



TWO CITIES CHURCH  
JESUS IN MY PLACE

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**Leaders  
Guide**

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**Discipleship.  
Nuture.  
Accountability.**

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# INTRODUCTION

If you're holding this little guide in your hands, it's probably because you're interested in **DNA Groups**. Maybe you've heard about them in passing at Two Cities, and you simply want to know more about them. Maybe you've been wanting to be a part of one and are trying to figure out what it looks like to begin that journey. Or it's possible that you're already in a **DNA Group**, and you are trying to determine a healthy and meaningful direction for your group.

No matter where you are in the process, we want you to know that we are incredibly grateful for you! We believe that investing in **discipleship** is a purpose of the Church, and no matter how hard it may seem, discipleship is always worth the **time, talent, and treasure** that we put into it. Ordinary, everyday believers just like you are indispensable in carrying out the **mission of the church** where they **live, learn, work, and play**. Because of that, we want to do everything in our power to equip and resource you for the task of discipleship.

We created this guide for you in hopes that you will find it helpful in leading or being a part of a **DNA Group at Two Cities Church**. It's a culmination of some of our deepest theological convictions, gleanings from resources and wisdom from some of the best disciple-making churches and leaders we could find, as well as drawing from what God has taught us in our own personal experiences.

This is by no means the only way to do a **DNA Group**, however, we know that sometimes what people need the most is fresh vision and direction to guide them forward. Our hope is that this guide will give you a glimpse of what a **DNA Group** could be paired with the convictions of what a **DNA Group** must be in order to see committed disciples raised up at Two Cities Church.

As you make this journey, we want you to know that we are here for you. As you lead your **DNA Group**, if you ever find yourself confused, frustrated, or unsure of what to do, please do not hesitate to reach out. Nothing is more important to us than investing in you, the life-blood of our disciple-making process. Call, text, email, or grab us by the arm. Whatever you need to do, just let us know you need help and we'll be there.



*Caleb Duvick*

**MINISTRIES PASTOR  
TWO CITIES CHURCH**

**P.S.** I would like to give a special thanks to my friend, Stuart Owens, Discipleship Pastor at Christ Community Church - Huntersville. This resource would not be what it is without your wisdom, clarity, hard work, and dedication when it comes to developing disciples.

# A VISION FOR DNA GROUPS

## WHY DNA GROUPS?

Before we get into the how of **DNA Groups**, it's important to be clear on the why and the what. First, we'll address why we prioritize **DNA Groups** the way we do at Two Cities. There are three sets of reasons: **theological, philosophical, and practical.**

## WHY: THEOLOGICAL

Throughout the Bible, we consistently find the call to **pass on the faith** to the next generation of believers. Shortly after the Exodus, God commands Aaron to *"teach the Israelites all the statutes that the Lord has given to them through Moses"* (**Leviticus 10:10**), and in the Psalms, Israel was reminded that *"One generation will declare your works to the next and will proclaim your mighty acts"* (**Psalms 145:4**).

Fast forward to the New Testament, and we're called to not only reach people with the gospel, but to *"[teach] them to observe everything [Jesus has] commanded"* (**Matthew 28:20**). Later on, Paul calls older men and women to teach the faith to their younger counterparts (**Titus 2:1-8**), and in another letter, Paul writes: *"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 2:2**).

Simply put, the Bible is clear that one of the core tasks of the church is to train others in what it means to follow Christ.

## WHY: PHILOSOPHICAL

Our philosophy of ministry is the confluence of our theological convictions and the realities of our church's context. **We ask ourselves a few questions:**

*What do we believe about **discipleship**? How does this best play out in our context? What is the most effective way to **live out our convictions**? We know what we believe, but how do we connect our beliefs to our daily reality? In other words, how do we best **pass along the faith** in our context?*

We're convinced that **DNA Groups** are one of the best ways to **make disciples**. They are highly relational, forcing people to **build deep connections** with one another and providing a great context to **care for one another** through the struggles of life. Their built-in **accountability** structures ensure members take the steps required for spiritual growth. They help members read and **understand the Bible** in ways most church members never do. In addition, they are easily **reproducible** and have the potential for exponential growth.

## WHY: PRACTICAL

Finally, there are some very practical reasons why we believe in **DNA Groups**. For one, they're portable. All you need to lead a **DNA Group** is a Bible. You don't need keys to the church building, money to purchase curriculum, in-depth training, etc. Really, all that's required to launch a **DNA Group** is a heart to make disciples and the commitment to show up every week.

Second, **DNA Groups** are great places to identify and mobilize leaders. There are **three levels of leadership**: 1) *leading oneself*, 2) *leading teams*, and 3) *leading an organization*. You cannot move to the next level until you've proven yourself at the previous one.



## PUTTING IT TOGETHER

In summary, **DNA Groups** are our response to the **Bible's clear mandate to make disciples** and the realities of the culture we find ourselves in today. They are a system set up to counteract the natural flow of the world around us and reroute us toward a **biblical vision for life in Christ**.

## THE LONG GAME

**DNA Groups** aren't flashy. They won't grow our church to huge numbers in a short amount of time, but that doesn't mean they're ineffective. In fact, over time, **DNA Groups** have the potential to make more of an impact than you think!

### The chart below compares two scenarios.

- (1) a **hypothetical evangelist** who leads someone to Christ every day of the year
- (2) a **disciple maker** who leads a **DNA Group** from which three people go on to lead their own **DNA group**.

YEAR	EVANGELIST	DISCIPLE-MAKER	YEAR	EVANGELIST	DISCIPLE-MAKER
1	365	3	9	3,285	19,683
2	730	9	10	3,650	59,049
3	1,095	27	11	4,015	177,147
4	1,460	81	12	4,380	531,441
5	1,825	243	13	4,745	1,594,323
6	2,190	729	14	5,110	4,782,969
7	2,555	2,187	15	5,475	14,348,907
8	2,920	6,561			

Concept from *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* by Greg Ogden

## ANALYSIS OF CHART

Through year four or five, the evangelist's numbers are impressive, but around year eight things change dramatically because they aren't reproducing.

Through slow and deliberate work, **disciple-making multiplication** is a worthy task that makes a lasting impact for the kingdom of God.

# WHAT IS A DNA GROUP?

## A DEFINITION

At Two Cities, a **DNA Group** is a closed group of **three to five Christians** of the same gender who gather regularly to commit themselves to **Discipleship**, **Nurture (Care)**, and **Accountability**.

## A CLOSED GROUP

Unlike many small groups and Bible studies, once a **DNA Group** begins no one can be added to the group. Because **accountability** and **honesty** are primary goals, a level of trust must be developed that would be compromised by people joining the group after it has begun.

one another, hold each other accountable, and encourage one another. There are few things in life that we follow through with that aren't done weekly. Including DNA in the regular flow of your week ensures that it becomes second nature.

## STUDY & MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE

**Discipleship** centers around the study of Scripture. Participants will **read the Bible** throughout the week, **write journal entries** based on their reading, and **memorize Scripture** together. Then, when they gather, they discuss their reading and recite their verse.

“**Discipleship is intentionally equipping believers with the Word of God through accountable relationships empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to replicate faithful followers of Christ.**”

*Discipling Her by Kelly Gallaty*

## 3 TO 5 PEOPLE

**DNA Groups** should have three to five participants, including the leader. This number strikes the balance between the desire to make as many **disciples** as possible and the need for **vulnerability**. It is difficult to foster **accountability** in a group of more than five people. Jesus opted to invest more deeply in Peter, James, and John than the rest of the disciples (**Mark 9:2**), perhaps for this reason. The need for honesty also necessitates the group being single gender.

## NURTURE & ACCOUNTABILITY

**DNA Groups** are the perfect environment to confess and repent sin, as well as open up about the **struggles** that members are facing. The safety of the small, closed group helps members be transparent. There, they can also encourage one another in the gospel as they **pursue holiness** throughout the week.

## GATHER REGULARLY

**DNA Groups** are encouraged to **meet weekly** so that members can more consistently grow in their relationship with

## PRAYER

Finally, **DNA Groups** should spend a considerable amount of time praying with and for one another. In **prayer**, we worship the Father and align our will with His. It's also where we ask for help for where we need God to intervene and thank Him for all that He's done for us.

# LEADING YOUR DNA GROUP

## WHY A LEADER?

Some might wonder if there should be a **leader** in the **DNA Group**. *Why can't we just let everyone have mutual leadership?* This is a great desire, and we earnestly hope that everyone in your **DNA Group** goes on to lead. However, if you have been part of any kind of group, you know that someone will eventually take on the main leading role. Why not just make it official? Naturally, you will see that groups thrive when someone takes **ownership** and leads, providing **vision and direction** and act as a **model** for others.

## OWN IT

First and foremost, the leader must take **responsibility** for their group. This means considering yourself personally responsible for creating an atmosphere conducive for **spiritual growth**. This can be done by keeping the group on track and through creating a group culture centered around **encouragement** and healthy **challenge**. Remember, if you don't own it, no one else will.

## PRAY

If we truly believe that we plant and water but *"God gives the increase,"*

(1 Corinthians 3:5) then we should be begging God to move in our **DNA Groups**. Commit to **praying** for your group members by name on a regular basis. Pray for your group to **grow in faith, develop deep relationships**, and **live on mission** in our community.

## COMMUNICATE

The **leader** of a **DNA Group** functions as a the go-to person for members of the group. Whether by texting, calling, emailing, or using good ol' fashion snail mail, find ways to keep your members **connected** throughout the week. **DNA Group** is meant to be **highly relational**, and that only happens when people feel genuinely **connected** to each other.

## LEAD MULTIPLICATION

One of the most important expectations we place on **DNA Group leaders** is that you keep **multiplication** in the forefront of your group's mind. The goal of a **DNA Group** is to **make disciples who make disciples**. Remind your group that they are just a link in the chain and that everyone is expected to lead their own **DNA Group** when this one ends.

“*But before a person can make disciples, he or she must first be a disciple. What does it mean to be a disciple? At the very core, a discipler is a learner, one who is set on growing and developing.*”

*Growing Up by Greg Ogden*



# SELECTING DNA GROUP MEMBERS

***"It's not how you start, it's how you finish," or so the old saying goes.***

There's a lot of truth to that, for sure, but how you start matters quite a bit. This is especially true when it comes to **DNA Groups**. The first step in **launching** your group is to **invite** others to join you, and much of the success of your group will depend on who you select.

There can be a tendency to choose the people who seem to know a lot of Bible verses and are well-trained in ministry, but this isn't necessary. Noting Jesus' method for selecting the disciples, Robert Coleman writes, *"For the most part they were common laboring men, probably having no professional training beyond the rudiments of knowledge necessary for their vocation...in short, these men selected by the Lord to be his assistants represented an average cross section of society in their day. Not the kind of group one would expect to win the world for Christ."*

These **ordinary men**, though they didn't look like much from the outside, ended up turning the world upside down.

*So, if we're not looking for Bible scholars, who are we looking for? **F.A.T. people**.* Generally, no one wants to be called **F.A.T.**, but in this context, there's no higher compliment. **F.A.T.** stands for **Faithful, Available, and Teachable**.

## FAITHFUL

Members must be people who will do what they say they will do. A **DNA Group** is a **high-commitment** endeavor and nothing will kill it faster than a member showing up without doing their part.

Or, even worse, not showing up at all. So, think of people who will **follow through**.

## AVAILABLE

Does this person have the **margin** necessary to participate? The reality is that not everyone will have the time for a **DNA Group**. This doesn't mean they're JV Christians, it just means they're in a busy season of life. Successful **DNA Groups** require a **weekly routine** of showing up and engaging in a meaningful way. Be sure to give people a good picture upfront of what it means to be meaningfully involved in **DNA Group** so they can determine if now is the best time for them to join. It's much better that they wait until their schedule isn't so full than to start and then have to withdraw later.

## TEACHABLE

The last quality of a **DNA Group member** is **teachability**. All of your best efforts to **disciple** someone will be for naught if a person isn't **humble** enough to **learn**. The people you invite into your group should be willing to admit that they have a lot to learn, and they should **desire to grow** in their faith instead of feeling like they've arrived. It's sometimes hard to evaluate **teachability** before a group begins. Look for people who don't dominate conversations, who don't always have to have the last word, and generally have a **humble attitude** about them.

**FAITHFUL**   
**AVAILABLE**   
**TEACHABLE** 

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

### DON'T SETTLE

Sometimes, you'll find people who meet two of the three criteria, and there will be a temptation to compromise, but the most **faithful** and **teachable** person will wreck your DNA Group and frustrate themselves if they don't have the **capacity** for it.

Similarly, a person who is available and teachable but cannot **follow through** will ruin the morale of your group. Perhaps worst of all, the person who is faithful and **available** but is not teachable is not the person you want to spend time with week after week.

**DNA Groups** are for people who are willing and eager to be **disciple-makers** themselves. The Holy Spirit has plenty of other avenues to grow someone's character to the point where they're ready for a **DNA Group**.

### CHRISTIANS ONLY

Please also remember that you can't **disciple** someone who isn't a **Christian**. **DNA Groups** are not for evangelism, they're for **training people** who already believe. While evangelistic Bible studies are great, they take on a different tenor than a **DNA Group**. Inviting nonbelievers into a **DNA Group** will make real accountability impossible, and Scripture

discussions will be severely limited in their scope, which will hinder the **growth** of the believers in the group. Now, just because group members must be Christians doesn't mean they must be mature Christians. They just need to be people of their word who have space in their lives and are willing to **learn**. Some of the most satisfying **DNA Groups** are made up of **young, hungry believers** who devour the Scriptures and then eagerly head out to make more **disciples**!

### PLAN TO REPRODUCE

Communicate up front that the goal is for every member of the **DNA Group** to **lead** their own group once this one ends. Now, not everyone will feel competent from day one to be a leader, but that's okay. At the start, all that matters is that they **be open** to the idea. Someone who insists that they will not become a **disciple-maker** isn't worthy of the time, energy, and effort you would be investing in them. Not everyone who participates in a **DNA Group** will go on to lead one right away, but most of them should be ready over time. The end result of a year or more of serious **Bible study, memorization, and accountability** should produce someone who's eager to make more **disciples**.

“**Discipling is an intentional relationship in which we walk alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. This includes equipping the disciple to teach others as well.**”

*Transforming Discipleship by Greg Ogden*

# GROUP MEMBER EXPECTATIONS

We've said that being a part of a **DNA Group** requires a high level of **commitment** from participants. *But what exactly are we asking of them?*

## SCRIPTURE READING

## JOURNAL ENTRY

## BIBLE MEMORIZATION

## SHOW UP & BE REAL

### SCRIPTURE READING

**DNA Groups** should all follow the same **Bible reading plan**. Every group member must keep up with the **weekly reading** assignments. A sizable portion of the weekly meetings are dedicated to **discussing the readings**, so a member who has not done their part will be lost. Additionally, they will hinder their fellow members because they won't be able to contribute to the discussion and enhance their learning.

We recommend that groups use the **F260 Bible reading plan** from **Replicate Ministries**. The plan has five readings per week, and each day's reading takes less than ten minutes. By having two days off from reading, there is an opportunity to catch up each week if you happen to miss a day or two. Additionally, the selection of readings gives readers a **good overview of the Bible** and is careful to include all of the major passages essential for Christians to know. **The F260 plan** also provides **memory verses** from that week's reading.

### JOURNAL ENTRY

Every day, after reading the assigned passage, group members should complete what's called a **S.O.A.P. Journal**. **S.O.A.P.** stands for **Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer**, and it provides an outline for each journal entry. Members will highlight a verse that stuck out to them in their reading and write it out at the top of their page. Then, they'll explain in a sentence or two what the verse means or what stood out. Next, they'll write briefly how the verse applies to everyday life. Finally, they'll write a prayer response to what they've read. *(For more detailed instructions or an example, see the Appendix)*

The entire **journal** can be anywhere from four to ten sentences. This is an important aspect of a **DNA Group** and should not be skipped! Writing the verse and spelling out how it applies helps move it from the head to the heart better than almost anything you can do.

### BIBLE MEMORIZATION

One of the most transformative aspects of a **DNA Group** is **Bible memorization**. The Psalmist wrote, *"I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you"* (**Psalm 119:11, NIV**). There is a direct connection between the Scripture and our actions.

Everyone in the **DNA Group** should **memorize** a designated verse each week. If you're using the **F260 reading plan**, you can use the verses provided each week. When everyone comes together, you should take turns reciting the verse from memory.



## SHOW UP & BE REAL

Lastly, group members are expected to **show up** to the meeting week in and week out and **be honest**. When you select a time to meet, it should be at a time that every group member can keep. There will be exceptions—people will travel for work or be sick—but generally speaking, everyone should show up every week.

It does no one any good to show up every week and lie to themselves, the Lord, and the group. **DNA Group** should be a safe place where people can **be honest** about what's going on in their lives. They should know they will not be condemned or shunned but instead met with **grace** and

the **gospel**. But the first step is being willing to **be real**.

## OPTIONAL: OTHER READING

Some **DNA Groups** may choose to do additional reading on top of their weekly Bible passages. This is a great way to grow in a specific area. You may decide to read a book on leadership, parenting, evangelism, or a number of other topics. If you opt to do this, be sure that everyone is on board with the added workload. You'll also need to ensure you allot more time for your weekly meetings to discuss the book. This keeps you from stifling the other important aspects of the meeting.

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# THE FIRST MEETING

## BREAK THE ICE

Your first meeting will look a little different than the rest. Greg Ogden has this to say about the first meeting(s):

*The leader should be aware that as you begin, people often come together a bit anxious, especially if the participants don't know each other well. They will be asking themselves what this experience will be like, how personal they will have to get, and will they enjoy being with these people. Therefore, it is important that you do something light in your first few times together to introduce yourselves to each other. Laughter is a very good antidote to anxiety. As you are just starting to engage the curriculum, I would suggest that you reserve a block of time (approximately twenty minutes) so that each person, one per week, can share the story of their faith journey.*

I think Ogden is right. Your new group will need some time to settle in, so be aware of that as you lead.

## SET EXPECTATIONS

It's also important to go over the **expectations** from the previous section. Talking about them clearly and directly together will help reinforce their seriousness.

You might also consider having each group member sign a **covenant** agreeing to the expectations. *We've provided one you can use in the appendix.* This is also a good time to **encourage communication**. Trade numbers and make it clear that if someone is going to miss group or be late, they should let everyone know. It may be helpful to start a group text message where you can talk about these things as well as check on each other throughout the week.

## CLARIFY TIMING

You'll want to confirm that the **time** and **place** you're meeting works for everyone and that there are no foreseeable conflicts. You should also determine how long your group will meet. We recommend 12 to 18 months but no more than 24 months.

## MULTIPLICATION

The first day, like every day, is a great time to remind your group that the goal is for each of them to **lead their own group** once this one finishes.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Finally, be sure you begin planning the **accountability questions** you'll ask each other. Select several for the group (see

*appendix*) and also ask each member to choose one or two specifically for themselves. Emphasize in this meeting that every member is responsible for making the group a place of **honesty**. Everyone will have to be committed to protecting each other's **privacy**. Everyone also needs to agree to be honest with one another.

## SET THE TONE

The members of your new **DNA Group** will likely be nervous about what they're getting themselves into. **Encourage them** by telling them how excited you are to begin, that you're all in this together, and that you're confident the Lord will use your time in big ways.

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# THE WEEKLY MEETING

Your **DNA Group** should meet every week to **discuss the reading, recite your verses, care for one another, hold one another accountable, and pray**. These meetings, over time, will become cherished hours spent with dear brothers and sisters in Christ. They will likely become one of the most **spiritually fulfilling** parts of your week.

## TIME & PLACE

You should choose a **setting** for your meeting that is convenient for all of the members. This can be a **coffee shop, a restaurant, someone's home**, or any other place where you'll be able to sit and talk for a while. Pick one place and stick to it week in and week out. Having it in the same place every week takes some of the thought out of it. For the same reason, it's important to meet at the same time each week. Talk with your group to select a

**time** that works for everyone every week. You will likely need between **75 and 105 minutes** for the **DNA Group** meeting.

## AGENDA

There is a lot of freedom in how you structure your **DNA Group** meeting. The only non-negotiables are **prayer, Scripture, and accountability/care**. How you order these things and how much time you spend on each is up to you. You'll naturally have some time of **catching up** when you come together. This is good and important, but be careful not to let it go on too long. You'll want to confirm that the time and place you're meeting works for everyone and that there are no foreseeable conflicts. You should also determine how long your group will meet. We recommend 12 to 18 months but no more than 24.

You're here for a purpose: "to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus." (2 Peter 3:18) Circumstances may dictate that an entire meeting be devoted to prayer or discussing a specific accountability or care issue. Let the Holy Spirit guide you in how you spend your time. It's a good idea to go into the meetings with a general

plan that everyone is familiar with, but don't be afraid to adjust as needed. If you find you're consistently skipping an element—perhaps prayer or accountability—you'll want to correct that and insist it be included.

**Below is a meeting outline that we recommend:**

PRAYER	SCRIPTURE	ACCOUNTABILITY
5 - 10 MINUTES	35 - 40 MINUTES	15 - 20 MINUTES
<p>Begin and end your meeting with <b>prayer</b>. As you open, ask the Lord to bless your time, to encourage you, to make you honest, and to glorify Himself. Use the closing <b>prayer</b> time to pray for specific requests for each other.</p> <p>Encourage group members to write down each other's <b>prayer requests</b> so they can pray for one another and check in throughout the week.</p>	<p>Spend some time discussing your <b>journal entries</b> from the previous week's <b>Bible reading</b>.</p> <p>Ask each other what stood out, what was encouraging, what was confusing, etc.</p> <p>Dialogue about how to apply the <b>Scriptures</b> to your lives.</p>	<p>It's important that <b>DNA Group</b> members hold each other <b>accountable</b> to the standards God's Word has set for us. The Bible also calls us to "spur one another on" in our faith (<b>Hebrews 10:24</b>).</p> <p>Take time to ask the <b>questions</b> you agreed on in your first meeting together. This is also the time when each member will recite their <b>memory verse</b> for the week.</p>

### A FEW CONSIDERATIONS

For **accountability** to work, everyone has to be on board. You can ask all the questions you want, but if a group member is committed to hiding the **truth**, it won't matter. Be sure your group understands that this is a place of **safety** where they can be **honest** with one another. Also, leaders set the bar for **vulnerability**. Your group will only be as

open as they see you being. So, take the lead in sharing your heart.

Remember, the response to **falling short** is always the **grace** and **mercy** of Jesus. The goal of **accountability questions** is to remind us to "live up to what we have already attained" in Christ (**Phil 3:16**). Work hard to point struggling Christians to the finished work of Christ on their behalf.



# HOW TO MULTIPLY

The goal of a **DNA Group** is to make disciples who make **disciples**. Once your group runs its course, each member will be more than **equipped** to lead their own group. Having a plan for **multiplication** can make all the difference.

## TALK ABOUT IT EARLY & OFTEN

The most important thing you can do to ensure your **disciples reproduce** is to talk about it regularly. Saying things like “*when you lead your own groups*” and “*next year when you’re a DNA Group leader*” will help reinforce the expectation of reproducing.

## LET THEM LEAD

Let your group members have plenty of chances to **lead** the meetings. Over time, it should feel less like you’re the leader of a group and more like you’re a group of peers.

Experience is good, but **evaluated experience** is better. After you give someone else a turn at leading the meeting, give them some **feedback**. *What did they do well? Where could they improve? A teachable disciple* will be eager to hear how they can be a better leader.

## SELECT THE NEXT GROUP

About two months before your group comes to an end, encourage your members to begin looking for people to populate their **DNA Group**. Remind them of the **F.A.T.** criteria, and encourage them to start inviting others. It can take some time to get two, three, or four people to commit to a group, so **recruiting** a few months ahead of time is wise.

## PASS IT ON

Once someone has been through a year or more of **DNA Group**, they’ll be more than **equipped** to lead their own. Still, you should remind them of the basics before you turn them loose. Give them a copy of this guide and answer any questions they may have.

## BE THERE FOR THEM

Finally, make yourself **available** to them after your group ends, especially during the first few months of a new **DNA Group**. Having you there as a **trusted advisor** will bolster their confidence. Check on them each week to see how the launch is going and how they’re doing personally.



***We were made to be disciples who make disciples until the day when we see the face of the One we follow, and together with all nations we experience His satisfaction for all of eternity.”***

*Multiply by  
Francis Chan*

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WHAT IF SOMEONE TALKS TOO MUCH?

From time to time, you'll have eager group members who **dominate the conversation**. This can harm the group dynamic and discourage others from participating.

If this is happening, **address it quickly**. Ask the individual to stay after group for a few minutes to talk. Point out that they are dominating the conversation. Encourage them to give other people a chance to speak and to be mindful of how much they're speaking.

If the problem does not immediately get better, pull them aside again and warn them that their unwillingness to put others above themselves is a problem. Let them know that they'll have one more opportunity to correct the issue. If it does not improve, you should ask them to leave the group.

## WHAT IF SOMEONE DOESN'T DO THE WORK?

One of the agreements everyone makes by joining a **DNA Group** is that they'll do what's required. A **consistent pattern** of not reading, journaling, or memorizing is a problem. People do what they consider important. Someone who isn't engaging the Scriptures doesn't consider them a **priority**, which means they're not ready for a **DNA Group**.

We recommend having one conversation with the person about living up to their **commitments**.

This conversation will be easier if your group members filled out a group **covenant** at the start of your time together. You can point out to them that they had committed to doing these things with the group. If they do not improve, you should ask them to leave the **DNA Group**.

Allowing someone to stay who does not keep up their end of the bargain will kill morale in your group. It will communicate that **discipleship** doesn't matter that much. That's the opposite of what we want to communicate in a **DNA Group**.

## WHAT IF SOMEONE MISSES TOO OFTEN?

Just like those who don't do the work, individuals who have **inconsistent attendance** bring the group down. Again, people make time for what they consider important. If they're not making time for group, assuming it's been scheduled with them in mind, then it clearly isn't a priority.

We recommend having one conversation with the person about living up to their **commitments**. This conversation will be easier if your group members filled out a **group covenant** at the start of your time together. You can point out to them that they made a **commitment** to coming. If they do not improve, you should ask them to leave the **DNA Group**.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## HOW DO I ENCOURAGE HONESTY & VULNERABILITY?

The Bible teaches believers to “*confess your sins to one another and pray for one another*” (**James 5:16**). **DNA Group** is the ideal place to be honest about **sin struggles** so that we can find victory over them, but this doesn’t come naturally to us.

The first step in encouraging **honesty** is to model it. You, as the leader, set the bar for **vulnerability**. Rarely will your group go beyond you in what they’re willing to share. So, take the lead here.

Second, be sure you leave enough space for it. When there is only five minutes left in your meeting, no one will want to open the can of worms that comes with **confessing sin**.

Lastly, when people do **confess sin**, be sure you meet them with grace while **encouraging repentance**. The goal of confession isn’t to ease our consciences but to help us turn from our sin. So encourage your group with the fact that they can be forgiven (**1 John 1:9**), and exhort them to turn from their sin (**2 Corinthians 2:10**).

## WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW HOW TO HANDLE SOMETHING A MEMBER IS STRUGGLING WITH?

If you create an atmosphere of **trust** and **grace**, you will find that your group members will begin to share some of the **burdens** of their heart.

Sometimes, these will be challenging situations. You’ll face things like pornography, adultery, doubt, suicidal thoughts, addictions, and more. If a member shares a struggle that you don’t feel equipped to handle, don’t panic.

First, respond with **compassion** and a **listening ear**. Resist the urge to “solve” the problem on the spot. Remind them how the **gospel** speaks to their situation, and let them know you’re there for them.

Tell them you’re going to think about the best way to help and that you’ll follow up with them soon.

After the meeting, we recommend **calling a pastor to talk about next steps**. The pastor will help you put together a plan to **care** for that person or will recommend a **pastoral meeting** where they can begin working with the individual.

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“**Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.**”

*Galatians 6:1-2 (ESV)*





# APPENDIX



# DNA GROUP COVENANT & CHECKLIST

Use these resources to help you stay on track with your group and its expectations.



## DNA GROUP COVENANT

- I will **commit myself fully to God** with the anticipation that I am entering a time of accelerated spiritual growth and transformation.
- I will meet with my DNA Group for **at least one hour every week**, unless providentially hindered.
- I will **complete all assignments** on a weekly basis before my DNA Group meeting, in order to contribute to the discussion.
- I will contribute to an atmosphere 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 this discipleship journey with me.
- I will begin praying about **replicating the discipleship** process upon completion of this group.

**DNA Participant Signature:**

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**Date:**

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**DNA Group Leader Signature:**

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**Date:**

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# DNA GROUP CHECKLIST

## Before you begin

- Invite two to four people of the same gender to participate in your group*
- Select people who are faithful, available, and teachable*
- Clearly communicate the expectations and time commitment of the DNA Group*
- Select a regular meeting time and place that works for every member of the group*

## At your first meeting

- Have everyone sign the DNA Group Covenant*
- Spend some time getting to know one another's faith stories*
- Determine which accountability questions you will ask one another each week*
- Explain the reading plan your group will be using*
- Explain how to write a S.O.A.P. journal entry*
- Provide the list of Bible verses you will memorize together*
- Explain that the expectation is that everyone in the group will lead their own DNA Group when this one ends*

## DNA Group weekly tasks

- Read the assigned Bible readings*
- Complete a S.O.A.P. journal for at least two readings each week*
- Memorize the week's Bible verse*
- Pray for your fellow group members*

## Weekly meetings

- Spend a few minutes catching up and making small talk*
- Pray for your time together*
- Walk through the week's reading and discuss one of your journal entries with one another*
- Recite the week's Bible verse for one another*
- Ask each other accountability questions and provide care as needed*
- Close in prayer*

# S.O.A.P. JOURNALING



*The S.O.A.P. method* of reading the Bible helps us to intentionally seek to understand and apply God's Word to our lives in transformative ways.

**S.O.A.P.** stands for **SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, AND PRAYER**. As you journal, you are going to be moving through each of these four steps. After nailing down a reading plan and setting aside a time each day to spend in Scripture, you'll be ready to go.

## HOW IS IT SET UP?

After taking some time to ask God to speak to you through his Word, grab your notebook or journal, and start out by writing:

- **Today's date**
- **The passage of Scripture**
- **Title or theme that describes this passage**  
(you can fill this in when you are done as a helpful reference for you to look back at.)

## S- SCRIPTURE

Once you've got your heading done, go ahead and read your Scripture for the day. As you read, look for a verse or two that really stands out and speaks to you. Once you're done reading, write the letter **S**, or the word **SCRIPTURE**. Under this heading you can write out the following:

- **The chapter and verse numbers that especially stood out to you**
- **Fully write out these verses**

You will be amazed at what the Holy Spirit reveals to you as you take the time to slow down and physically write out Scripture. It's also makes it easier to look back on this passage if you want to revisit it in the future.

## O- OBSERVATION

Next, write the letter **O**, or the word **OBSERVATION**, under your last entry, and write down any observations about this passage that could help you better understand its meaning.

Here's a few questions to help you:

- **What jumps out to you in this passage?**
- **Who was this written by? written to?**
- **What's one thing you didn't notice before?**
- **Is there repetition, comparison, or contrasting?**
- **What is God intending to communicate through this text?**

Your observations may start out with things that are obvious, but they will gradually become deeper and deeper as you continue to practice. It's important to continue to learn how to engage the Scripture and wrestle with its meaning.

## A- APPLICATION

After writing your observations on the passage of Scripture, write down the letter **A**, or the word **APPLICATION**. Working to find the application in the text is one of the most important parts of this whole process. We are called not just to be hearers of the Word but doers of the Word. Use questions like these to help you discover the application of the text to your own life. You can use questions like:

- **How can this help me?**
- **Is there a specific action that I need to take or confession that I need to make?**
- **What would it look like to specifically apply this to my life where I live, learn, work, and play?**

Answering these questions is one of the most important ways to see God's Word come alive to us!

## P-PRAYER

Lastly, under all of these sections you can write the letter **P**, or the word **PRAYER**.

This is a time for you to respond to what God has spoken to you through his Word. You can ask God to help you live out what you've seen in this passage. You can thank God for the truth found in His Word, for his love, or for His care. You can confess in response to a conviction the Holy Spirit may have laid on your heart while reading. You can praise God for a part of His nature or character that was revealed to you. Whatever you do,

the important thing is to simply respond to the God who initiated the conversations with us through his Word.

As you continue to practice S.O.A.P.'ing through Scripture, you will see the Holy Spirit using your efforts to do a work in your heart, mind, and life. God doesn't want us to sit back and wait for Him to drop some truth into our laps. God desires that we would actively pursue Him. Jesus said, **"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you"** (*Matthew 7:7*).

## SAMPLE SOAP JOURNAL

<b>Date:</b>	<i>November 26, 2019</i>
<b>Read:</b>	<i>Philippians 3-4</i>
<b>Title:</b>	<i>The Secret of Contentment</i>
<b>S (Scripture)</b>	Philippians 4:11-13 "Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me."
<b>O (Observation)</b>	Paul shares with the Philippian church 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.
<b>A (Application)</b>	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. I need to look to Jesus to give me the strength I need to be content in every circumstance of life.
<b>P (Prayer)</b>	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.





# CARING WELL FOR OTHERS

At Two Cities Church, we see DNA Groups as one of the primary places that believers can receive care for the struggles of life that each of us experience. Below are a few suggestions for how you can love the people in your group by caring for them well. If at any time you feel like you could use some help in caring for someone, you can always ask your Community Group Leader for help or next steps.

## LISTEN WELL

- Listen with *loving curiosity*.
- Listen *more than you talk* to understand their reality and struggles.
- Listen *with your ears* — voice, tone, words, phrases, word pictures.
- Listen *with your eyes* — body language, facial expressions, tears, and demeanors.
- Listen *with your heart* — thoughts, emotions, and desires (TED).
- Listen for *evidences of God's grace* in the person's life and struggles.

## ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

- *Listen* — Good listening leads to good questions.
- *Slow down* — Listen to what is being said rather than having a conversation in your own head - thinking about what to say, how to respond.
- *Linger in the moment* — In one sentence, there can be many thoughts, emotions, and desires. In a moment, there can be many expressed movements and meanings.
- *Don't assume* — Ask clarifying questions for better understanding.
- *Ask open-ended questions* — Also don't offer multiple choices of what they may be thinking or feeling.
- *Ask probing questions* — Sometimes it takes deeper questions to get to the heart of people's struggles. Don't be afraid to try to go deeper.

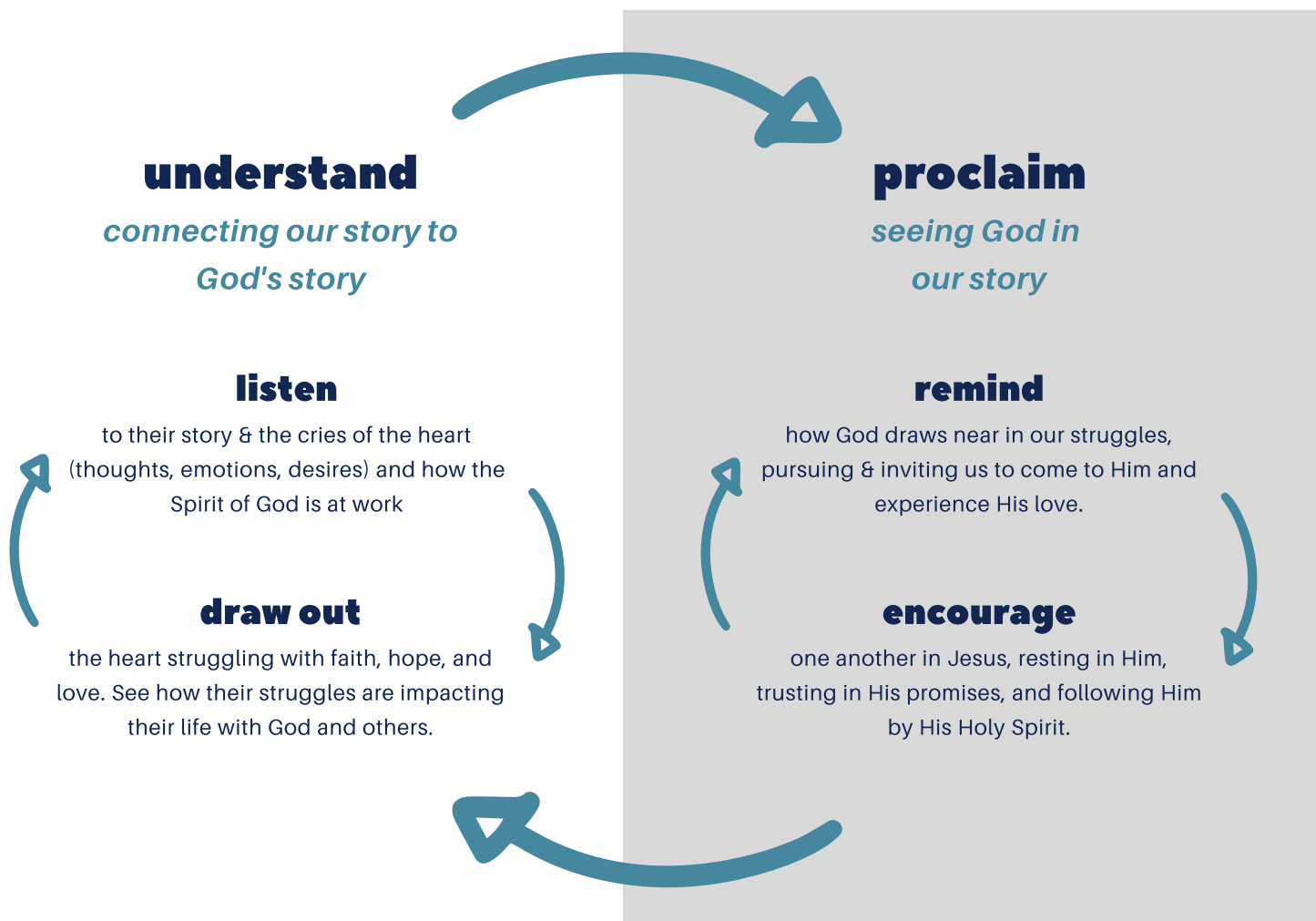
## THINGS NOT TO DO AS YOU CARE FOR OTHERS

- *Assume sin* is behind everything.
- Say *"I know how you feel"* or *"That happened to me"* which draws the focus back to yourself.
- Focus on the details of the situation while *forgetting to focus on Jesus*.
- Try to *convict the person*. Only God's Spirit convicts and opens eyes.
- Tell people what you think they need to hear versus *asking questions to help them to see their need for grace* in Jesus and to rest in His love.

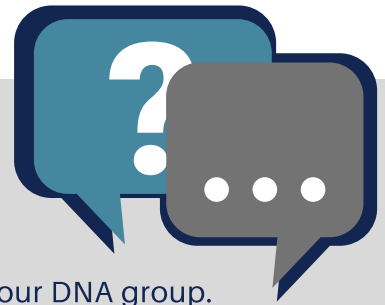
## STRUGGLES TO LISTEN FOR

- **Common Struggles**
  - **Fantasy** — imagining and longing for something that is different from your God-given reality.
  - **Guilt** — pain associated with something you've done.
  - **Shame** — pain associated with who you are.
  - **Fear** — anxious anticipation of something perceived to be threatening or dangerous.
  - **Anger** — an assessment you make and a stance you take — “That matters... and it’s wrong.”
  - **Sorrow** — deep sadness or distress, usually stemming from some form of loss.
- **Relational Struggles**
  - With **God** (vertical)
  - With **Others** (horizontal)
  - With **Ourselves** (internal)
- **Faith Struggles**
  - **Doubt**
  - **Dispair**
  - **Distance**
- **Spiritual Warfare**
  - **Deceit**
  - **Distraction**
  - **Discouragement**
  - **Division**

## GOSPEL CARE CYCLE



# ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS



Below is a list of various accountability questions that you can use with your DNA group. We'd recommend picking out several questions that are a good fit for everyone in your group. Additionally, each member of the group should offer one or two questions that they want to be asked each week. These can be specific to their life situations and struggles.

Whatever you decide, be sure you include a question regarding living on mission. All of our discipleship is pointless if we don't encourage one another to share Christ with a dying world.

- Have you spent daily time alone with God in **prayer** and in the **Word** this week?
- Have you **shared the gospel, shared your testimony**, or taken intentional steps toward that end by building a relationship with an unbeliever this week?
- Have you given **quality time with your family** priority this week?
- Have you **loved/served** your **wife** this week? Have you **respected/submitted** to your **husband** this week?
- Have your thoughts been **pure**? Have you resisted lustful, envious thoughts or exposed yourself to inappropriate materials this week?
- Have you participated in any **divisive behavior or attitudes** that have caused relational strain or damage with anyone this week?
- Have your **words built up or tore down** others or yourself? Have you exposed yourself or contributed to **gossip** this week?
- Have you given in to any **addictive behaviors** this week?
- Have you **taken care of your body** through regular physical exercise and proper eating/sleeping habits this week?
- Have you lacked **integrity** in your financial dealings or **generosity** this week, or **coveted** something that does not belong to you this week?
- Have there been any **lies you have been believing** this week that have undermined the truths of the gospel?
- Have you been **completely honest** with your answers?

# RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



## Bible Reading Plan

For *DNA Groups*, we would highly recommend *Replicate Ministry's F260 Bible Reading Plan*. This manageable plan highlights the foundational passages of *Scripture* that every disciple should know. The *F260 Plan* has you read one or two chapters a day for 5 days each week, with an allowance for weekends off. It also gives suggested *Scripture memorization* that goes along with the weekly Scripture. Get the *F260 Bible Reading Plan* here: <https://tinyurl.com/yy2mtzp4>



## Discipleship

- *Rediscovering Discipleship* and *Growing Up* by Robby Gallaty
- *Disciple Her* by Kandi Gallaty
- *Discipleship Essentials* and *Transforming Discipleship* by Greg Ogdan
- *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert Coleman
- *Fight Clubs* by Jonathan Dodson



## Bible Study Tools

- *The ESV Study Bible*
- *The CSB Study Bible*

## Scripture Memory

- *Verses* (iPhone | Android)
- *Fighter Verses* (iPhone | Android)
- *An Approach to Extended Memorization of Scripture* by Andy Davis.



## Nuture (Care)

- *Side by Side* by Ed Welch
- *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hand* by Paul Tripp

## Accountability

- *Covenant Eyes* (Computer Device Software)



## Prayer

- *Old Paths, New Power* by Daniel Henderson
- *Praying the Bible* by Donald Whitney
- *Prayer* by Tim Keller
- *Echo* (iPhone | Android)



*All human books grow stale after a time - but with the Word of God the desire to study it increases, while the more you know of it the less you think you know. The Book grows upon you: as you dive into its depths you have a fuller perception of the infinity which remains to be explored."*

*Charles Spurgeon*