



**DGROUPS**  
**ESSENTIALS**



# DGROUPS ESSENTIALS

## WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU LEAD

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1. CREATING ATMOSPHERE
2. LEADING A GREAT DISCUSSION
3. THE POWER OF PRAYER
4. BREAKING THE ICE
5. BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS
6. MULTIPLYING YOUR LEADERSHIP

## WELCOME TO YOUR DGROUP.

This is how you make a big church feel small.

This is how you make a direct impact on the lives of the people around you.

This is how you help people grow their faith.

Every DGroup looks different, but each is equipped to fulfill a unique purpose as we strive to make Jesus central to the world around us. Specifically, your DGroup helps you to fulfill the calling God has placed on your life to bring His love into the lives of those around you.

That's what DGroups are all about—connecting people and growing faith.

To be an excellent DGroup leader, you don't have to be perfect. You just have to be committed.

Committed to seeing people far from God raised to life in Christ.  
Committed to offering a place for people to connect with strangers and meet new friends.  
Committed to being there for people when the struggles of life challenge their faith.

As your pastors, we believe in you. Your passion and ability to make a difference in people's lives is a gift God has given you, and we're thrilled to have you on our team as we continue to surround our communities with the love of Christ.

Along the way, we're here for you. We want to equip you, encourage you, and empower you to become the leader God created you to be.

This is just the starting point. The best is yet to come!

# CREATING ATMOSPHERE

As leaders, the last ten percent of our preparation often becomes the first ten percent that people notice.

Sometimes, that last ten percent can make the difference between someone committing to an DGroup over the long haul and someone dropping out of a DGroup after one meeting.

Though adjusting your living room's lighting, smell, or arrangement may not seem to have a direct effect on what your DGroup will be doing, it can be the tipping point that allows people to feel welcome, invited, and cared for in your group.

## HERE ARE A FEW EASY WAYS TO USE ATMOSPHERE TO CREATE A GOOD DGROUP EXPERIENCE:

- **Brew coffee or bake cookies.** Filling your house with a pleasant smell can make people feel at home. Remember, this is an unfamiliar setting for most of your DGroup members, so anything you can do to welcome them is a bonus.
- **Clean up a little bit.** Spending a few minutes picking up any loose items laying around will go a long way. If you're short on time, remember: God gave us closets for a reason!
- **Provide enough seating for your DGroup.** Having enough seats shows that you prepared for the people in your Group, and it makes them feel valued.
- **Eliminate distractions.** Eliminating small distractions like cell phones or noisy pets helps keep group members engaged. Your DGroup hinges on discussion and prayer time, so do as much as you can to control the environment.

# LEADING A GREAT DISCUSSION

## EVERY DGROUP LOOKS DIFFERENT.

There's a common thread in every DGroup that sets it apart from any other gathering of people: a Christ-centered, meaningful, and encouraging discussion.

You don't need to have all the answers. As a matter of fact, you'll help people grow their faith the most when you're able to stop talking and facilitate a discussion among your group.

## HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO TRY:

- **Start with something easy.** Break the ice with a game, a few laughs, or some simple, surface-level conversations. This opens the door for your DGroup members to participate at a deeper level later on in the conversation.
- **Ask follow-up questions.** Pay attention to what your DGroup members are saying and don't be afraid to ask for more details. Though most people rarely share the full depth of their feelings at first, your follow-up questions give them permission to fully express their thoughts.
- **Allow room for silence.** Give your questions some time to breathe. Silence can give your Group members time to gather their thoughts and find a way to honestly approach a challenging subject.
- **Bring it back.** Allow the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion by following your DGroup's answers, even if they seem slightly off-topic. Use your instincts and allow the Holy Spirit to speak through you about anything your DGroup is wrestling with.
- **End with encouragement.** Think of your leadership role as one of a CEO: Chief Encouragement Officer. Wherever your discussion leads, offer an uplifting insight, thought, or action step that will give your DGroup members the hope they need to continue through the rest of the week.

# THE POWER OF PRAYER

Prayer is the lifeblood of our relationship with God. It's what turns our cries for help into a supernatural transaction, where God hears us and responds to our every need.

One of the unique qualities that sets a group of believers in Jesus apart is their ability to unite in prayer and leverage it to make a difference in their lives.

## HERE ARE A FEW DIFFERENT WAYS YOU CAN PRAY WITH AND FOR YOUR DGROUP:

- **Pray Out Loud.** Help people establish good prayer habits by praying out loud with your DGroup. It can be uncomfortable for some, but challenging people to pray out loud in your DGroup will give them confidence in their prayer life outside of your DGroup.
- **Prayer Partners.** Encourage your DGroup to pray for each other throughout the week by randomly assigning prayer partners at the end of your DGroup meeting. Have these DGroup members connect throughout the week to share any prayer needs.
- **Surround.** Every once in a while, have your entire DGroup surround one individual and pray over them at the end of your DGroup meeting. This will be an especially meaningful and encouraging moment for a DGroup member who may be going through a difficult time.
- **Group Prayer Messages.** Use Facebook, e-mail, or a text message thread for your DGroup members to share prayer requests with each other at any point in the week. This also gives people a channel to celebrate answered prayers with each other in real time.



# BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

One of the main reasons people decide to lead a DGroup is to help people build relationships with other believers in Jesus.

Meeting with your DGroup during your regularly scheduled meetings will provide stability as people begin to connect and grow their faith, but as a leader, your greatest ministry moments will likely happen outside of your regular DGroup meeting.

If you commit to developing healthy relationships with the people in your DGroup, you will become a trusted friend and counsel in the moments in life that matter the most.

## HERE ARE A FEW SIMPLE WAYS TO BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR DGROUP MEMBERS:

- **Meet outside of your DGroup.** A simple meeting over coffee or dinner shows that you're not just committed to being a leader, but to being a friend.
- **Text and call people regularly.** Investing in people's lives by consistently including them in yours is one of the easiest things you can do to build relationships with the people in your group.
- **Celebrate life events.** Wishing happy birthday or happy anniversary, celebrating promotions, baby announcements, and new marriages are ways to show your DGroup members that you genuinely enjoy sharing life with them.
- **Have fun together.** Breaking the norm is a good way to refresh and re-energize your DGroup. Not every DGroup meeting has to be serious. Every once in a while plan to do something fun – plan a group dinner, go bowling, or serve at one of our Outreach events together.



# MULTIPLYING YOUR LEADERSHIP

As your DGroup grows and progresses, you'll notice one or two people you couldn't imagine your DGroup without. When the time comes, ask yourself:

*What if they started a Group of their own?*

*How many more people could they reach?*

*How many more leaders could they empower?*

As long as we have new leaders, we can continue to reach more people and help them grow in their faith. When you identify a co-leader in your DGroup, you help us multiply our ability to connect with new people.

## HERE ARE A FEW WAYS YOU CAN EMPOWER A CO-LEADER AND MULTIPLY THE IMPACT OF YOUR DGROUP:

- **Get help where you need it.** Empower different people to handle different tasks so that they can take ownership of seeing the group thrive and grow. You may be great at leading a discussion, but struggle with organizing events. Meanwhile, one of your DGroup members may love organization.
- **Allow someone else to lead.** Take a step back and allow someone in your DGroup to lead the discussion from time to time. Their confidence in themselves will grow when they know that you trust them to handle the most important part of your DGroup.
- **Set a goal to multiply your DGroup.** Identify a co-leader, give them opportunities to grow under your leadership, then set a goal for them to start a DGroup of their own. Empowering new leaders is the only way we can give everyone at our church the opportunity they need to connect with others and grow their faith.



# VISION FOR DGROUP MINISTRY

## **Proverbs 29:18**

*Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint...*

## **DGROUPS AS A MEDIUM OF DISCIPLESHIP**

The call of Jesus for every disciple is to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). In DG's we make disciples in the context of community. We aim for the growth of each one!

## **GROWTH INDICATORS**

### 1. Spiritual Growth.

- A. Understanding and Assurance of Salvation (1 Peter 2:2).
- B. Good Works and Knowledge (Colossians 1:10)
- C. Rooted in Faith, Overflowing with thankfulness (Colossians 2:6-7).
- D. Serving according to Spiritual Gifts (Ephesians 2:8-10).
- E. Victory over sin, and genuine love for others (1 Peter 1:5-8).

### 2. Numerical Growth (Acts 2:47).

### 3. Multiplication. (John 15:4-5, Acts 6:7, Acts 9:31).

## **WHY WEEKLY?**

In a recent study done by church growth experts, it's clear that groups meeting every other week experience considerably less health, community, and growth. Groups that meet weekly produce healthier disciples and experience more numerical growth. It keeps disciples from being complacent, instead, they get fired up!

## **KEEP IT AT TWO**

The American Journal of Medicine found out that the average human's attention span during a lecture is 15 to 20 minutes. But when engaged in a discussion, attention span can last 2 hours. In a DGroup setting, keep your discussions under 1.5 hours for maximal effectiveness.

*Example of effective two-hour DG schedule:*

Arrival wait time : 10 minutes

Welcome time: 5 minutes

Worship: 5 minutes

Discussion time: 1.5 hours

Prayer time: 10 minutes

Fellowship time after (people may stay or go as they please.)

**CULTURE SHIFT**

It has been said that culture is what you allow. Anything you allow becomes the culture. If you allow tardiness, it becomes the culture. When a culture is not God-honoring, change the culture.

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

- September 8 and 15 —DGroup Fair
- Week of September 8 — DGroups relaunch!
- October 20 — Fall Baptism Bash
- December 1 — DGroups Joint Christmas Party
- January 6-26 — 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting
- January 26 — Winter Baptism Bash
- February 9 — Couples Banquet

**ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT,**

**WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR MY DGROUP?**

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