

Discipleship Group Starter Guide

*Practical Insights for Launching
a Discipleship Group*




R




Table of Contents



- 3** Discipleship Group Defined
 - 5** How to Use This Guide
 - 6** How to Form Your Discipleship Group
 - 7** Week 1: Goals & Expectations
 - 12** Week 2: Share Your Story
 - 13** Week 3: H.E.A.R. Journals & Scripture Memory
 - 18** Week 4: Accountability & Prayer
 - 22** Bible Reading Plan
- 





You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 2:1–2 (CSB)

Discipleship Group Defined

A Discipleship Group is a gender-specific, closed group of 3 to 5 believers meeting weekly for the purpose of helping the members become disciples who make other disciples. The Discipleship Group is an environment meant to foster accelerated spiritual transformation as each member is equipped to become a dependent worshiper, joyful servant, sacrificial steward, loving presence, and intentional disciple-maker. A person joins a Discipleship Group by invitation only.

A City Group is a life-changing community where people can belong, believe, and become. City Groups exist for the purpose of building authentic community, and they are a great opportunity for evangelism through hospitality and friendships. A Discipleship Group, on the other hand, consists of believers who desire to grow deeper in their walk with Christ. It is not evangelistic in its form or function but in its fruit. The Discipleship Group helps grow disciples who will then go on to make more disciples.

This chart shows a breakdown of the differences between both groups and why they are both important.

	City Group	Discipleship Group
Model	Open group	Closed group
Participants	Believers and non-believers	Believers
Size	Sizes vary but usually 10–20 people	Usually 3–5 people
Dynamic	Co-ed or gender specific	Gender specific
Purpose	Build authentic community and pursue spiritual growth	Intentional discipleship and mutual accountability
Time Frame	A community that exists for a period of time and then launches new city groups	A microgroup that exists for 9–12 months before multiplying to launch new discipleship groups
Expectations	Flexible expectations of group members	High expectations of members upheld by a covenant of commitments and consistent accountability
Leadership	One or two leaders who nurture spiritual growth within the group and develop future city group leaders	One leader who helps discipleship group members grow in spiritual maturity and prepares them to lead future discipleship groups
Outcome	Designed to grow and multiply biblical community	Designed to multiply intentional disciple-makers

How to Use This Guide

You are about to enter an exciting season of accelerated spiritual transformation. The Discipleship Group environment encourages us to engage with God's Word and His people in a way that most of us never have before. As His Spirit works in our lives, it creates a passion to help others experience the same thing.

The Discipleship Group Starter Guide is an interactive booklet that introduces each element of the group and helps your group start strong. We encourage each member of the group to have a booklet and use it to guide you through the first four weeks of your discipleship group meetings.

This resource will help your group have four important conversations:

Week 1: Goals & Expectations

In your first meeting, you will talk about your goals and expectations for the group. This booklet will provide a couple of simple exercises to help you set spiritual goals for the upcoming season.

Week 2: Share Your Story

Before you look forward, spend time getting to know the stories of those in your group. The trust and empathy you develop by hearing each other's stories will increase the impact this group will have on your life.

Week 3: Introducing H.E.A.R. Journals & Scripture Memory

In the third week, you will begin to get into the rhythm of the four weekly disciplines. You will learn what a H.E.A.R. Journal is and why Scripture memory is so important.

Week 4: Introducing Accountability & Prayer

During the fourth week, you will continue your weekly rhythm through the disciplines while also introducing your second accountability question and explaining how you will pray for one another.

How to Form Your Discipleship Group

Are you ready to start a Discipleship Group but aren't sure where to start and who to invite? If your Discipleship Group isn't formed yet and you need help identifying and inviting people into your group, follow these steps:

1. *Identify who you will invite into your Discipleship Group. Seek the Lord through prayer and ask for wisdom on who to disciple.*
2. *Invite each person you have identified into your Discipleship Group. Have a conversation with those individuals and invite them into a disciple-making journey.*
3. *Set your first meeting, then decide when and where you will meet for the upcoming season. During your first meeting, you will cover the goals and expectations of the discipleship group.*

Once you have the 3-5 people in your Discipleship Group committed and you know your start date, give everyone a Discipleship Group Starter Guide. Have each person complete the exercises on pages 6 and 7 before your first meeting.

Week 1

Goals & Expectations

Welcome to Week 1 of our Discipleship Group! For today's meeting, we will discuss where we are going as a Discipleship Group, how we will get there, and what we will expect from each other. Get ready for the amazing months ahead!

Discussion Questions

As you get started, each person should answer the two questions below:

1. *Why did you join our Discipleship Group?*
2. *What is one thing you hope to get out of our time together?*

Where Are We Going?

Discipleship Groups foster a season of accelerated spiritual transformation. It is a highly relational and committed group of believers who are calling each other to look more like Jesus. Over the next season, this group is committing to help each other look more like Jesus.

What Will Happen?

As we allow the Word of God to work in our lives, we will see its impact through five areas that a disciple of Jesus should be growing in:

In the boxes below, rate between 1–5 how well each of these identities describe your life today.

(1 — This doesn't describe me at all; 5 — this definitely describes me.)

- Dependent Worshiper:** A disciple who orients their life around the presence, power, and purposes of God.
- Joyful Servant:** A disciple who serves like Jesus and uses their gifts to build up the church.
- Sacrificial Steward:** A disciple who trades worldly ambition for kingdom ambition by leveraging their time, talent, and money for the glory of God.
- Loving Presence:** A disciple who is being transformed by the Spirit into the likeness of Christ, bearing the fruit of the Spirit, and learning to love others as God loves them.
- Intentional Disciple-Maker:** A disciple who joins the mission of God by leading people to discover and display the good news of Jesus and entrusting them to do the same.



How Will We Get There?

Read 1 Timothy 4:7-8 (CSB).

During the upcoming season, we will train in godliness by focusing on the following four weekly disciplines each time we meet:

- Bible Engagement (Bible Reading Plan & H.E.A.R. Journals)
- Scripture Memory
- Accountability
- Prayer

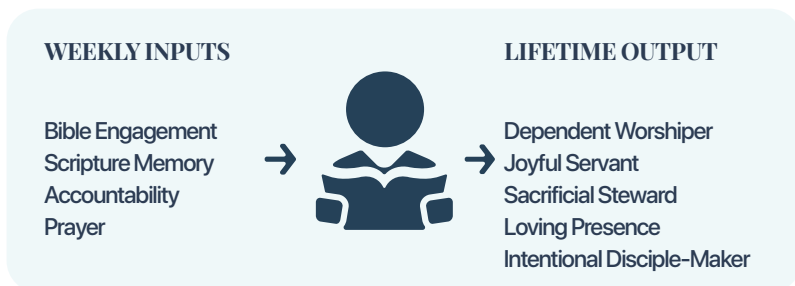
Discussion Questions

As you get started, each person should answer the two questions below:

1. *Which of the four Weekly Disciplines are you currently doing the best?*

2. *In which weekly discipline do you need to grow the most?*

Below is a picture demonstrating how the four weekly disciplines will shape your spiritual growth as a disciple. Consistent weekly inputs will affect your lifetime output.



Before Week 2

Defining Moments

One of the most powerful things God gives each person is their story. Your story is unique to you, and when you leverage your story, it can be a tremendous blessing to you and those around you. The problem is that though every person has a unique story, few have slowed down to see how God has been active in the high points and low points. God has been writing a story in your life; the question is if you will connect your story to God's mission.

In order to do that, every believer must be able to articulate how God's story (the Gospel) has changed their story. Before your next Discipleship Group meeting, take time to reflect on the questions below and complete the exercise on the next page.

Defining Moment Reflection Questions

1. *What are my truly formative experiences in life? What experiences have made a lasting impact?*
2. *Is there any common thread to my experiences?*
3. *Why do I do what I do vocationally? Did one person or event significantly determine this?*
4. *Who are my most meaningful friends?*
5. *Who taught me how to live?*
6. *How am I learning to live like Christ?*
7. *How has God's grace been revealed in my life?*
8. *How does my unique story bring God glory?*
9. *What would my life be like without God?*
10. *What may God be preparing me to do in my life?*

Share Your Story

Identify and list your top 10 high points and your top 10 low points. Use a short phrase or a key word that will remind you of these defining moments.

TOP TEN HIGH POINTS

TOP TEN LOW POINTS

Once you have listed these moments in your life, put a star by the 6 most significant *Defining Moments* for your life (3 high points and 3 low points).

Top Six Defining Moments

Now that you have your *Six Defining Moments*, place them in chronological order in the boxes below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Reflection Questions

As you get started, each person should answer the two questions below:

1. *Think about each of these moments. Why did you choose these six? What impact did they have on your life? How did they shape you?*

2. *As you look at your story, how have you seen God active through the High Points and Low Points?*

3. *What is the biggest thing you have learned from this exercise?*



Week 2

Share Your Story

Welcome to Week 2 of our Discipleship Group! This week is all about getting to know one another's story. As each person shares, listen for how God has been at work in their story, and identify what you are excited to learn from them in the season ahead.

Share Your Defining Moments

Once your group is settled in, transition to sharing your Defining Moments. Before the group starts sharing, determine how much time each person has to share. You want to be sensitive both to the person who is sharing and make sure the entire group gets to share.

Each member should share their top six Defining Moments of their life and explain why they chose those times. What impact did each of those moments have on their life? Each member should share what they learned from the exercise.

Either at the end of each person's story or after everyone has shared, take time to pray over each Discipleship Group member. Thank God for how He worked through the high points and the low points of each person's life.

Week 3

H.E.A.R. Journals & Scripture Memory

Over the next two weeks, your group will introduce each element of a typical Discipleship Group meeting. Once all the elements are introduced, your group will follow a simple rhythm through the four weekly disciplines. Below is an example of a typical Discipleship Group rhythm. The pace and content of the conversation is set by the discernment of the leader. Times may vary depending on the personalities and number of people in the group.

Today, we will introduce H.E.A.R. Journals and Scripture memory. Spend the entirety of your time reading and discussing the sample H.E.A.R. Journal and Scripture memory process.

Example Discipleship Group Rhythm

FELLOWSHIP: 10 MINUTES

Spend the first ten minutes catching up. You can have each person share any "celebrations" and "challenges" from the week.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY: 5-10 MINUTES

After everyone quotes the week's memory verse, ask, "As you meditated on this verse, what stood out to you?" We want to hide God's Word in our heart, not just be able to recite it.

BIBLE READING AND H.E.A.R. JOURNALS: 25-35 MINUTES

As you share H.E.A.R. Journals, a great question to ask is, "Which of your H.E.A.R. Journals stood out the most to you this week and what are you doing about it?"

ACCOUNTABILITY: 10-25 MINUTES

In addition to our H.E.A.R. Journal question, choose a few accountability questions from the question bank to discuss with your group.

PRAYER: 10 MINUTES

Finish the time by having each person share something specific and personal the group can pray for.

What is a H.E.A.R. Journal?

A H.E.A.R. Journal is a simple way to help you read the Bible with the intention of applying it. By asking four simple questions, you can understand and apply any passage. In addition, journaling is a great discipline because it helps you retain three times more of what you read.

Every week, each member will share a H.E.A.R. Journal and discuss what we have heard from God's Word. There is not a set amount of H.E.A.R. Journals that you must do each week, but the goal with this discipline, as with all of the others, is to improve as time goes on. Consider how often you currently journal and try to do one more. So, if you have never journaled, just try to do a couple per week. If you journal occasionally, try to do it three times a week. The hope is that as you get more comfortable with this discipline and experience its benefit, you will want to increase this number throughout the year.

As you read through your reading plan this week, create a H.E.A.R. Journal by using these four questions:

H (HIGHLIGHT)

What is a verse(s) that stood out in today's passage?

E (EXPLAIN)

What is the author's intended meaning in the context of the passage?

A (APPLY)

What is the principle to live by today?

R (RESPOND)

How will I respond to the application in my relationships and/or situations this week?

When the group gets together next week, share your H.E.A.R. Journal, and discuss as a group how to best use this method.

Sample H.E.A.R. Journal

Date:

Scripture Passage: Philippians 4:10-13

HIGHLIGHT

Philippians 4:13, "I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me." (CSB)

EXPLAIN

Paul was telling the church at Philippi that he has discovered the secret of contentment. No matter the situation in Paul's life, he realized that Christ was all he needed, and Christ was the one who strengthened him to persevere through difficult times.

APPLY

In my life, I will experience many ups and downs. My contentment is not found in circumstances. Rather, it is based on my relationship with Jesus Christ. Only Jesus gives me the strength I need to be content in every circumstance of life.

RESPOND

Lord Jesus, please help me as I strive to be content in You. Through Your strength, I can make it through any situation I must face.

How Will We Do Scripture Memory?

Every week, we will memorize a verse together. This is a largely neglected discipline that has amazing benefits for the believer. The discipline's purpose is to hide God's Word in our heart (Psalm 119:11). For this reason, we do not want to only memorize verses, but to meditate on them as we do it. Once everyone recites the verse, the group will discuss what stood out to them as they meditated on it.

It is important to choose a Scripture memory plan together and stick to it. It will be helpful for everyone to memorize the same passages. Though it is not required to use the same translation, it benefits everyone when we are able to work as a team to say the same verse in the same translation.

"I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture. It is God's gift to us, and it will greatly strengthen your dividends! Your prayer life will be strengthened. Your witnessing will be sharper and much more effective. Your attitudes and outlook will begin to change. Your mind will become alert and observant. Your confidence and assurance will be enhanced. Your faith will be solidified."

— Chuck Swindoll
(Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life, 61)

Discussion Questions

1. *What experience do you have with Scripture memory?*

2. *How can you see Scripture memory being beneficial in your life?*

This Week

After choosing the memorization plan you will use, begin memorizing the first verse this week. Additionally, keep working through your Bible reading plan and try to complete at least one H.E.A.R. Journal before the next discipleship group meeting.

Week 4

Accountability & Prayer

As we continue to introduce elements of the Discipleship Group meeting, today we will focus on accountability and prayer. For today's meeting, read and discuss the following sections.

Example Discipleship Group Rhythm

FELLOWSHIP: 10 MINUTES

Spend the first ten minutes catching up. You can have each person share any "celebrations" and "challenges" from the week.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY: 5-10 MINUTES

After everyone quotes the week's memory verse, ask, "As you meditated on this verse, what stood out to you?" We want to hide God's Word in our heart, not just be able to recite it.

BIBLE READING AND H.E.A.R. JOURNALS: 25-35 MINUTES

As you share H.E.A.R. Journals, a great question to ask is, "Which of your H.E.A.R. Journals stood out the most to you this week and what are you doing about it?"

ACCOUNTABILITY: 10-25 MINUTES

In addition to our H.E.A.R. Journal question, choose a few accountability questions from the question bank to discuss with your group.

PRAYER: 10 MINUTES

Finish the time by having each person share something specific and personal the group can pray for.

Core Questions

Each week, ask these core questions to facilitate healthy group discussion:

1. *Which of your H.E.A.R. Journals stood out the most to you this week, and what are you doing about it?*
2. *What are you hearing from God, and what difference is it making in your life?*
3. *Choose and discuss 3–4 of the questions below.*

Question Bank

- What has my attention, thoughts, and energy?
- Have you damaged another person by your words?
- Have you told any lies or half-truths this week?
- Who is someone far from God but close to me that I can start praying for?
- Who am I helping take one step closer to Jesus?
- How am I living out my God-given calling?
- How am I leaving a legacy that matters?
- Which relationships am I currently investing in?
- Who can I disciple?

What Do We Expect?

During the duration of this group, I will do my best to:

- Give myself fully to the Lord during this time as I anticipate a season of accelerated spiritual transformation.
- Commit to this group and consider how I may best spur others on in their relationship with Jesus.
- Meet weekly with my Discipleship Group (usually 60-90 minutes). When unable to meet in person, I will stay involved through sharing H.E.A.R. Journals and prayer requests.
- Commit to the four weekly disciplines: Bible Engagement, Scripture Memory, Accountability, and Prayer.
- Contribute to a group atmosphere of confidentiality, honesty, and transparency.
- Pray every week for the other members of my Discipleship Group and those in my life who don't know Jesus.
- Pray and look for others in my life who I can invite into a new Discipleship Group when my current group decides to multiply.

Name: _____

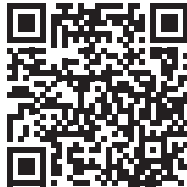
Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Bible Reading Plan

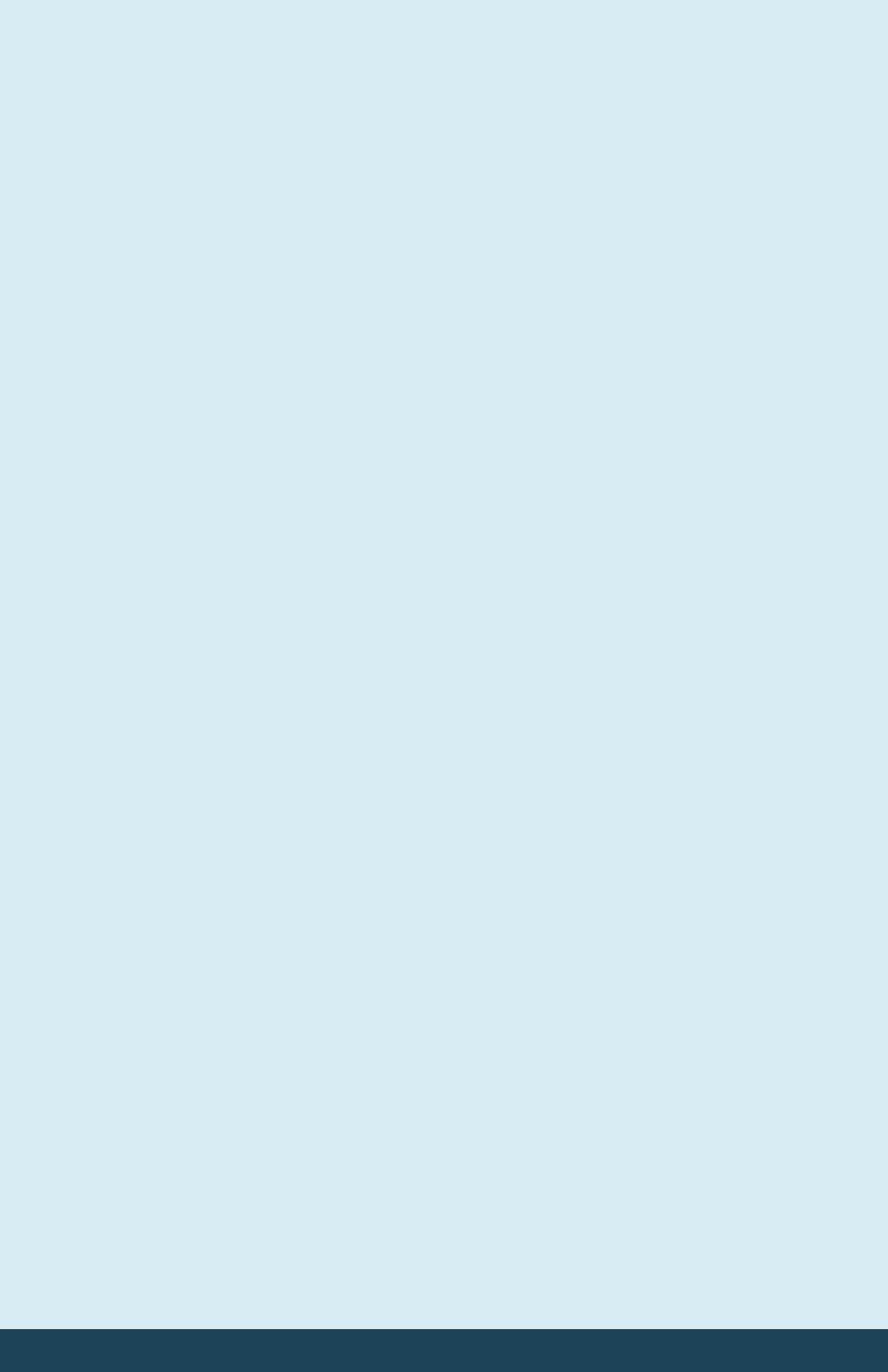
You can find the yearly Reality Church Bible Reading plan on the resources page on our website at <https://realitymiami.com/resources>.




Scan QR code above for
Bible Reading Plan



Scan QR code above to register
your Discipleship Group





Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20 (CSB)



www.realtymiami.com