



SOUTHPOINT
FELLOWSHIP

DNA GUIDE

DNA GROUP FAQ'S

What is a DNA group?

The term "DNA group" refers to a group that ideally consist of 3-5 people- men with men, women with women- who meet weekly. They seek to be known and to bring the gospel to bear on each other's lives so that they become more like Jesus.

DNA is an acronym that reminds of us three key components of discipleship: Discover, Nurture, and Act. Our DNA group should be a major factor in our growth as a disciple: someone who is learning to submit to the lordship of Jesus in absolutely every part of life.

Why should I be in a DNA group?

We are not meant to live in isolation. The chorus of the creation hymn in Genesis 1- "and God saw that it was good"-is abruptly halted, like a needle scratching across a record, when in Genesis 2 we hear God declare "it is not good that man should be alone."

As disciples who have been saved and made righteous, Paul exhorts us to "be transformed by the renewing of your minds" (Romans 12:2). Discipleship requires life-on-life interaction, and can only happen in community. We grow primarily through the experience of life in gospel community. We need regular reminders from one another of the truth of the gospel. A DNA group can be a key catalyst for growth and transformation in our lives.

What is the goal of a DNA group?

The overall goal of a DNA group is to foster discipleship relationships that help each person grow to become more like Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. Transformation should occur at every level, affecting the whole person: head, heart, hands. The DNA group model is intended to be easily transferrable, so there is no necessary expertise, only a handful of people committed to obeying the commands of Christ.

- **DISCOVER:** Intentional relationships and **Study** the Bible.
 - Open with prayer (1-3m)
 - Conversation (5-10m): high/low for the week; celebrations from life
 - Quote Scripture for the week (3-5m)

- **NURTURE:** **Repent** and **Believe** in the gospel. The goal is to *shepherd* the heart.
 - Daily journaling through that week's passages, addressing 4 areas, to discuss as each weekly meeting (every participant is on the same 5 day/week reading plan): (30-40m)
 - **Highlight:** what stands out to you?
 - **Explain:** in your own words, what is happening in those verses?
 - **Apply:** how are you to obey the commands of these verses?
 - **Respond:** how will your life look different as you obey? Where are you struggling to understand or apply these verses?
 - Occasionally ask the 4 Questions:
 - Who is God?

- What has He done?
 - Who are we?
 - How do we live?
- **ACT: Listen and Obey** as he calls us to bear fruit in keeping with repentance. The goal is to *empower* the hands.
 - Confess sin to each other, as convicted by the Scripture or the Spirit. (5-10m)
 - Hold each other accountable to be putting sin to death in our lives. (5-10m)
 - Hold each other accountable to actively evangelize 2-5 people they see on a regular basis. (3-5m)
 - Pray for each other, any requests, and the lost we are seeking to convert. (5-10m)

What can I expect from a DNA group?

The members of a DNA group should be committed to meeting together regularly, usually for about 90 minutes. These meetings consist of sharing personal stories and struggles, asking questions, listening to each other, reading and quoting scripture, praying, speaking the truth in love, repenting and confessing sin, and listening to the Holy Spirit. Beyond the weekly meeting, however, DNA groups should seek to build trusting relationships by sharing normal life together.

DNA GROUP STRUCTURE

How many should be in a DNA group?

Discipleship methods have often employed a 1-on-1 approach. While this is in line with many apprenticeship models, from which we can glean a lot about how to train someone along the way, it does not appear to be the method Jesus utilized. We rarely, if ever, find him with only one of his disciples.

If you are accustomed to one-on-one meetings, there are several reasons to add more people:

- *A more dynamic group exchange occurs*
- *It is much more difficult for one person to dominate the conversation*
- *There are multiple sets of ears filtering everything that is said, providing more unique perspectives in response*
- *There's a much greater potential for learning and development. Each person is unique and brings so much to the table!*
- *There are more people loving and supporting each person in the group. No one is bearing another's burdens alone*

If you are accustomed to small groups of 6-8, there are several reasons to limit it to 3-5:

- *Each person can contribute significantly to the group*
- *No one can "hide", remaining silent for very long before someone asks, "What do you think?"*
- *Each person has an ample opportunity to share at each group meeting"*
- *Scheduled group meetings don't last multiple hours (but can be great from time to time)*

Who should the DNA group consist of?

If our DNA group is intended to be a major factor in our growth as a disciple, then ideally our DNA group will consist of people from our Life Group. This will help ensure another regular touch with some of the people in your Life Group outside of the weekly Life Group gathering. It will also allow you to share your heart and your life with a few of the people with whom you are on mission. When DNA groups are made up of people from the same Life Group, it greatly strengthens the Life Group. While this is ideal, there will certainly be times when a DNA group will not be made up of men or women in the same Life Group.

How often should a DNA Group meet? And where?

DNA groups should connect on more than just a formal basis. DNA groups should be engaged in as much normal life as possible. Ideally, gospel friendships will form, and people will enjoy hanging together in all kinds of ways.

As far as a more structured meeting, DNA groups should plan to meet on a weekly basis for about 60-90 minutes. If a group only plans to connect every other week, the busyness and unpredictability of life (travel, sickness, holidays, schedule conflicts) will often mean long stretches between solid meetings. Meetings usually occur in coffee shops, restaurants, or homes. Focus is a key factor to consider: it's hard for three moms to have a DNA group meeting while their kids play at the park. Meet in a place where everyone is comfortable and that is reasonably free of distractions.

DNA GROUP LEADERSHIP

The nature of group dynamics reveals that every group has a leader. Acknowledging this reality will help DNA groups function in a healthier manner. Each DNA group's make-up will be unique. The nature of the group will determine the type of leadership that's needed. For some groups, where all participants have similar experience and maturity, the leader will simply be the person who makes sure the group meets. For others, the leader will clearly drive the discussion.

Regardless of who initially plays the role of leader, each member of a DNA group should get experience leading within the group. Ideally, over the course of a year or so each person will spend a few weeks or months leading the group. As disciples, each person should be equipped to guide a group of at least three people through a discussion that is centered around Jesus. A DNA group provides a great training ground for disciples to learn the basics of leading in a group setting.

A note for Life Group Leaders: the investment you make in your DNA group is the most strategic discipleship investment you will make. Be prayerful and very intentional with who you invite into your DNA group and in how you utilize your time together.

DNA GROUP GROWTH, MULTIPLICATION, AND TRANSITION

A DNA group should be more than a once a week meeting. The members of the group should share normal life together. Hopefully, friendships will form that "stir up one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24). Relationships are beautifully complex, and must be handled with care and sensitivity.

The goal of any discipleship is multiplication. Even the most immature of believer, if committed to spiritual growth and obedience in their lives, will be able to lead a DNA group after 12-18 months of involvement. Southpoint encourages new DNA groups to form in January and August each year. This provides a clear beginning point as well as multiplication goal. For someone to be a fully-formed disciple of Jesus, they must move from being the recipient to the reproducing agent in the discipleship process. It is our hope that the church would be equipped, empowered, and entrusted with this necessary task for the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God.

DNA GROUP MATERIAL RESOURCES

1. Book of the Bible
2. Commentaries to accompany sermon series
3. You Can Change (Chester and Timmis)
4. Christian Beliefs (Grudem)
5. Gospel-Centered Discipleship (Dodson)
6. Practical Theology for Women (Alsup)
7. The Enemy Within (Lundgaard)
8. Mortification of Sin (Owen)