

DNA GROUP OVERVIEW & FLOW

VISION

The term “DNA group” refers to a group of, ideally, three people who meet together weekly to ⁽¹⁾ seek to be known, ⁽²⁾ bring the gospel to bear on each other’s lives, and ⁽³⁾ grow to become more like Jesus. The goal is not merely to hang out and have fun, or even to build friendships, though hopefully all of that will happen! The overall goal of a DNA group is to foster discipleship relationships that help each person grow to become more like Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

DNA is an acronym that reminds us of three key components of discipleship: Discover, Nurture, and Act. The purpose is to help one another to *discover* Jesus in the Scriptures and prayer, *nurture* the truths of the gospel in our hearts through gospel conversations, and faithfully *act* on what the Spirit calls us to do through being not only hearers, but also doers of the Word. DNA group meetings consist of sharing personal stories and struggles, asking questions, listening to each other, reading scripture, praying, speaking the truth in love, repenting and confessing sin, listening to the Holy Spirit, and submitting to one another. Beyond the weekly meeting, DNA groups are also designed to build trusting relationships with each other by sharing everyday life together.

GROUP STRUCTURE

- **Who:** A DNA group is for every follower of Christ. As you ask the Lord to highlight people who you might be in a group with, look for people that are believers (1) who are actively seeking Christ, (2) who desire to be known, and (3) who desire to be transformed by applying the gospel to the specifics of their lives.
- **Size:** The ideal size is three. This allows time for everyone to share and be prayed for, makes it easier to coordinate schedules, and to keep the meeting to a reasonable time limit.
- **Type of Group:** A DNA group is a same-gender, closed group. Unlike a community group or perhaps a bible study where new people are regularly invited to come visit, a DNA group is designed to be a set group where the same people commit to meeting, growing, and living life together.
- **Place:** A home or a setting that is private, comfortable for everyone, and free of distraction.
- **Time & Frequency:** Weekly for about 90 minutes (although they often go longer!). Make sure your group is consistent (meet even if one person can’t come). If you meet less than this or skip meetings on a regular basis, it will significantly reduce the intended impact the group is meant to have on your life.
- **Confidentiality:** When you join a DNA group, you are making a commitment to one another to keep confidential that which is shared with the group. The only exception is a situation where a person indicates they may harm him/herself or someone else.
- **Commitment :** When you join a DNA group, you are making a commitment to yourself and to the others in the group to be faithful in your attendance, punctuality, and participation. You are also asking others to hold you accountable to this.

YOUR FIRST TWO MEETINGS

1. Meeting 1: Beginning Connections & The Story of God

The formative stage of a DNA group is very important. The first few meetings will set the stage for how the group will interact in the future. *Beginning Connections:* Before discussing the Story of God, talk through how you each are feeling about starting the DNA Group and why you wanted to be a part of it. Share any thoughts you have about the weeks to come - things you are excited about or things that may challenge you, etc.

The Story of God: Next, whether or not the group members are already familiar with “The Story of God” or not, reviewing it is a great way to begin your first group meeting (Appendix 1).

2. Meeting 2: Sharing Your Stories

Each group member will share a 10-15 minute version of their personal/spiritual story. As each member of the group shares their, the other DNA partners will listen. But not just for the sake of showing empathy and compassion, though that is vitally important. Listen for the heart (Appendix 5). A person’s story has the potential to reveal where they have exercised faith in Jesus (gospel alignment), as well as where they have replaced Jesus as the only right object of faith (gospel distortion). Jesus is the only one who can save, and we regularly look to created things instead. These false saviors will often be revealed in our stories. After a person shares, each listener should take some time to share what impacted them and ask relevant questions. Then take a few minutes to pray for the person who shared before moving to the next person.

GOSPEL FOCUS

SCRIPTURE

As a group, decide how you would like to integrate scripture into your group and individual lives during the week. You can choose to read through passages together (like reading a psalm a day) or you may choose to each study something different. As you spend time in the Word during the week, ask yourself these four questions: (1) Who is God? (2) What has he done? (3) Who am I in light of that? (4) How do I live in light of that? It will help you to journal your answers as God reveals things to you.

GOSPEL CONVERSATION TIPS

Encourage one another as you...

- Remind one another that it is possible to live as new creations by relying on God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 5:17)
- Avoid advice giving
- Focus on gospel-oriented questions
- When sharing, avoid long stories that eat up time and often distract from the real issues
- When listening, avoid interrupting the other person's process by sharing your own story that relates
- Speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15)
- Address blind spots
- Encourage one another to be doers of the word, not just hearers (James 1:22).
- Take notes and write down goals to be met or actions to be taken in the coming week.

GOSPEL SHEPHERDING QUESTIONS

- What does repentance look like?
- What would redemption be for you?
- What is preventing that from happening?
- What is your sin in the situation?
- What is the sin behind the sin?
- How does that make you feel?
(emotions reveal beliefs)
- What lie are you believing?
- What does the Word of God say?
- How does the gospel apply to this?
- What does it look like for you to pursue unity?
- What does it look like for you to forgive?

DNA GROUP FLOW

(1) DISCOVER -- The 1st person to share starts here.

Sometimes the group may walk the first person through *all three questions* before moving to the next person. Other times *the whole group* may answer question 1, then question 2, etc. Decide what works best for your group.

1. **What has God been teaching you through the scriptures and prayer this week?**
2. **How have you struggled with sin/unbelief this week?**
 - Anger, bitterness, or unforgiveness?
 - Living in worry or fear?
 - Neglecting/mistreating spouse, family, or friends?
 - Damaging others by negative speech or actions?
 - Neglecting time in the Word or with God?
 - Sexual purity?
 - Being dishonest, lazy, or resentful at work?
 - Money: tithes and offerings, debt, stealing, wasting money, coveting?
 - Steward of physical health: rest, diet, exercise?
 - Steward of time?
 - Addictions: food, tech, alcohol, drugs, etc.?
3. **How is the Spirit leading you to repent and live in faith? What does that look like?**

(2) NURTURE -- The people listening start here.

1. Listen for the heart as the person shares his/her answers from Discover Step.
2. Ask good questions, utilizing:
 - Gospel Shepherding questions (Appendix 5 & 6)
 - X-Ray questions (see Appendix 7)
 - "Fruit to Root" questions (see appendix 9)
3. Speak the truth in love as the Spirit leads you, calling each person to repent of sin and believe the gospel. (see Appendix 8)

(3) ACT -- The person sharing finishes with this step.

1. Ask the Spirit, "What do you want me to do?" and "Who do you want me to tell?"
2. Repent and obey as the Spirit calls you to bear fruit in keeping with repentance.
3. Consider the following questions:
 - Which spiritual disciplines could I make greater use of? (prayer, fasting, private worship, etc.)
 - How is it going pursuing people far from God?
 - How is going with the people I'm discipling?
 - How is it going with those among "the least" that I am spending time with?
4. How am I exercising my spiritual gifts and natural talents to serve in my church?