

## Group Formation & Selection Training

**Vision: To live as the family of God together, demonstrating and proclaiming the gospel to each other and our city.**

**Mission: To make, mature, and multiply disciplemakers.**

**I am opening up with this to not only remind and inspire us but because communicating the WHY clearly and passionately is part of selection!**

**Colossians 1:28-29:** the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

**Philippians 1:6:** And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

**Matthew 28:18-20:** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- Jesus did it!
- Jesus had no "plan B" to carry out the mission.
- Jesus commands us to do it!

### **ASK:**

**Why do YOU disciple others? What's your vision? (Or, why do you think the person who disciplined you did it?)**

**Small groups for 5 minutes then discuss together.**

*Can also ask - (WHY do we value discipleship so highly at NCC?)*

*Why do we forsake other programs and pour so much time into discipleship?*

*What benefit have you seen from this? )*

*"Here is where we must begin like Jesus. It will be slow, tedious, painful, and probably unnoticed by people at first, but the end result will be glorious, even if we don't live to see it. We must decide where we want our ministry to count -- in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of our lives in a few chosen people who will carry on our work after we have gone. Really, it is a question of which generation we are living for."*

Robert Coleman, The Master Plan of Evangelism

Discipleship changes lives. It's the place where we bring our real selves and **fight for the light**. We fight together. We fight for each other. WE fight for the light - in ourselves and in others *because of the power of the gospel*. His power works in us as we toil alongside others in discipleship. I love this quote from Roy Hession because it reminds me of why our sanctification is always in community:

*Sin always involves us in being unreal, pretending, duplicity, window dressing, excusing ourselves and blaming others—and we can do all that as much by our **silence** as by saying or doing something. While we are in that condition of darkness, we cannot have true fellowship with our brother either—for we are not real with him, and no one can have fellowship with an unreal person. The only basis for real fellowship with God and man is to live out in the open with both. 'But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another'....Love will flow from one to another, when each is prepared to be known as the repentant sinner he is at the cross of Jesus. When the barriers are down and the masks are off, God has a chance of making us really one" (Roy Hession, The Calvary Road)*

### **Why do I remind you of all this?**

Because, for starters, we always need vision in front of us to encourage us, right? But also, mostly, you can *use it in your selection conversations*. This is a great way to cast vision to someone who is considering being in your group. Some will flock to this and love it and others will say "no way". *And that's okay*. You don't want to present your group as something that it's not - and this goes either way. You don't want to say "we're going to hold each other accountable and talk about accountability goals and struggles every week", if you're not. You don't want to say, "hey this is life-on-life, so in addition to group meetings, I plan to get coffee with you twice a month one-on-one", if you're not going to do that. Now, both of these things are great to do, yet neither of them are required for a solid and growing D-Group. You also wouldn't want to skim the surface, making being in a d\*group sound *less* committed than it is or *chase* someone down trying to make it easier for them simply because you really like them or want them to like YOU.

This is why knowing our vision and goals, knowing your personality, leadership strengths and weaknesses, and knowing your personal availability outside of group time even, are extremely important in your group formation.

Our sanctification is a community endeavor. If we look back at the Roy Hession quote we see that; if we look at Jesus with his own disciples, we see that. Never did Jesus just preach to the crowd, but also, he never discipled, rebuked, or taught one-on-one that we see in scripture. It was always the 12 or the 3 closest.

This is why selection is KEY in the health of your D\*group, and your own soul as well. You probably know this by now, either from doing it well, or feeling like you made a mistake. We DO want the Spirit to lead us in this, so there's not a perfect formula; yet, it's extremely frustrating for the leader and even the group members when one member doesn't fully commit and just doesn't show up either physically or emotionally. *Are you ever going to feel like you "made a mistake" or a person didn't grow in your group?* **Yes**. If you're humble, you will absolutely feel this way. The good news is that Jesus is ALWAYS at work in His children no matter what (Phil.

1:6). **NOTHING** is a waste and He can and will use all things for our sanctification - even if it's a tough year of D\*group.

*Share my discipleship vision - this is what I communicate both via writing and aloud to someone who I'm talking to about my group. I want them to know exactly my heart, vision, thoughts, leanings, and expectations.*

**Describe a time when you invited someone into your group and it was a really good fit (maybe juxtaposed with a time it wasn't).**

**Discuss for 5 minutes and then share.**

**What makes you nervous about selection? What excites you?**

**Let's dig into why we do this thing called selection, where we want you as the leaders to meet with people instead of us forming the groups for you. The number one reason is that:**

**Selection was important to Jesus.**

I'm going to borrow straight from Perimeter's Life-on Life guide for Discipleship here written by Monte Strakes:

"Let's begin by looking at how Jesus selected His Apostles.

1 - He chose wisely, not flippantly.

2 - He took time to choose. Did you know the He took *over a year to choose the 12?*

Most theologians believe around 15 months. How do we know that?

The number of Passovers recorded shows us the number of years that passed. So if we look at when Jesus selected his men, it was over a year that he spent time with the crowds before he selected the 12. He spent time with them before he selected them.

3 - He sought His Heavenly Father in Prayer (Luke 6:12). He prayed all night before he chose the 12. I would venture to guess that that night was not the only time He prayed about who he would chose.

4 - He looked at the hearts of His men, not just their knowledge and skills.

What were the Apostles like?

Acts 4:13 - Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that **they were uneducated, common men**, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

These uneducated, common men who had been *with* Jesus turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6).”

***Did you hear anything new here that surprised you? Are you comforted by this, discouraged or something else?***

Let's jump into the predominant tool that we can use to help us sift through these conversations with people we're meeting with - and yes, you'll want to get at least one face to face, sit-down meeting and conversation in, even if the rest need to be over the phone or email.

### ~ FAITH ~

- Use the **FAITH** acronym with them. We got this from Perimeter Church and its very helpful in determining if someone is ready to commit to a discipleship group and helps you structure your group as well:
  - **F - Faithful:** Is this person committed to their family, their work, the church, and to their own personal walk with Jesus? This will show a lot about if they can be faithfully committed to you and the group. Will they be faithful in attendance - both physically and emotionally, present in the conversation, and in hanging out outside the group on occasion? No one is perfect, so we're not looking for that, because we will all struggle with this, but consistency in life. We see Jesus choosing men who were faithful.
  - **A - Available:** This is similar to faithful, but asks the question, “do I have time in my current schedule to add this to my week - both the meetings, the homework, and occasional get-togethers?” It's good to start with the time and day you meet to see if it even feels like a fit or if they need to meet with another leader. There is a time and season for everything and sometimes, even though we really want to be a part of a group, we look at our schedule for the year and find we cannot in good faith physically commit. If you hear signs of this in conversation with someone, you should ask them honestly if they have time to commit, giving them the grace to say no at this point in time. This is why we need to give the other person and ourselves 2 weeks in between this intentional conversation and getting a commitment. You both need time to pray and process the commitment. We sharpen one another by being together and vulnerability comes over time together. Its extremely hard to connect as a group if one member floats in and out, making the other members feel less secure and you feel frustrated. We see Jesus select men who were available.
  - **I - Interdependent:** This is someone who knows sanctification is a community endeavor or wants it to be! They can see that they need others speaking into

their lives and that others need them too. This is someone who deeply desires to work toward a common goal with other believers - fighting for the light together (see Hession quote!). Will they ask for help and offer help? Do they want to be a part of a band of brothers or sisters or are they a lone ranger? Can they see that "iron sharpens iron"? Jesus was with his men, together - teaching, rebuking, eating, etc. We see Him being and calling them to be - interdependent.

- **T - Teachable:** Pray and look for teachable people - these are men and women who know they don't (and won't ever) have all the answers but long to grow in community. Teachable people could be older or younger than you. Jesus is leading all of us as we disciple, and I find that I learn an incredible amount from my d-group even as the leader. A good question to ask is "are they more curious than certain?" Are they open to submitting to each other within the group? Is their mind and their heart ready to grow? We see Jesus choosing men who were teachable - bold and selfish and sinful and often confused, yes - but teachable!
- **H - Humble and Hungry:** Humble sums up the other four traits, because none of us will show perfection in these areas. Are we willing to grow in these traits though? Are we willing to say we're not perfect? Jesus chose men who were humble, and sometimes they had to be humbled! Also, HUNGRY is a great word here too, since teachable really hits the trait of being humble. Is this person hungry to grow? Are they hungry to dig into the Word of God in community? Do they long for BOTH community and the Word of God?

### **Some final thoughts:**

- If you have a co-leader, try to do selection together if you can. This will enable the potential group member to see both of you as the leaders and one of you may be better at asking tough questions about commitment. You'll also be able to pray more specifically about that person in particular if you both meet with them face to face.
- Covenant Partners at NCC have shown to be more committed overall. This isn't a perfect formula, however, over and over again, people who haven't committed to the church via covenant partnership, don't yet have the high level of commitment that is required for a D\*group to be all it is meant to be. We don't want to make a hard and fast rule that you should only invite people into your group that are covenant partners, but use the Spirit's guidance on this and just know what the statistics show in making your prayerful decision. You can always ask them if they are a member (or ask me)!
- That being said, you may be drawn to a group of brand new believers or someone really interested in the gospel. Can this be your group? Of course! You may be evangelizing and meeting with 1 or 2 people and have your d\*group separate, or it may be that the

Lord has called you to a group of newer or almost believers. I would still walk through the FAITH tool to see if they are committed and available.

- When inviting someone into your group, make sure you meet with them and really lay out the vision for the group, the covenant, and expectations. Even if you are SURE they are a good fit for the group, tell them you want them to think about it for 1 -2 weeks and prayerfully consider all you've said and that you'll do the same.
- If one person has a wall up that just won't break even the tiniest bit, it changes the dynamic of the whole group, potentially even stunting the growth. Now, vulnerability and trust take TIME, so plan that even if the group has been together for a year or two and the 1-2 new people are brought in, it IS going to take a little time for them to feel comfortable. That's okay! You may want to plan some time with them one-on-one or with another member of the group for dinner, coffee, a play date if you're moms, etc. Something to help them connect to you and the group outside of group time and deepen the level of trust.
- **Ask THEM WHY they want to be in a DG. This will tell you a lot about what their expectations are and what you can clarify for them - clarity is kindness!**
- Sometimes you're going to need to have a touch conversation. Even in the business world, researcher and psychologist Brene Brown says this about team dynamics that applies wonderfully to us:
  - ***“Daring leaders must care for and be connected to the people they lead...care and connection are irreducible requirements for wholehearted, productive relationships between leaders and team members. This means that if we do not have a sense of caring toward someone we lead and/or we don't feel connected to that person, we have two options: Develop the caring and connection or find a leader who's a better fit. There's no shame in this - we've all experienced the kind of disconnection that doesn't get better despite our strongest efforts. We need real courage to recognize when we can't fully serve the people we lead.”*** (Dare To Lead, Brene Brown)
  - This is why knowing who YOU are as a leader and who you are called to lead is incredibly important as well. What are your values? Who do you connect with? Who do you love to share the gospel with? How do you love to serve?
  - Saying, “I'll take anyone because I don't want anyone to feel left out. I'm not going to tell anyone ‘no’” is, in effect, presumptuous. It could very well be that you are not suited to be that person's leader and God has someone else for them; *you may just need to get out of the way.*

