

At Village Church, we have a conviction that people become mature followers of Jesus in the environment of personal discipleship relationships where they engage regularly with Scripture. We want to be a church that is known as a place where people are equipped to take the initiative to engage with God's Word and grow in their faith.

Our busy culture makes intentional relationships hard to maintain. And when it comes to studying Scripture, many people don't feel capable or qualified to study God's Word meaningfully on their own.

If the church is doing its job well of equipping with Biblical truth during our gathered times together (Sunday morning and Village Groups), then the next step is to encourage each person to begin to engage with Scripture on their own. Village is committed to encouraging this step of taking a personal initiative in discipleship, because too many programs, events, and sign-ups can in the end circumvent growth and allow for a comfortably shallow depth of maturity.

Discipleship Groups are not another program or just another church group or bible study to join. These groups provide a simple structure and connection point for long-lasting and intentional discipleship relationships. This is the environment where each person who calls Village home can practice taking the initiative in engaging with Scripture and applying it to their life.

What do Discipleship Groups look like?

- 3 to 5 people, men with men and women with women
- Meeting weekly at a time that fits in with our schedule (morning, lunch, evening, weekend, etc)
- A focus on becoming more like Jesus in every area of life
- A primary diet of studying Scripture together
- Occasionally supplemented with timely topics
- Growing in Redemption > Mission > Community > Multiplication as a life of Worship
- Encouragement and support from the church

How do people get in a Discipleship Group?

The first place to start is to look for a few other people in your Village Group who you would like to do this with. Or, if you know other people at Village who would like to start a group with you, that's OK also. Join the "**Men's Discipleship**" or "**Women's Discipleship**" groups on **The City**, where you will receive encouragement and support for your group. If you do not already have people to start a group with, posts in these resource groups will help you make some connections, and you can ask your Village Group leader for help.

Everyone on The City can start their own Discipleship Group on The City, so this should be your next step in order to confirm who is in your group and give you a place to communicate. If you have any questions, always feel free to ask in the Discipleship Resources groups on The City – these groups are there to help you along the way!

How many people should be in a group?

Have a goal of **three to five** people (men with men and women with women) in your Discipleship Group. This is the ideal number, because it is small enough for a lot of focused attention from each person, but if one person needs to miss a week, the others can still meet. The group should not get any larger than this, however, and if five people are meeting consistently each week, they should consider if they can form two groups and involve more people in personal discipleship.

What do we study together?

Much like our Sunday morning teaching, Discipleship Groups will have a regular diet of studying books of the Bible together. Start with **Ephesians** or **James**, and then study through **John**.

Also as on Sunday mornings, there is room for doing short, topical studies of special interest, but this is a supplement to the main diet of books of the Bible. Suggested resources will be posted in The City resource groups. Be sure to begin your Discipleship Group with at least 12 weeks in Scripture – the goal is to learn to engage with God’s Word.

What does a typical meeting look like?

Discipleship Groups should be highly relational. Our focus is to go through life with each other as we seek to become more like Jesus, so this means time spent knowing what’s going on in each other’s lives. Meetings should be at a regularly agreed upon time once per week.

Read one chapter each week from the book of the Bible the group is studying. If the chapter is long and there is plenty to talk about, read half of a chapter.

- Spend time preparing the week before by reading over the next section of Scripture, and write down any notes, thoughts, or questions that you have to share with the group.
- Because we sit under good teaching on Sunday mornings and we learn to apply God’s Word at Village Groups, we are equipped to study and apply Scripture together in Discipleship Groups.

Text > Theology > Life

- **Text** – Spend time in the text before and during group time. Ask the Holy Spirit to draw your attention to what He wants you to know.
- **Theology** – Work through the verses together, trying to follow the flow of the author. Where is the gospel reflected in this text? The gospel is always in context. Strive to be Christ-centered, not performance-centered. Delight in Jesus before moving to application.
- **Life** – Share your life in light of the text and theology. Talk about your personal struggles and successes. Allow plenty of time for this, and ask each other questions. Share actual life, not insights.

Talk through some of these questions and remember to **focus on personal transformation and change, not just information**:

- What does this passage tell us about God? What does it say about who He is, what He has done and what He is doing in the world?
- What does this tell us about us? What are God’s purposes for us, and what has gone wrong?
- What do we learn from this text that helps us keep God and His glory at the center of our life?
- What is God meaning to show us in this passage, and why does it matter?
- What selfish ambitions and pursuits do you need to repent of in light of what we read?

- Pick up a Group Guide and Questions card for more questions!

Finally, spend some time praying together about what has been discussed.