

What to Expect in a Discipleship Group

Something very powerful happens when Christians who are eager to grow in their faith commit to:

- ▶ “Do life together” for a season.
- ▶ Gather regularly to open God’s Word and wrestle with what it means to follow Jesus.
- ▶ Trust the Spirit of God to bring about transformation in and through them.

Here’s a list of five things you can expect if you participate in a discipleship group:

1. **You’ll be surprised.** When we dig deeply and ponder prayerfully, we discover things about God, about walking with Christ, and about ourselves that we never knew. Disciples should be curious and open.
2. **You’ll be transformed.** Jesus promised that those who are spiritually hungry and thirsty would be satisfied (Matthew 5:6). Disciples can expect to know God better and grow in the faith.
3. **You’ll be encouraged.** Nothing is more inspiring than being in a group where the members are experiencing transformation and are being used by Jesus to make an eternal difference in the world. Disciples must be committed and faithful to build each other up in the faith.
4. **You’ll encounter resistance.** The enemy of our souls doesn’t want us growing in the faith. He will pull out all the stops to oppose, distract, and tempt us. Disciples have to be wary and persistent.
5. **You’ll be corrected.** The more we study God’s Word, the more we realize that many of our notions about life and the spiritual life are simply wrong. Disciples need to be humble and teachable.

If you are up for all that, here are five important challenges:

1. **Be committed.** The old saying is true: You get out what you put in. Show up. When you miss a group meeting, others can't benefit from what God is teaching you. But don't just attend. Merely showing up to meetings doesn't lead to growing up in the faith. Study. Ponder. Wrestle. Then come prepared to participate.
2. **Be authentic.** It's always tempting to try to make ourselves look better—more spiritual, more solid, etc.—than we really are. But no one benefits from that kind of dishonesty. You don't need to share your deepest secrets, but be a truth-teller even when the truth is hard or ugly. Often one member's transparency and vulnerability can set the tone for an entire group. Be that person!
3. **Be trustworthy.** Help make the group a safe place. Adapt the "Vegas philosophy": *What's said in the group stays in the group.* Don't blab the secrets of others. There's no quicker way to kill a group.
4. **Be realistic.** Groups aren't heaven on earth. You won't "click" with everyone. Some nights the discussions will drag—or you'll come away with more questions than you had when you showed up. That's okay. Remember discipleship is a lifelong process, not an eight- or thirty-week program. Hang in there. Long journeys take a lot of little steps.
5. **Be prayerful.** Jesus said, "Apart from me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Without the presence of Christ, your group will be a mere meeting. But if, in a spirit of faith and surrender, you summon and submit to the infinite power of God, who knows what might happen?

[Leader's Note: Copy these sheets and hand them out to each member of your group; then read and discuss.]