



What is a DNA Group?

A DNA group is a small, same-gender group of 3-5 individuals who commit to meet on a regular basis for a sustained period of time to focus on the three priorities of **D**iscipleship, **N**urture and **A**ccountability.

Why DNA Groups?

According to Scripture, Jesus has given the church the task of making disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). God is doing the work of shaping disciples to become like Jesus (Romans 8:29), and this work is done as disciples develop disciples (2 Timothy 2:2). God's people are to invest themselves in **calling, raising, and sending** disciples of Jesus. We should all be disciples who make disciples.

Unfortunately, many believers do not engage in the work of discipleship, for various reasons. Some have never been disciplined themselves, and so don't know how to do it, or they feel unequipped or unworthy to pour into others.

However, we need each other in order to become more like Jesus. A life of following Jesus was never meant to be a solo journey. Furthermore, none of us is perfect and nobody has it all together. Discipleship often simply looks like a few people walking the road together and helping each other follow Jesus in the normal areas of our lives.

Discipleship can happen in various venues, but DNA groups offer a more intimate setting where trust can be built, we can be truly known, we can confess our sins, remind each other of the Gospel, and receive nurture and encouragement to fight sin and grow.

As Jonathan Dodson writes in his book *Gospel-Centered Discipleship*, discipleship is "imperfect people, clinging to a perfect Christ, being perfected by the Spirit."

What do DNA Groups actually do?

Discipleship

DNA Groups are disciples making disciples who will in turn make disciples.

In order to do this, you need to spend time with each other. DNA groups should plan to meet regularly (weekly if possible) in order to build trust and deepen relationship for discipleship to take place.

DNA Groups start with the vision of seeking to help each other become more like Jesus by:

- **Calling** each other to Jesus constantly by reminding one another of the Gospel that is the foundation, goal, and fuel of discipleship.
- **Raising** one another up in the faith, helping each other to grow in an understanding of God and obedience to his Word. Therefore, DNA Groups should constantly be Word-Centered, spending time together reading and discussing the Word, as well as using the Word to address the issues and struggles of life.
- **Sending** and encouraging one another as you seek to live like Jesus throughout the week, and also by looking forward to multiplying new DNA Groups in the future.

Nurture

Nurture is caring for each other's hearts and attending to one another's souls. This takes a willingness to be open and a trust that the group has your best in mind. If no one ever opens up, nurture will not happen, because the heart will never be reached or even approached.

Trust and honesty are key factors to nurture, as well as sympathy and empathy. DNA Groups must be willing to share about every part of life: struggles, victories, crises, joys. Be willing to ask discerning, thoughtful, and sometimes difficult questions. Your goal is to get to one another's heart, but also to get to what the Holy Spirit is actually *doing* in each others' lives. Trust and honesty are key.

DNA Groups nurture by regularly *reminding each other of the Gospel*. It's easy to fall into offering advice and empty moralism rather than simply being a friend who seeks to nurture, shape, and point back to God (rather than try to fix someone's problems).

Accountability

DNA Groups help each other fight sin and grow in holiness. A successful DNA Group will generally not start with accountability, because true accountability requires knowledge of one another on a deep level and trust that each member of the group has your best in mind. This takes time. Starting with accountability will sap a group, because it focuses not on relationship, but on action and performance. Accountability is difficult because we tend to overdo empathy (and end up commiserating about shared sin rather than calling one another out of it) or we overdo moralism (offering quick fixes and life hacks to "manage" sin). True accountability begins with confession (James 5:16) and a willingness to name sin without minimizing it or hiding it. It offers forgiveness based in the reality of the Gospel (1 John 1:8-9) and calls for the transformation required by the Gospel (Colossians 3:1-17; 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8, etc.). DNA Groups express love for one another by asking hard questions, following up on commitments made, and extending forgiveness rather than judgment.