

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS GUIDE TO LEADING



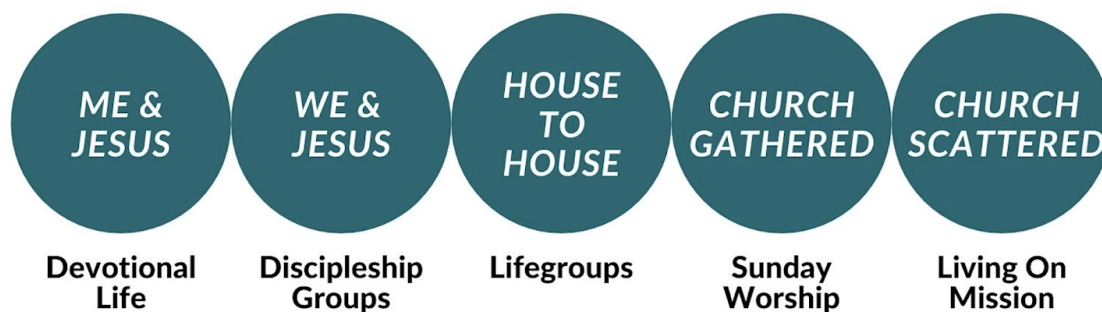
Introduction:

In John 10:10, Jesus summarized His mission: *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

Because God loves us in Jesus – we want to be a people who walk in loving relationship with Jesus, become like Jesus in community, and help others find and follow Jesus together.

We see in Scripture five main expressions where people grow in relationship with Him, become like Jesus in community, and live on mission together.

5 Circles of Church



One of the most transformational expressions of church are **Discipleship Groups**.

Discipleship Groups are same gender groups of 3-5 people who regularly grow as disciples of Jesus together.

This guide is to help you know how to lead a discipleship group.

How to Use This Guide:

Sections 1-3: Focus on preparing the environment for a fruitful discipleship group.

Section 4: Introduces a C.O.R.E. framework for facilitating discipleship group meetings.

[Section 1: Source of Growth: God](#)

[Section 2: Soil For Growth: Relationships](#)

[Section 3: Water For Growth: Prayer](#)

[Section 4: Nutrients For Growth: C.O.R.E. Practices](#)

[C- Confession](#)

[O- Others](#)

[R - Read & Response](#)

[E - Encouragement](#)

The Source of Growth: God

As the Apostle Paul noted long ago, our job is to sow and water, but God is the true source of growth.

1 Corinthians 3.5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

As we build and lead discipleship groups, our job is not to control, manipulate, or manufacture growth. Our job is to sow, water, and foster the environment for the Holy Spirit to bring transformation in people's lives.

The Soil For Growth: Relationships

The soil of fruitful DGroups is relational. As our friends at [Forerunner Mentoring](#) say, "Relationships Change Lives." When we look to Jesus, this is the way He made disciples.

*Mark 3.13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve that they might **be with him** and that he might **send them out** to preach 15 and to have authority to drive out demons.*

As Jesus called the twelve disciples, he called them first to *be with Him* and then to be *sent out on mission*. Practically, this meant Jesus spent significant time with His disciples over the coming years.

To follow Jesus's example, we want to spend intentional time building relationships with one another in our DGroup. Here are some ways to do this in your group:

- **Clarify Expectations:** The main focus of the DGroup is to mature as disciples of Jesus who will in turn help others do the same. We want to follow Jesus, become like Jesus, and be sent on mission with Jesus.
- **Share Testimonies:** Take the 1 or 2 DGroup meetings to have each person share about their lives and relationship with Christ. ([How To Share Your Testimony Guide](#))
- **Consistency:** Pick a consistent time and place to meet. Consistency is key to building trust and discipleship groups move at the speed of trust.
- **Eat Together:** Invite group members to lunch or to your house for a meal.
- **Serve One Another:** Helping someone move, do yard work, prepare a meal, or babysit are all ways to build holistic relationships.
- **Celebrate One Another:** Celebrate significant life events like birthdays, engagements, marriages, childbirth, promotions in your members lives!
- **Crisis and Loss:** Being present and weeping with those who weep in the midst of life's low points build a depth of relationship in life's most vulnerable times.

The list above is not exhaustive. Be creative and trust the Holy Spirit to show you how to build relationships in your discipleship group.

The Water For Growth: Prayer

Our behind the scenes prayer for the members of our DGroup is like the water the Holy Spirit uses to grow mature disciples.

- Pick a time to consistently pray for your DGroup members by name. Example: Tuesday morning, I pray for the members in my DGroup for 10-15 minutes.
- Pray Bible verses over their lives and situations to help them mature in Christ.

Here are some sample prayers from Scripture to use:

Ephesians 1.15-22 *15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

Ephesians 3.14 *For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

Philippians 1.9 *And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

Colossians 1.9 *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.*

Romans 15.5 *May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, 6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*

Romans 15.13 *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

1 Thessalonians 5.23 *Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*

2 Thessalonians 1.11 *To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

C.O.R.E. PRACTICES

*Matthew 7.24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and **puts them into practice** is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and **does not put them into practice** is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."*

When we put Jesus's teachings into practice we build our lives on the Rock. When we listen but do not practice we build our lives on sand.

C.O.R.E is a simple way to remember 4 powerful but often overlooked spiritual practices. When we do these consistently the Holy Spirit does a deeper work in us and deepens our love for Jesus.

C= Confession

O= Others

R= Read and Respond

E= Encouragement

In the following pages, we describe how to use these fantastic nutrients in discipleship.

NOTE:

When leading your DGroup you don't have to do all 4 of these in the exact same order. Be prayerful and open to the Spirit's leading in how you integrate these 4 nutrients into your DGroup.

[Here](#) is an example of what an 1.5 hour DGroup meeting could look like using CORE.

Confession:

Why We Practice Confession of Sin

The practice of confessing sin to the Lord and to trusted brothers or sisters in Christ leads to healing from the poison of sin in our lives. Confession is a gift and a normal part of how God transforms us over time.

Proverbs 28.13 Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

James 5.16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

1 John 1.8-9 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Instead of stirring up shame, fear, or guilt, the practice of confession crushes these things as we draw near to Jesus.

How To Practice Confession of Sin

In facilitating a time of confession, as a group read Galatians 5.19 - 25.

19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Here is one way this could look in DGroups.

- Start as a group by thanking the Lord for His goodness and love.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to highlight to you any sins holding you back from Him.
- Share those with one another and the Lord.
- Pray for one another to grow into the fruits of the Spirit and put away the acts of the flesh.

Additionally, many find this chart helpful as a primer for confession of sin. It is based on what is historically known as the *Seven Deadly Sins*. This helps identify the root causes of sins.

Read through the chart and ask the Holy Spirit to identify any heart posture or sin you need to confess. Ask God to change you from the inside out by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Struggling With:	Ask God For:
Pride	Humility
Envy	Gratitude
Anger	Patience
Apathy	Purpose
Greed	Generosity
Gluttony	Self-Control
Lust	Contentment

After a time of confession and repentance, depending on the context, it may be helpful to ask follow-up questions:

- Where would you like to grow in this area?
- What options have you considered to grow out of this sin pattern?
- How would you like us to support you and hold you accountable?

Others:

Why We Pursue Others

Jesus has a passion for the lost and desires to work through us in seeing people come to know Him and new disciples made. It is easy to drift into prioritizing our own lives in such a way that we lose sight of our call to others, and the mission of Christ.

Luke 19.10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

1 Timothy 2.3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Matthew 28.18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The "Others" practice is meant to redirect our eyes from self to others. We do this by identifying a few people in your life God's calling you to reach out to. We reach out for the purpose of demonstrating the love of Christ to them, sharing the Gospel and/or discipling them, and praying for them.

We cannot make anyone follow Jesus, but we can play our part in sowing seeds into their lives, whether for evangelism or discipleship.

How We Do This

1. Each person identifies one or two people they believe the Holy Spirit is highlighting to them to reach out to.
2. Take time to pray for these people by name as a group.
3. Share any updates on how it's going with these people.

Below are Scriptures to help guide your prayers for OTHERS.

Ephesians 4.3-6

3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Sample Prayer:

Father, would you open a door this week for me to be able to share about Christ with _____. At that moment, would you give me clarity and boldness to speak about what you've done for me? Give me wisdom in this friendship. Open my eyes to see ways I can make the most of every opportunity with _____. Let our conversations and friendship be full of grace. Bless them today!

Acts 17.26-28

26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.

Sample Prayer:

Father, thank you that your desire is for _____ to know you and seek after you. Thank you for not being far from _____ but near. I am praying for you to orchestrate circumstances in _____ life and relationships to help them see their need for Jesus, reach out for you, and find you.

Acts 4.29-31

29 And now, Lord, consider their threats, and enable Your servants to speak Your word with complete boldness, 30 as You stretch out Your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." 31 After they had prayed, their meeting place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly....

Sample Prayer:

Lord, you know the challenges the world presents against the Gospel going forward. Please fill me with complete boldness in my relationship with _____. Would you stretch forth your hand to heal and work miracles as I reach out to them so that they would see up close and personal your power and majesty in our day. Would you fill me with the Holy Spirit as I go out this week!

Read & Response:

Why We Practice Reading & Responding

God's Word is powerful, alive, and active. God uses it to train us in righteousness and thoroughly equip us for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Psalms 119:103 How sweet are Your words to my taste— sweeter than honey in my mouth!

Like a tree planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in season, is the person who consistently reads and responds to God's word (Ps. 1:3). We want to grow in this practice as a DGroup together.

How We Do This

1. Read Scripture Daily

If we only read Scripture when we meet for DGroup, it will be hard to actually let the word of God sink deep and change us. Instead, our focus on daily reading plans. [Here](#) is an example from the Gospel of John.

2. D.N.A. Scripture Study Method

There are many great methods of studying Scripture. We use D.N.A. which stands for:

- D - Discover what God's Word says
- N - Nurture the meaning to our hearts
- A - Apply this to our lives

3. DGroup Discussion

When we do gather in a DGroup, share what God's been teaching you through His Word.

Encouragement:

Why We Practice Encouragement

Scripture commands us to encourage one another. Our world is in desperate need of encouragement, and without encouragement, it is easy to be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

We want to end our times together encouraging one another.

How We Do This

The way this happens can be varied and creative. Here are some examples of ways we can encourage one another:

- On someone's birthday, have the group encourage them.
- Pick someone ahead of time and spend the last 5 minutes of the group encouraging them.
- Wait on the Lord and have each group member encourage someone else, go until everyone has been encouraged.
- Share testimonies of what God has been doing in and through your group members.
- Pray and prophesy over one another. Prophecy releases encouragement and edification.

***Content credit goes to [Church of the City NY](#) for the C.O.R.E. model. This guide was taken and adapted to fit our context at Antioch Dallas.*