

Discipleship Groups (D-Groups)
First Baptist Church of Medina
An Information Packet

¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20

It is awesome that you are interested in becoming a true disciple of Jesus. Joining and committing to a discipleship group will give you a great start on that exciting journey. This will likely be more intense, focused study and transparency than what you have experienced in your walk with Christ. Know that it is worth it!

Understand from the start that what God does in you through this experience was never meant to stop with you. Jesus' last command is to be your and every other Christian's first priority. You and I are made into disciples for the purpose of making more disciples. This packet will give you an idea of what to expect as you jump in.

One note of caution - Participation in this will put a target on your back. Satan is always going to take notice of those being intentionally obedient to God's Word. Always remember - Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7

I am excited for what God is going to do in and through you on this journey.

Grace and peace,

Steve Lytle
Discipleship Pastor, First Baptist Church Medina
John 3:17 | Romans 5:6-8

What is Discipleship?

A disciple is fundamentally a learner or pupil. That makes discipleship the process of teaching a learner or a pupil. In the context of being a disciple of Jesus, discipleship is teaching a learner or pupil how to follow Jesus.

To understand more of the Jewish understanding of discipleship, read:

<https://bible.org/article/being-first-century-disciple>

What is a D-Group?

A D-Group is a closed group consisting of 3-5 believers of the same gender who for a certain period of time (at least 52 weeks) agree meet together to pray, study the Bible (see “Content for Discipleship” below), memorize parts of it and be transparent with each other about their faults (See “Transparency Questions” below) all for the purpose of fulfilling the mission Jesus left us with - be disciples of His who make more disciples. It is not evangelistic in its form or function, but in its fruit as it makes disciples, who then make disciples. It is the shift from a lecture atmosphere with one teacher (typical church service) to an intimate, transparent relationship with a handful of like-minded people. This blueprint is sketched by Jesus Christ.

Who can be in a D-Group?

To be part of a d-group, it goes without saying that each group member must already be a believer. However, it does not matter if a person is a new or a seasoned Christian. Groups are gender specific (all guys or all girls) and should exceed no more than 5 individuals (including the discipler). Though 1 on 1 discipleship is an option, it is not preferred. The smallest a group should be is 3 members including the discipler.

What is the content for D-Groups?

There are a ton of discipleship materials out there. However, it has to be remembered that the early church made disciples before all of these materials existed. Truly all that we need is what the early church needed - God’s Word. Currently we are utilizing the F-260 Bible reading plan from Replicate.org. You can find this at firstmedina.org/discipleship under “Bible Reading Plan and Memory Verses”. The reading plan is set up for reading and journaling 5 days a week. Memory verses are set up in such a way that a new verse or passage is being memorized every 2 weeks. The verses are intentionally focused on our identity in Christ as believers as knowing and understanding *who* and *whose* we are as well as how glorious those truths are is vital.

How should we go about studying?

Reading and journaling comprise our study of the Bible. Journaling is guided by the SOAP method. SOAP stands for Scripture, Observations, Application, Prayer. A further explanation is given at firstmedina.org/discipleship. Click on “S.O.A.P. Journal Reading Method”.

- Note - It is helpful to have a Study Bible to aid in study, especially to understand the background of a book of the Bible before reading it. In fact, it should be a regular practice to study the background of a book before reading it. For this purpose, if no Study Bible is available (ie. The ESV Study Bible), go to firstmedina.org/discipleship.

Under “Old Testament Survey” and “New Testament Survey”, backgrounds for each book of the Bible can be found.

Where do we meet?

Groups should meet in a public setting, away from the church building or someone’s home - ie. restaurant, coffee shop, library, etc.

What is the duration of a meeting?

The typical D-Group meeting duration is 1.5 hours. However, this can vary.

What do I need to bring to a meeting?

To be prepared for a D-Group meeting - one should bring their completed SOAP Journal entries, a pen, their Bible, a prayer request and money for coffee/food (if needed, based on where you meet).

What does a D-Group Meeting look like?

Once you and your D-Group find a place that you can consistently meet, here is what a typical meeting will look like:

1. Scripture Memory Check
2. Prayer
3. Sharing of SOAP Journal Entries
4. Transparency Questions
 - Have you spent time in the Word and prayer this week?
 - Have you proclaimed the gospel or your testimony to an unbeliever this week?
 - Have you spent quality time with your family this week?
 - Have you had any lustful thoughts?
 - Have you viewed anything immoral this week?
 - Have you told any self-promoting lies this week
 - Have you participated in anything unethical this week?
 - Have you lied about any of your answers?
5. Prayer

Is there a requirement outside of the formal D-Group meeting?

The answer to the question is two-fold:

1. A discipleship group is not meant to simply meet formally once a week, but should there should form a bond within the group members that results in doing things together, outside the formal meeting time - ie. communication, serve the community, participate in evangelism, share meals, help with house projects, etc.
2. Being a disciple of Jesus means that you closely follow His teachings and life. One cannot become a disciple simply by knowing information but having that information move the disciple to action: (The list below is not exhaustive)
 - Get baptized

- Proclaiming your testimony/the Gospel to an unbeliever
- Make church gathering a non-negotiable
- Right broken relationship(s)/forgive anyone you have anything against
- Solitude/Unplugging
- Fasting
- Serving without the expectation of gaining anything in return
 - Not only in the church but in your family and the community
 - Not just the token time, but making this a consistent action done in love
- Submission to authority
- Personal Reflection
- Worshipping - Privately and Publicly
- Risk for the Gospel
- Giving back to God what He has allowed you to steward - time, talent, treasure

What are the expectations?

See the "Discipleship Group Agreement" later in the packet.

Discipleship Group Agreement

To be read, signed and turned in to your group leader.

- I pledge myself fully to the Lord with the anticipation that I am entering a time of accelerated spiritual formation
- I will meet with my D-Group every week, unless providentially hindered - I understand this attendance requirement is crucial
- I will complete all reading, journal entries and memorization on a weekly basis before my D-Group meeting, in order to contribute to the discussion
- I will contribute to an environment 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 men/women who are on the discipleship journey with me
- For the edification of others in the group as well as my own spiritual growth, I will make every attempt to participate in what happens outside of formal D-Group meetings
- I will begin now praying about replicating this discipleship process with others upon the completion of this group
- I will make it a practice to be in church every Sunday

Signature: _____

Date: _____

S.O.A.P. Journal Bible Reading Method

As you read scripture, write down what God is showing you in the following categories.

S - Scripture

- Write out a verse or passage that stands out to you

O - Observation

- Establish the context - Who is the author?, Who is the author writing to?, Why is the author writing?
- Write what the verse or passage says in context - What comes before the verse or passage, What come after the verses or passage, Note repetition of words, phrases, Cause-and-effect/*ifs* and *thens*, Questions and answers, Comparisons and contrasts, Bring to mind other verses/passages in Scripture (Cross Referencing), Themes, Key phrases in an effort to interpret what is being communicated
- What does this say about God?
- What does this passage say about Jesus?

A - Application

- How does this passage apply to you?
 - Is there a sin to forsake?
 - Is there a promise to claim?
 - Is there an example to follow?
 - Is there a command to obey?
 - Is there something to be thankful for?
 - Is there something to share with others?

P - Prayer

- Write out a prayer to God about what He has shown you
- Pray the scripture over your life, others, and your prayer list