SOME HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR LEADING A D-GROUP?**

Some helpful resources for you as the leader among many others are “The Bible Recap,” “Blue Letter Bible,” “Christ-Centered Exposition Series,” “NIV Application Commentary,” “Got Questions.org,” “Bible Gateway,” “Read Scripture App,” “The Gospel Coalition,” “Austin Precept,” and “The Matthew Henry Commentary.”

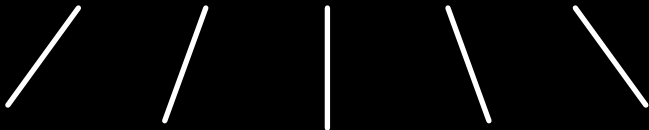
In addition, a few helpful apps that are good for accountability, prayer and scripture memory are the “You-version” app, the “Bible Memory” app, the “Echo Prayer” app, and the “Twelve” app. There are many other great resources, but these will be a good starting place!



**REMEMBER 1 CORINTHIANS 3:7-8**

*“So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor.”*

You will face moments of discouragement and celebration; nevertheless, remember that *God* gives the increase for your group! He will use your simple obedience to produce eternal fruit for His kingdom!



***May God work powerfully in  
and through you as you work  
to make disciples for His glory!***



