

City Discipleship Groups

At New Life Church, we celebrate the gifts & growth of everyone in the church (1 Corinthians 12:27). We aim to have a discipling culture of **contribution over consumerism, development over delivery, and the presence of God over programs**. *Discipleship Groups are designed to facilitate learning and living the Discipleship Pathway by practicing Hearing from God, Obeying God, and doing that With others (the "HOW").* Through this, we hope members will be equipped and grow in the lifestyles of following Jesus for their lifetime. The structure of leadership, coaching, and group facilitation has been shaped to invite individual ownership of one's faith and personal needs, while having the opportunity to grow close with a small group of others for mutual discipleship.

Basics

Size: 5 to 8, when a group gets consistently larger than 8, we will begin to look at options for multiplying the group.

Participation: Anyone can join a D Group if they are a believer, have a professed desire to grow in relationship with Jesus, a commitment to meeting weekly (or as often as the group is scheduled to meet), a commitment to help and be helped in following through on next steps, commitment to God's Word, and a willingness to share openly about life and faith.

Coaching: Each group has a "point person" who connects with a coach for direction, accountability, and to ask questions. This coach is available to every member of the group but meets regularly with the point person. A rhythm for these meetings is likely 1x/month, but the coach can make space for additional communication needs.

Facilitation: To start, the point person will facilitate the group time (explained below). However, the point person will model/teach others in the group how to facilitate. Once comfortable, other members of the group can rotate with the point person to facilitate the conversation for that week. This includes taking time to pray and prepare for the meeting ahead of time. By sharing the skill of Discipleship Group facilitation, our groups can more easily multiply once they reach capacity.

The Weekly Meeting

The purpose of a Discipleship Group is to learn and live the Discipleship Pathway by practicing the HOW (Hearing from God, Obeying God, With others). As such, there is flexibility in how one engages with the HOW. However, below is a template you could use. The key is that all of this goes back to the Greatest Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40, Mark 12:29-31, Luke 10:27) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). We ultimately organize D Groups as a tool to help us love God, love others, and make disciples.

Default D-Group Time:

1. Authentic check-In (30 minutes)
 - With authentic relationships as our way of life, the group will catch up on how each other are really doing.
 - Staying here longer is fine, if needed! It could be a way to serve a brother or sister in Christ.
2. Vision and Bible (15 minutes)
 - Facilitator prepares something to share regarding "why" the group is meeting (Discipleship Pathway/HOW).
 - Groups may either select an "outside of group time" reading plan that gets discussed in this time or groups can take extra time here and do Bible study together during the group.
 - Another option is the ask the question, "Outside of group time, how did God speak to you through Scripture, song, prayer, people or circumstances since we last met?"
3. Last week's next steps and celebration/feedback (15 minutes)
 - Talk about how the last week's steps went. Celebrate the steps of faith that were taken. Offer grace, encouragement, and help for passivity or failure (1 Thess. 5:14).
4. Take time to hear from God (10 minutes)
 - Individually ask God for help and discernment with what obedience looks like this week.
 - Sit in silence, read Scripture, journal your thoughts, etc.
 - Look through the Discipleship Pathway, particularly the habits, to see if any of those are things God is getting your attention with.
 - If you aren't hearing something clearly from God, you can make a decision in faith about how to obey God this week!! There are many good steps of obedience that Jesus calls us to in the Bible and categorized in the Discipleship Pathway.
5. Share what you may be hearing and any next steps to obey this week (15 minutes)
 - Ask the group for help where you need it!
 - Consider taking a step of obedience with someone else. Is there a way someone could join you in this action or you in theirs this week?
6. Pray together (5 minutes)
 - Dedicate your week & areas of obedience by faith to the Lord. The ultimate goal is to be following Jesus and taking these steps from a place of depending on him (John 15:5).
7. Flex Time (30 minutes)
 - Lengthen any of the above time slots or use flex time for a meal, Bible Study, communion, etc.

The goal of all of these steps is to have a regularly set aside time to help us engage with how God is getting our attention in life (Hearing from God), how we want to respond (Obey Him), and give and receive support along the way (With others).