

DNA Groups: A model for authentic, life-on-life discipleship

Introduction to DNA Groups:

A Discipleship, Nurture and Accountability group (DNA for short) is made up typically of 3 people, all of the same gender, who meet regularly (weekly, fortnightly, or monthly) for personal accountability in the areas of their spiritual growth and development. It is a simple yet powerful rhythm for those ready to be honest, open and accountable to each other about their relationship with God and others. The aim of a DNA group is to provide a loving, accountable and catalytic environment for being increasingly transformed into Christ's image by the Holy Spirit to the glory of God. Growth and transformation is the aim and expectation.

The simplicity of the group structure means that no curriculum or training is necessary, just the willing participation of the members ready to be committed, prayerful, honest and supportive to each other within the DNA structure.

The rhythm and structure of DNA group time:

DNA groups are focused on discipleship. So to keep them from drifting towards a friendly catch-up about life in general, the DNA group time has a fairly structured rhythm. The aim is to keep the group time roughly to an hour. Each time there is a threefold rhythm to the meetings: a sharing of what each has been learning from God, a confession of personal sin, and prayer for each other and non-Christian friends. In more detail, these are:

1) Sharing

The great truth is that God is actively at work in our lives! So the beginning of the group time starts with each sharing how they have experienced and heard from God since the last meeting through their personal bible reading, prayer and living for Jesus. Keeping a journal is not necessary, but does certainly help to capture and record this.

Here are some guiding questions that are a good place to start thinking about what to share:

- How have I been encouraged by what God is revealing through my Bible reading?
- How have I heard God's voice speak into the way I am called to be living?
- How have I seen/sensed God at work in me, through me and around me this week?

2) Accountability

A key element of the DNA group time is being held accountable in the context of loving, grace-filled, supportive and encouraging relationships. This is not about legalism or religious performance or trying to prove ourselves to one another. Instead, it is about a deliberate intentionality and commitment to the ongoing process of sanctification: that lifelong journey marked by progress not perfection, where we are increasingly transformed by the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Jesus.

We want to be growing in our discipleship, faith and obedience and having two other believers who journey with us in that can be powerfully transformative. Often if we are asked a vague question “how are you going?” it gives rise to vague answers “I’m going okay”. So the idea of examining ourselves in light of specific questions (below) is to help genuine self-reflection and sharing that gives rise to accountability and plans to enact change.

These questions are obviously not a comprehensive list (as if following God can be reduced to a few dot points), but simply a few pointed questions designed to help us to examine ourselves and generate discussion/sharing. Over time each DNA group works out what are the best questions to keep coming back to (and are encouraged to write their own), plus asking fresh questions every now also helps aid genuine self-reflection.

- Share how you went with what you planned to do from our last DNA.
- Where are you currently feeling yourself resist God’s leading?
- How are you being challenged to more fully place God first in the major areas of your life (*ie: key relationships, work/study, time*)?
- Which area/s of your life are you desiring to experience more of God’s power or freedom?
- Is anything (*eg: study, work, technology, habit, emotion or hobby*) currently holding you back or becoming a hindrance from pursuing wholehearted devotion to Christ?
- How do you feel you are currently stewarding what God has entrusted to you (*be that time, finances, opportunities, spiritual gifts, relationships*)?
- (Your personalised accountability question): _____
- Is there anything else you need to share with the group today?

3) Prayer

God is the one who is active and at work in our discipleship and our disciple-making. He hears and answers our prayers, and prayer itself becomes a means of acknowledging our dependence upon him as well as our trust in him. So each group time ends with a period of intercession. The focus is still on our discipleship, so prayers can be centred on God’s empowering to help each respond with faith and obedience to what they feel God calling them to do, think, be or become. This is also a time to be praying specifically for not-yet-believers (by name) who we are trying to witness to and who we desire to be saved.