



Discipleship Group Leadership Team

October 10, 2026

Personal & Group Prayer Requests

These were included in an email to all current Discipleship Group Leaders.

Administrative Nuts and Bolts

- **Life Groups are now officially called Discipleship Groups!** That change is intended to better reflect what our groups are intended for and actually do, so that those who want to join them
- Fall is here – **time for returning group leaders to meet with Brandy!** An email will be coming out asking you to pick a time to meet. Leaders who are leading for the first time, or those who have new groups, will be meeting with Brandy in the spring, when you've had more time to observe your group's dynamic.
- **If your group is doing the sermon notes**, please encourage them to be doing the full Prepare – Attend – Reflect – Act discipleship rhythm. An outline of that is available at www.gracecomm.org/growasadisciple and forms the structure upon which the sermon notes are built each week. In short, your members should be preparing by studying the weekly Scripture passage on their own, attending the sermon, and then reflecting and acting on what they have learned in your group discussion time, using the questions provided as a guide/starting point.
- **If your group is not doing sermon notes**, make sure you are still emphasizing the general rhythm of discipleship – prepare for group, attend group, reflect on what you learned, identify how you can act on what you have learned. Many curricula already have this built in, but being overt about it helps our people learn the rhythm that accompanies growing in faith.

Healthy Discipleship Groups

Introduction – Our groups are discipleship groups. This differentiates them in a meaningful way from other types of groups that churches often offer. For example, Bible studies focus on “what did you learn?” Life/community groups focus on fellowship and social connections. Both are valuable and important components of Christian life.

Distinctive feature of discipleship groups: The main focus of our groups is spiritual growth through applying biblical knowledge. The key question these groups look to answer is “How are you walking this out?” Discipleship groups center on the two key things the Bible identifies as part of discipleship: **transformation** (2 Corinthians 3-4) and **multiplication** (Matthew 28:16-18). **People are first discipled and then become disciplers.**

Three key ingredients of healthy Discipleship Groups:

1. **Intentionally Relational** - Discipleship groups include fellowship, which is more than just “shooting the breeze” or chatting. It is social connection that emphasizes the most important commonality people can have – love for Jesus Christ. However, discipleship doesn’t stop at finding faithful brothers and sisters to be friends with. It digs deeper into real questions about how to be a Christian “when the rubber meets the road.” **Good discipleship groups are high-challenge and high-grace** – we call one another to do better, but do not shame one another for falling short.
2. **Application-Focused** – Discipleship Groups emphasize the hands-on part of faith, where we examine how to “walk the talk.” Spiritual growth is the purpose and goal and is addressed through discussion along the lines of: “If X is true about God, what does that mean for how I respond to Him?” “How will this component of my life look different if it is increasingly influenced by what Scripture says is true?”

This ingredient will be the main focus of the February 6, 2027 Discipleship Group Leadership Team meeting.

3. **Reproducibility** – Those who have been *discipled* become *disciplers*. If you are further up the hill, you turn and reach back down to help others behind you. This is a predominant reason that we seek to birth new Discipleship Groups out of existing ones.

This ingredient will be the main focus of the May 1, 2027 Discipleship Group Leadership Team meeting.

Ingredient 1 – Intentionally Relational

Jesus’ primary discipleship strategy was relationships - He obviously did a lot of teaching, talking to big groups, etc. However, when it came to molding the lives of those He chose to be His closest circle, His approach was to have them follow Him, live life beside Him, watch Him. They asked Him questions and He offered feedback, encouragement and correction as needed. Discipleship means attending first and foremost to our relationship with Him – making sure we are regularly in His Word and in prayer. It also means cultivating intentional relationship with other believers in which we can offer feedback, encouragement, and correction as needed.

Moving from “How’s it going?” to “How are you doing?” - We want to set the expectation that Discipleship Groups care most deeply about the spiritual growth of their members. This is accomplished primarily by setting the tone to be one of direct, clear attention paid to how each member is functioning in their walk with God. Where is that going well, and where can we help support your improvement? One tangible strategy is moving prayer requests to focus on the person in the group, not another person (e.g., if Clancy shares that his son is struggling, ask how it is affecting Clancy personally and focus your prayer on Clancy’s coping). This doesn’t mean we don’t care about or won’t engage in intercessory prayer, but it does mean that the main emphasis is on prayer for one another specifically. **Prayer requests for physical ailments are very common; guide your group to focus their requests on their spiritual health.**

Accountability cannot arise without trust - Group members must be able to trust that it is safe enough to share their genuine spiritual experiences, or else they won't do it. There is never a guarantee that it won't go sideways (our groups are run by and filled with other fallible humans), but there should be commitment to working it through together when it does. Key to trust are **consistency** (members have to show up regularly), **confidentiality** (no one can share with anyone else outside the group), **mutual respect** (two-way recognition of value and worth), **open communication** (being willing to discuss things openly, including conflict and difficulties), and **owning your own "stuff"** (having the integrity to recognize your own contribution to problems/conflicts and taking responsibility for improving in the future).

Take a moment to reflect honestly about where your group is with regard to being intentionally relational. Where do you need to improve? What specific strategies can you implement to assist you in doing so?

Mark Your Calendars!

- **Upcoming Discipleship Group Leadership Team Meetings**
 - Saturday February 6, 2027 – 10am to 11:30am
 - Saturday, May 1, 2027 – 9am to 2pm
- **Get Connected Lunches**
 - February 7, 2027 – OWLS and Moultons Host
 - April 11, 2027 – Eldridges and Carrolls Host