

Discovery Groups

Discovery groups are mixed-sex discipleship groups of up to about 12 people. They are usually formed when reaching out to a new family, friendship group or community, or by a few Growth Groups meeting together for mutual encouragement.

Because Growth Groups are limited to no more than 4 people, a Discovery Group is often more appropriate when reaching *groups* of people rather than ones and twos.

Once people in a Discovery Group start to commit themselves to Jesus you should encourage them to form Growth Groups for more effective discipling and outreach. Meanwhile, the Discovery Group can naturally transition into a Missional Community.

As with Growth Groups, you should disciple for obedience and mission from day one, **even if the members are not yet believers**. You will be amazed at what the Holy Spirit will do if you simply expect the members to pray and be obedient to scripture from the start. Discovery Groups have proved to be a very powerful means of introducing the Gospel to new communities around the world, including very closed Muslim communities. They are often started by women and should always aim to include whole families.

They are particularly good when reaching new communities because the group learns more quickly and collectively remembers more than when working with an individual. Discovery Groups also provide protection against error because they are self-correcting (see 5.c below).

Format for a Discovery Group meeting

1. Give thanks – be specific and respond in worship.
2. Ask for help – prayer and action for personal practical or spiritual needs.
3. Reach out – prayer and action for practical or spiritual needs in the community.
4. How has each need or concern moved on since last week?
5. Bible Discovery:

- a. Read a passage of scripture (see list below).
 - b. One person re-tells the passage in their own words, as if telling a friend.
 - c. Ask the group, “Was anything important missed out or added?” If anything was added, ask “Where did you get that from in this passage?”
 - d. Ask each person the four discipleship questions:
What does this tell us about people's character or nature?
What does this tell us about Jesus or God?
What does Jesus want to say to me personally?
Who does Jesus want me to share this message with?
6. When shall we meet again?
 7. When shall we meet the community/individual needs we identified?

Each person should keep a notebook of the spiritual and practical actions they agree to take.

Trusting the Holy Spirit

From the very start we must let the Holy Spirit do His work with His word in His children. This surprising principle has been discovered and proved time and again by church multiplication movements in every culture across the world:

- Do not explain scripture to lost people or early converts!

At the heart of this principal is that we must demonstrate that we allow scripture to have authority in our lives, not that we are an authority over scripture. The Holy Spirit has been sent by Jesus to reveal His glory through Scripture. We must let Him do His work.

Our role is to guide people in their own reading and interpretation of scripture, which is what Philip did for the eunuch in Acts 8:31 (NIV has “explains” but most translations have “guide” which is much closer to the Greek). Helping someone to understand the words of scripture and to ask the four discipleship questions and answer them for ourselves is as far as we need to go in a Discovery Group.

Another important point is that if, by the display of our great wisdom, we make people feel they need an expert in order to understand scripture, then we prevent multiplication of the group. If every group feels they need an expert bible teacher then the number of groups becomes limited to the number of available experts.

Becoming a Church

Whenever a member of a Discovery Group decides to follow Jesus they should be baptised by the person who led them to Christ or the leader of the group. When several members of the group have been baptised – guess what? You have a church – a group of people, some of whom are believers, meeting in Jesus’s name and in His presence. What happens next is up to you, but we hope you will multiply Growth Groups and Missional Communities and start new Discovery Groups in other communities.

Scripture readings for a Discovery Group:

Leviticus 4:1-35

Isaiah 53

Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-20

Matthew 3, John 1:29-34

Matthew 4:1-11

John 3:1-21

John 4:1-26, 39-42

Luke 5:17-26

Genesis 1:1-25

Genesis 2:4-24

Genesis 3:1-13

Genesis 3:14-24

Genesis 6:1-9,17

Genesis 12:1-8, 15:1-6

Genesis 22:1-19

Exodus 12:1-28

Exodus 20:1-21

Leviticus 4:1-35

Isaiah 53

Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-20

Matthew 3, John 1:29-34

Matthew 4:1-11

John 3:1-21

John 4:1-26, 39-42

Luke 5:17-26

Mark 4:35-41

Mark 5:1-20

John 11:1-44

Matthew 26:26-30

John 18:1-19:16

Lk 23:32-56

Lk 24:1-35

Lk 24:36-53

John 3:1