



Small Group Guide: Bridging the Gap - Connecting & Engaging (Part 2)

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word and to give your group practical ways to live out the call to make disciples.

Icebreaker

Share a time when someone invested in your spiritual growth beyond just a one-time conversation. How did their ongoing presence impact your faith journey?

Key Scripture

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

Key Takeaways

1. **Presence is Greater Than Information** - Discipleship requires more than sharing facts; it requires walking alongside people.
2. **Discipleship Happens "As You Go"** - Making disciples isn't a separate event but woven into our daily lives.
3. **We Must Open Our Bibles AND Our Calendars** - Knowledge without time commitment produces shallow connections.
4. **The Early Church Model** - Acts 2:42 shows devotion to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer as the foundation for authentic community.
5. **Your Workplace is a Mission Field** - Every sphere of influence is an opportunity to connect and engage with purpose.

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Understanding the Call

1. What's the difference between "making believers" and "making disciples"? Why does this distinction matter?
2. The pastor mentioned that 80% of people abandon fitness apps within the first month because "presence is greater than information." How does this principle apply to spiritual growth and discipleship?
3. Read Acts 2:42. What four things were the early church devoted to? Which of these comes most naturally to you? Which is most challenging?

Section 2: Examining Our Barriers

1. The pastor identified several barriers to discipleship:
 - "I'm too busy"
 - "I'm an introvert and relationships drain me"
 - "Nobody wants this church stuff"
 - "What if they ask me something I can't answer?"
2. Which barrier resonates most with you? Why?
3. The pastor said, "If God never stops working, we should never stop praising." How does this perspective shift the way we view our responsibility to disciple others?
4. Discuss this statement: "You can't make disciples if you are not a disciple." What does being a disciple (a constant learner) look like in your daily life?

Section 3: Practical Application

1. The pastor challenged us not to post more about politics than about Jesus. How can we maintain our witness while navigating divisive cultural issues?
2. Who in your life (workplace, neighborhood, family) might God be calling you to intentionally connect with for the purpose of discipleship?
3. What does it practically look like to "put your phone down" and be fully present with someone? When was the last time you did this?

Section 4: Moving Forward

1. The pastor mentioned several tools available at New Life (5-day devotionals, study guides, Bible studies, prayer meetings). How can you use these resources to grow as a disciple and disciple others?
2. Read 2 Timothy 2:2. Paul describes a four-generation discipleship chain (Paul → Timothy → faithful men → others). Can you identify where you are in this chain? Who discipled you? Who are you discipling?
3. The sermon emphasized that your testimony should include both blessings AND how God has convicted and grown you. Why is it important to share both aspects?

Personal Reflection

Take 2-3 minutes of silence for each person to consider:

- What is one specific action God is calling me to take this week to connect with

- someone for the purpose of discipleship?
- What barrier do I need God's help to overcome?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to commit to this week:

Option 1: The Coffee Connection

Invite one person to coffee or a meal with the specific intention of asking about their spiritual journey and sharing what God is teaching you.

Option 2: The Prayer Initiative

Ask at least three people this week, "Can I pray for you about anything?" Then actually pray with them in that moment.

Option 3: The Calendar Commitment

Block out one hour in your calendar specifically for discipleship—whether attending a Bible study, using the Dig Deeper devotional, or meeting with someone you're investing in.

Option 4: The Workplace Mission

Pray each morning before work: "God, give me one person I can connect with today and show me how to point them to You."

Option 5: The Digital Detox Dinner

Have one meal this week with family or friends where everyone puts their phones in another room and practices being fully present.

Group Activity

Testimony Sharing: Take turns sharing a "fresh testimony"—not just your salvation story, but something God has done in your life recently or is currently teaching you. Practice being vulnerable about both victories and areas where God is growing you.

Action Steps

1. Download the New Life app and commit to using the "Dig Deeper" 5-day devotional based on Sunday's message.
2. Identify your "one person" - Write down the name of one person God is laying on your heart to intentionally disciple or invest in spiritually.
3. Join a connection point - If you're not already involved, commit to attending one of the following:
 - Women's Bible Study (Mondays 10am or 6:30pm)
 - Men's Bible Study (Thursdays 6:30pm)
 - Wednesday Night Prayer (6:30pm)
4. Create a testimony list - Write down 3-5 recent examples of how God has worked

in your life (both blessings and convictions) to have ready to share when opportunities arise.

Memory Verse

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Closing Prayer Points

- Pray for God to remove barriers (busyness, fear, selfishness) that prevent us from connecting with others
- Ask God to open doors for divine appointments this week
- Pray for specific people group members identified as their "one person"
- Thank God that He is always with us as we go and make disciples

For Group Leaders

Preparation Tips:

- Review the sermon or watch it online before your group meets
- Consider sharing your own story of being disciplined or discipling someone
- Be ready to model vulnerability by sharing a "fresh testimony" that includes both victories and areas of growth
- Have paper and pens available for people to write down their "one person" and action steps

Follow-Up:

- Check in with group members next week about their chosen challenge
- Celebrate stories of connections made and conversations had
- Continue to emphasize that discipleship is a process, not perfection

Remember: "A disciple is not produced by a single conversation. It takes steady presence, opened Bibles, and opened calendars."