



Discipleship Groups at Hope

Disciple: A disciple is someone who follows Jesus, is changed by Jesus and joins Jesus on His mission of love.

Purpose: The purpose of Discipleship Groups is to help people grow to become more like Christ in the context of friendship and fellowship. These groups are open so they can grow and multiply in line with the following core values.

Core Values:

- **A Culture of Invitation:** We want everyone to have an opportunity to connect and grow in a Discipleship Group so all groups are open to new people at all times. Group members are encouraged to always be thinking about who they can invite to join their group. When the group grows to approximately 12 people, it will branch into two smaller groups. The goal is to welcome everyone who is interested in joining a group while also keeping groups small enough for meaningful discussion.
- **Branching:** We ask leaders and groups members alike to work toward growing and branching the groups as a way of multiplying discipleship opportunities for as many people as possible. A group that grows and branches is cause for great celebration!
- **Multiply Leaders:** Every group has an apprentice leader(s) who is becoming equipped to branch off and lead a new group as soon as the need arises.
- **Celebration:** As we come together in groups to mature in our relationship with God, we will celebrate all that God is doing to grow us and to multiply his disciples! We will celebrate when:
 1. a person grows to become more like Jesus
 2. an apprentice is identified and trained to lead
 3. a group grows as a result of invitations and
 4. an existing group branches to form a new group

How are Discipleship Groups different than other Small Groups?

We have a variety of excellent Small Groups at Hope, which are great places to connect with others while studying a certain topic, pursuing a hobby or sharing a meal! Discipleship Groups are the next step for disciples of Jesus looking to unite more deeply with him and to grow and mature in their relationship with Jesus.

Group Guidelines: These guidelines are essential for a healthy, safe and loving environment in which everyone can grow as disciples of Jesus.

- Confidentiality- what is said in the group stays in the group.
- Listening- be attentive and try to avoid thinking about what you are going to say next.
- Pause- allow pause in conversation after someone shares.
- Silence- allow silence as it provides time to think.
- No "Cross Talk"- Do not have side conversations while someone is talking.
- No Fixing- We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

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- No Rescuing- Resist the temptation to give immediate condolences when someone is sharing something deeply personal.
- Sharing- Be sensitive about the amount of time you talk.
- Be self-aware- Be aware of how you personally affect the environment.
- “I” Statements- It’s easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to focus on your own journey and only speak for yourself. Try to use “I” instead of “them”, “the church”, “they”, “us”, “we”, “you”, etc.
- Conflict- We will commit to resolve conflict biblically. The following are a few key Scriptures in this regard. If someone sins against you: Matt 18:15-20, Restoring someone in sin: Gal 6:1-5, Forgive a sinner: Col 3:12-13 Reconciling differences: Mat 5:23-24, Mat 7:1-5.

Group Framework:

The format for each gathering is outlined below. This format is simple, yet powerful. To keep our Discipleship Groups highly reproducible, we ask you to faithfully follow the format without creative variation. We are keeping the framework simple and consistent so that apprentices who become equipped and ready can successfully lead and multiply unified and aligned Discipleship Groups in the future.

Most groups will meet for 1 ½ hours. Please arrive a few minutes before the start time so the group can begin on time. Also, please let the leader know if you are running late so the group can adjust accordingly.

Phase 1. Welcome Time (food, snacks and/or drinks are encouraged) [approx. 10 min.]

Phase 2. Celebrate an example or two of following Jesus in all areas of life and/or encouraging others to do the same – “How did being a disciple and/or serving someone else beyond yourself go this past week?” [approx. 10 min.]

Phase 3. Purpose & Core Values for Discipleship Groups

Phase 4. Group Guidelines

Phase 5. Prayer to Prepare our Hearts

Phase 6. Scripture to be Read and/or Retold

- A passage of Scripture and suggested questions will be provided to leaders.

Phase 7. De-brief the Scripture

- Head Questions- Example: What is the cultural significance of the event in the scripture? Do any key words or ideas stand out to you?
- Heart Questions- Who do you relate to most in the story, and why? What does this tell you about God?
- Hands Questions- Is there an area of your life where you can apply what you have learned? Whom can you love better considering what we’ve learned? What could this look like this week?

Phase 8. Close in Prayer [approx. 5 – 10 min.]

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} [approx. 50 min.]

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