

**Discipleship Group Member
First Baptist Church of Medina**

What it looks like to be “Discipled”

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 but the intimate, life filled relationship with Jesus that you can develop makes it all 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 Christians 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 into that endeavor.

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. Please contact me at First Baptist Church of Medina - Steve.lytle@firstmedina.org | 330-725-5853 x105 if you have any questions.

Grace and peace,

Steve Lytle
Discipleship Pastor, First Baptist Church Medina
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 Christians (people who have decided to follow Jesus) of the same gender who for a period of time (at least 52 weeks) agree to meet together to pray, study the Bible (see “Content for Discipleship” below), memorize scripture 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, each group member must be someone who has already decided to follow Jesus. 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 a modified version of the F-260 Bible reading plan from Replicate.org. You can find this at firstmedina.org/discipleship. 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 4 weeks.

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”.

SOAP Journaling has two primary functions:

1. Teach personal study of the Bible

Many times Christians think that they have to have a Bible degree, own or consult commentaries and know Greek or Hebrew to be able to study the Bible. Although

each one of those aforementioned things are helpful in studying the Bible and are good gifts God has given us today, they are not absolutely necessary. As Christians we have the Holy Spirit, who is the best teacher (1 John 2:27). As well, God gave us a mind that we are to love him with (Matthew 22:37) which includes exercising it in the understanding of God's Word. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, as we exercise our minds by employing the simple outline of Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer to scripture, any Christian can study the Bible.

2. Biblical Meditation

Meditation is a concept that typically brings to mind a person with their legs crossed, eyes closed and each hand out with their thumbs touching their index fingers humming "mmmmmmmm...". The idea is to empty your mind to achieve a level of peace or something greater. That type of meditation finds its origin in eastern religions. The Bible speaks of meditation as well (Psalm 1:1-2, 77:11-13 are a couple examples) but it is very different. Biblical meditation is about quieting our hearts with scripture in pursuit of a deeper intimacy with Jesus. It is not about emptying one's mind but filling it with and considering deeply the truths of God's Word and God Himself. Biblical Meditation is something that has been for the most part lost in our day and time. SOAP journaling moves Christians toward not just reading scripture to check Bible Reading off their list for the day but Biblical meditation.

Note on "How should we go about studying?"

- 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

*Other potential questions include questions like:

- For men: Have you loved your wife well this past week?
- For women: Have you respected your husband well this past week?
- How is time in God's Word affecting your marriage? Parenting?
- How have you served others this past week?
- How have you loved the unlovable this week?
- Is there anything you are holding on to that you need to forgive and reconcile with the offender?
- Have you damaged your testimony by what you said or did this week?
- Is there anything that needs to be forgive that you are holding on to?

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
 - Servangelism
 - Proclaiming your testimony/the Gospel to an unbeliever
 - 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
- Make church gathering a non-negotiable
- Right broken relationship(s)/forgive anyone you have anything against
- Solitude/Unplugging
- Fasting
- 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”.

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: _____