

Albert City, IA

Evangelical FREE CHURCH

TO KNOW CHRIST & MAKE HIM KNOWN

Discipleship Groups

At the Albert City Evangelical Free Church, we encourage everyone to be a part of a Life Group and to consider being a part of a Discipleship Group (D-Group). It is our highest hope that every person is participating in at least one of these two forms of Gospel-centered community. *While you find community in a Life Group, you learn to be and make disciples in a D-Group.* This is where we live up to our mission in an even greater way of “to know Christ and to make Him known.”

What is a D-Group?

A D-Group is a gender-specific closed group of 3 to 5 believers (including the leader) who meet most weeks for the purpose of making disciples through accelerated spiritual transformation.

The time period to meet is ideally 12 months as part of a yearly commitment. A person joins the D-Group by *invitation* or by signing their groups up online with a leader already established. It is encouraged that groups are formed out of relationships from their Life Groups.

A D-Group is different from Life Groups. The main purpose is for believers to go deeper in their walk with Christ. While Life Groups emphasize *community* and *support*, D-Groups emphasize *commitment* and *accountability*. The result will be disciples who make disciples. Each one that takes part has an understanding up front that at the end of the 12 months, they are to multiply by taking on 3-4 people themselves to disciple in the same way.

D-Group meetings follow the ***Three Thirds Method***:

- [Looking back](#) (20 mins) for **accountability** to review how you did with your commitments.
- [Looking up](#) (20 mins) for **absorption** to receive direction from the Lord.
- [Looking forward](#) (20 mins) for **application** to plan and practice how you will obey the Lord in the coming week.

How do I find a D-Group?

If you would like to be in a D-Group, you can either ask church leadership to assign you a group or you can form your own group (with a decided upon leader) and register it online. If you currently are in one, talk to the Life Group leader for more information on a D-Group, or talk to Pastor Jason. Any entirely new D-Groups (with no members having previous experience in one) will be required to have an orientation training meeting with Pastor Jason before starting.

How do I lead a D-Group?

The only requirement for leading a D-Group is that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ that is intentionally seeking after Him. You do not have to be a polished teacher or scholar. You just need to lead a group from a position of humility. Be like the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:1 – “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”

As a D-Group leader, you do set the tone for the group. Lead with humility, but at the same time with accountability to each person. Encourage everyone to continue in his or her time of reading God’s Word, always being prepared for the group meeting. Hold strong that everyone is memorizing the Scripture verses, reading their Bible passages and preparing the “H.E.A.R. Journals” each week. Be sure to lead by example.

How do I choose disciples?

1. Pray about whom God would have you ask.
2. Consult with Pastor Jason or the “D-Group Leadership Team” for people suggestions and ways to launch and lead the group.
3. Approach and invite.
 - a. Be sure that your group consists of people who are faithful, available and teachable.
 - b. As you approach someone, do not ask him or her, “Would you like for me to disciple you?” That may come across wrong! Ask them, “Would you join

me in a D-Group for the purpose of studying the Bible, memorizing Scripture, and praying together?”

4. Covenant with them to be committed and accountable to each other for 12 months, meeting most weeks, and committed that they will replicate at the end by finding 3-5 people of their own to disciple (see the D-Group Covenant below).

What resources are available to use?

We recommend the F-260 Bible reading plan, which covers the entire meta-narrative of Scripture through 5 weekly readings (with weekends off). You can purchase this on Amazon by following this [link](#) or by searching for the “H.E.A.R. Journal,” but its name on Amazon is the “Replicate Journal.” We have copies of this that you can look over and get familiar with before purchasing.

How many people should be in the group?

Because accountability works well in a smaller setting, the ideal size of a disciple-making group is 3 to 5 – you and 2 to 4 other people. We recommend that you do not have more than 5, and remember that a one-on-one relationship is not ideal.

Where should we meet?

Find a meeting place away from the church. Restaurants, coffee shops, diners, and homes are all good options. Meeting outside the church in the community encourages your group members to publicize their faith, teaching them it is okay to read the Bible at a restaurant or pray in public. Be sure to select a place that is convenient to all group members.

How often should we meet?

Ideally, you should meet once a week for 60-90 minutes. You can meet more frequently, but it is important that you meet at least once a week. This schedule does not prohibit those you are discipling from calling you throughout the week or coming by for counsel when needed. It is important to remember that discipleship is about the relationship between you and your group members, not about checking a requirement box. Disciple-making is a way of life, not a program.

Is there an attendance requirement?

Absolutely yes, and it is not negotiable. The first time you meet with a potential group, be sure to explain the *Disciple-Making Covenant* with them. Since you will be spending your lives together for the next twelve to eighteen months, you want to know if they are

committed. Some people will not agree to do this and will change their mind. That is okay. Allow potential disciples to opt out of the group on the front end after understanding the expectations spelled out in the disciple-making covenant. Remember, you are looking for people who want to be discipled, people who have a desire to grow and learn. An unwillingness to commit reveals that they are not ready to be in a D-Group.

Should I disciple unbelievers?

In order to be discipled, you have to be a disciple of Christ. The entire group needs to be born-again believers seeking to grow in righteousness. We recommend that at the very first meeting, to ask each person to share his or her testimony with the others. You can also ask them to explain the gospel. This will help you in determining if all people are ready to continue with the group. (For help, see the *Spiritual Journey Inventory*)

What do D-Group meetings look like?

Every D-Group has three main components: **LOOKING BACK**, **LOOKING UP**, and **LOOKING FORWARD**. The following is an easy order to follow to keep you on task each week:

1. Prayer

- a. Thank God for the time you now get to share together. Ask for God's wisdom and encouragement by way of the people and passages you discuss.

2. LOOK BACK: Accountability

a. Personal Connection

- i. Briefly share highs and lows of the week
- ii. Share any praises or disappointments

b. Personal Questions

- i. Ask specific questions related to action steps shared in last meeting.
- ii. All accountability should be saturated with grace, not legalism.
- iii. You can't expect what you don't inspect.

c. Scripture Memorization

- i. Everyone quotes the Scripture
- ii. Different person to start each week

3. LOOK UP: Absorption

- a. **Share H.E.A.R. Journals.** Have everyone share 1-2 of their H.E.A.R. journal entries from the week.
 - i. **Highlight**
 - ii. **Explain**
 - iii. **Apply**
 - iv. **Respond**

4. **LOOK FORWARD: Application**

- a. **Identify 1-2 specific action steps the Holy Spirit is prompting you to do in the week ahead.**
 - i. These should be in response to your reading or a current life situation.

- b. **Prayer requests and closing prayer**
 - i. Pray specifically for the action steps mentioned.
 - ii. Pray for other requests.

**After several months, be sure to let each member have a time at leading the group as a whole. This will help in preparing them to lead others.

How do I challenge my D-Group to memorize Scripture?

The best way to do this is to hold your group accountable each week to reciting the verses to one another. Let someone different start each week, but every person needs to be given an opportunity to show that they have memorized the Scripture for the week. Make it a priority to all.

When should I ask someone to leave the D-Group?

This is one of those tough questions that no one wants to deal with, but unfortunately there may be times in which you have to be prepared to ask someone to step away from your group. Always approach someone with much humility and grace in any of these cases.

Possible good reasons for asking someone to leave include:

- Not a teachable spirit
- Not faithful in attending meetings
- Not completing assigned work
- Not putting in the kind of effort required, such as not taking part in discussion each week.
- They are living a lifestyle of blatant and unrepentant sin, etc. Be sure to approach them as given in Matthew 18.

What if I don't know the answer to a question?

There should never be any pressure at all to know everything. None of us know everything or we would be God. We all should seek to be life-long learners so if we do not have an answer, just admit that you don't know it, but commit to finding it out. Go to one of the pastors, or another spiritual leader, to be able to help you. Study and find the answer through the Scriptures. That way God uses that time to impress it upon your heart.

When do I send out disciples to make disciples?

From the beginning of initiating the group, the expectation of every person should be to multiply. Your group will be meeting for 12 to 18 months and then *the expectation should be that every member would start a group of their own*. Give each person several opportunities throughout the life span of the church to lead the group to experience what it is like to lead. Some groups will want to stay together longer because of the close bond that they have developed or for the mere fact of staying comfortable. Push forward encouraging them in forming other groups, reminding them of the goal.

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D-Group Covenant

I will commit to the following expectations:

- I pledge myself fully to the Lord with the anticipation that I am entering a time of accelerated spiritual transformation.
- I will meet with my D-Group for approximately 60-90 minutes most weeks, unless providentially hindered.

- I will complete all assignments on a weekly basis before my D-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 the discipleship journey with me.
- I will begin praying about replicating the discipleship process upon completion of this group.

Signed Mentee _____

Signed Mentor _____

Date _____

D-Group Leader Job Description

The D-Group Leader is responsible for continuing to disciple a gender-specific closed group of 3 to 4 believers who meet together weekly for 12 to 18 months for the purpose of accelerated spiritual transformation.

- Prayerfully initiate the group
 - Initiate a meeting to discover interest.
 - Schedule weekly group meetings (time, date and place) according to the consensus of the group.
 - Be available to Pastor Jason or the D-Group Leadership Team for helping prepare you to successfully launch and lead the group.
- Help to disciple the group
 - Coordinate each meeting to include the order of action each week for accelerated transformation.
--(See "What do D-Group meetings look like?" in D-Group FAQ's.)
 - Be available to your group throughout the week to talk through any questions, problems or prayer concerns.
- Attend D-Group Trainings / Meetings.

- All D-Group leader trainings will occur every two-months, usually on Zoom.
- Communicate regularly with your Life Group leader on how the group is progressing throughout the 12 to 18 month life span.

Sample H.E.A.R. Journal

Read: Philippians 4:10-13

Date: 9-4-23

H (Highlight) – *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.* Philippians 4:13

E (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.

A (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.

R (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.

Spiritual Journey Inventory

Use these questions towards the beginning of your D-Group to get acquainted with each other.

1. The story of how I came to know Christ is _____.
2. After coming to the Lord, I finally understood _____.
3. The closest I have felt to God in my life was _____.

4. The farthest I felt from God was _____.
5. If I could change one incident in my life it would be _____. Why?
6. One incident in my life that I would never change would be _____.
Why?
7. The turning point in my relationship with God was _____.
Why?