

New D-Group Booklet



New D-Group Booklet

The 4-week Booklet that you hold in your hands is designed to guide you through conversations that are necessary in the development of a sustainable, organized D-Group. This booklet was written to be read aloud with conversational language that will encourage everyone to participate in the decisions being made. There is room at the end of this booklet write down the decisions that your D-Group makes, so that you can refer back to them in the future.

We encourage you to actually use this feature, as it will help clarify what the D-Group is agreeing to. We are so very excited for you all and would love to answer any questions that may come up. Please don't hesitate to reach out us at tcruz@southwestbible.org

Table of Contents

Week 1: Constructing Our D-Group **2**

Week 2: Family Rhythm **8**

Week 3: Discipleship Rhythm **10**

Week 4: Mission Rhythm **13**

Our D-Group Plan **15**

Week 1: Constructing Our D-Group

Overview

If we want, we can typically make space each week we meet to eat dinner together first and then get down to business afterwards, but because there are a lot of decisions for us to make, we are going to go ahead and eat while we discuss everything tonight.

Our goal for tonight is to work out quite a few of the foundational details of our D-Group. Making these decisions at the beginning will help us to ease into our rhythms of d-group life.

Welcome & Introductions (15 minutes)

Let's go around and introduce ourselves.

- What is your name?
- How long have you been at Southwest?
- If it was guaranteed to become a New York Times bestseller, what book would you write?

Community Leader(s) (2 minutes)

D-Group Leaders are the people who give shape to our D-Group's nights together, facilitates the discussion, and is the point of contact for our D-Group with Southwest Leadership. The ideal is for a woman and a man to co-Lead together. They don't have to be married, nor do they have to even have known each other before joining this D-Group. The value is simply that each D-Group would have a mother and father voice shepherding us.

As of now, _____, is going to facilitate discussion over the next 4 weeks for our D-Group until a Leader(s) is established. Facilitating includes being present each week to guide our D-Group through the New D-Group Booklet, communicate to our group when and where we're meeting, and to be the point of contact with Southwest's Discipleship Team. They may be moving forward in the process of

becoming the D-Group Leader(s). Until they get to do the Leader Application & Pathway, they will be serving as our D-Group's facilitator.

If anyone else is interested in learning more about co-Leading, please reach out to tcruz@southwestbible.org to let the Discipleship Team know.

Coordinators & Other Roles (2 minutes)

Another category of leadership is a Coordinator. These folks will help our D-Group stay focused in particular areas to ensure that we aren't missing anything within the values of Family, Mission, & Discipleship. Typically, D-Groups function with a variety of Coordinators, usually depending on where there is need and where there is gifting. A few common Coordinators are:

- **Food & Hospitality Coordinator: Oversees hosting and food rhythms**
- **Mission Coordinator: Oversees the Community's monthly mission initiative (some D-Group have two people coordinating mission)**
- **Communication Coordinator: Oversees the D-Group's communication platform and adds new folks to the conversation.**
- **Communion Coordinator: Oversees who is leading the Communion practice every week (*they don't have to lead it each week, but make the rotation schedule*)**

That said, as you know, it takes a village! So even if you are not a D-Group Leader or Coordinator, you should still have a role! Because everyone has something different to offer, most D-Group have a variety of roles, like: being in charge of making sure everyone's birthday is celebrated, helping plan an outing or trip for the D-Group, making sure no one sits alone at church, planning activities beyond the night you meet, planning holiday themed parties, leading worship, reminding everyone about prayer requests, or anything else you may want to contribute.

We won't pick the Coordinators or other roles now, but we will ask about them over the next few weeks in the correlating sections as they come up.

Night to Meet (5 minutes)

What night of the week does our D-Group want to meet?

Let's start the conversation by working through the following questions:

- **Can anyone not make certain nights of the week work?**
- **Do any of our jobs change the availability of our evenings? If so, how often?**

We are going to pick the night that works for the majority of the D-Group and then the Discipleship Team will help the one or two others for whom it doesn't work find another D-Group. If that's you, please email tcruz@southwestbible.org

Time To Meet (5 minutes)

What time does our D-Group want to meet each week? Depending on kids' bedtimes and work/school days, most D-Group meet 5:30 – 7:30 PM or 6:30 – 8:30 PM.

Let's start the conversation by working through the following question:

- **Does anyone have a strong preference?**
- **Are there other times that work well?**

Where to Meet (5 minutes)

Next, we need to have a conversation about where we're going to be meeting. If multiple people want to host, we can have a conversation about rotating hosts each week. Also, let's keep in mind that a family with younger kids may prefer to host so they can put their kids to bed at some point during the night.

Let's start the conversation by working through the following questions:

- **Are there any families with kids who would prefer to host for bedtime routine purposes?**
- **Does anyone else want to host?**

Kids (10 minutes)

Next, we need to have a conversation about what we want to do with the kids in our D-Group. Remember that our desire is for kids to feel like this is their D-Group as much as it is ours. While this ideal is really great, it can also be quite tricky to work out. Our goal is to find the balance between including the kids and honoring everyone in the room. Most D-Group have kids present for the front half of the night, as they eat dinner, and then have some sort of situation figured out for them for the second half (e.g. bedtimes, paid babysitters, a rotation of two unrelated adults in the D-Group that parents feel comfortable with to hang out with the kids, etc.).

Let's start the conversation by working through the following questions:

- **Acknowledging that finding a balance is going to probably take some time, what is everyone's preference for integrating kids in our D-Group?**
- **After hearing that, do the parents of the kids in our D-Group have any other ideas to add?** (*Note: If anyone prefers to take a week to think about this, that's ok!*)
- **Is there a compromise between these ideas?**
- **How should we continue to make space to talk about how to integrate kids in our D-Group (especially as they grow)?**

Communication Platform (5 minutes)

Next, we need to talk about how everyone wants to communicate with each other. The most common platforms that D-Groups use are Slack, GroupMe, WhatsApp, and iMessage (if everyone has an iPhone). It is not recommended that folks use email because not everyone checks it frequently enough to be an effective form of group communication.

Let's start the conversation by working through the following questions:

- **Does anyone have a preference for a communication method? Is someone using one now that they would recommend?**
- **Does someone want to volunteer to be the Communication Coordinator and get everyone's contact information into the chosen app tonight before we go?**

-----*****

Dinner & Communion (10 minutes)

There are many ways that D-Group practice communion as a meal together. Here are three of the most common options D-Groups choose:

- **Meal Rotation** – In this scenario, two people team up to pay for and make the food for each week. (So in a D-Group of 12, each person would only pay for and make food once every 3 months.)
- **Potluck** – Everyone brings something to contribute to a previously chosen, cohesive meal – tacos, burrito bowls, gyros, a barbeque, etc.
- **One Cook** – If there is someone in our D-Group who loves to cook, has the time, and wants to take it on, everyone can pitch in \$12-\$15 a month and this person can make the food each week.

Let's start the conversation by working through the following questions:

- How do we want to do dinner?
- Does anyone want to volunteer to be the Food & Hospitality Coordinator to organize our food plan?
- How do we want to do communion? (i.e. having bread and wine/juice each week or observing the whole dinner as communion)
- Does anyone want to volunteer to be the Communion Coordinator?

Sunday Gatherings (5 minutes)

Now for the extra credit section! It is really fun for D-Groups to be able to sit together at the Sunday gatherings. Have a conversation about which gatherings everyone goes to and whether or not this is something we would like to do.

- Which gathering does each person go to?
- Do those of us who go to the same gatherings want to try and sit together?

D-Group Commitments (5 minutes)

We all are familiar now with the D-Group Commitments — they are in our D-Group Basics booklets, if anyone wants to reference them. Just as a reminder, if

anyone has any questions about them, you can reach out to the Discipleship Team at tcruz@southwestbible.org to have a conversation.

- **Does everyone feel up to committing to what we've talked about tonight for the next 3 months?**

The Next Three Weeks (5 minutes)

Over the next three weeks, we will be getting to know each other better.

For Week 2 (next week), we will work through the Family section of this Booklet. There is homework connected to that, but we'll get there in a second.

For Week 3, we will be working through the Discipleship section of this Booklet, in which we will explore what is typically known as Listening Prayer.

For Week 4, we will be working through the final section of this Booklet: Mission. During this week, we will use a list provided in this section to select a monthly way to be proximate to those on the margins in our city.

Before we talk about the homework, let's reiterate the plans for next week:

- **Next week, where are we meeting and what are we eating?**

Homework (2 minutes)

Next week, we will be sharing a little about ourselves with each other. At some point in the future, it would be wonderful to really get to hear each other's stories, but since we're all still strangers, we're going to start small. Remembering that vulnerability and trust are grown not expected, we want to share only what we feel ready to share. So next week, we want everyone to come ready to share something about themselves that they want everyone to know – what they do for a living, where they're from, something about their family or a hobby or cool experience they have had. In order to facilitate that, please bring an item that you can use as a jumping off (and focusing) point. This could be a photo or trophy or favorite book or some other item that captures the essence of what you're wanting to share. Each person will have 3 – 5 minutes to share (we'll time it to make sure everyone gets to go). Not only does it not have to be super serious or heavy, we encourage the opposite – keep it light and fun!

Week 2: Family Overview

Tonight, we'll eat dinner and observe communion for the first half of our time together. And once dinner's over, we'll press into our first of the three Rhythms of D-Group Life: Family. We always want to remember that trust and vulnerability are built over time with consistency and shared experience, so let's be open with and honoring of each other as we get to know each other a little better.

Our goal for tonight is to begin to take some time to share about ourselves through the items that we brought tonight.

(Leaders: After dinner, invite everyone to transition into a space where they can comfortably see and hear each other – around a table, circled up in the living room, etc. Once they're comfortable, move forward and read the next section.)

For the remainder of our time tonight, we want to share a bit about ourselves through the items we brought. Before we get going, let's talk about how this is going to work.

- First, let's do a quick calculation: the time we have left ÷ the number of people sharing = the amount of time each person gets to share
- Next, can someone use their phone to set a timer for the above time for each person as they share?
- As people share, try to not interrupt them, but give them space to share what they've planned to share. If someone doesn't use their full time, we will use it to ask questions and get to know them even better.

Ok! That's it! Let's do it.

(Leaders: As you close in prayer, thank God for each person who shared and ask him to bless each of you this week. Before you go, make sure everyone is on the same page about next week's plan for food and hosting.)

How to Use Future Family Weeks

- Game Night
- Community Outing (movies, Top Golf, fancy dinner, etc.)

- Men's/Women's Nights
- Picnic at a Park
- Birthday Parties

Week 3: Discipleship

Overview

Tonight, we'll begin with dinner and communion together. After we share the Lord's Supper, we'll turn to the second of our three Rhythms of D-Group Life: **Discipleship**. There are many practices vital to spiritual formation, so tonight we'll focus on one: **Bible Study**. This guide follows the same format you experienced in our Listening Prayer week.

Our goal for tonight is to learn the flow of a discipleship-centered gathering and to practice a simple, reproducible Bible-study method together.

Community Commitments (5 minutes)

1. Why Bible Study?

- God's Word is the most powerful, reliable, and transformative book ever written. It reveals God's heart, shapes our character, and equips us for every good work.
- We study the Bible not for mere facts, but to **know God**, be **transformed into His likeness**, and to **engage our world** with His truth.

2. Three Questions of Bible Study

- **Observation** ("What does this passage say?")
 - Read slowly and ask: Who wrote this? To whom? Why? What stands out?
- **Interpretation** ("What does it mean?")
 - Break it into phrases or sentences. Paraphrase in your own words. What was the author's intent?
- **Application** ("How do I live this out?")
 - Ask: "Based on this, I should ..." and finish the sentence. Identify a sin to confess, a promise to claim, an example to follow, an encouragement to receive, or a command to obey.

3. Guiding Principles

- We're **not preaching**, but helping one another discover truth.
- We honor the Holy Spirit by letting Scripture speak for itself.
- We avoid rushing—depth over breadth.

Do This Practice Tonight

Passage: (Leader, choose a short text—e.g. Philippians 4:4–9, Psalm 23, or Luke 10:38–42.)

Volunteer Reader

Who will read the passage aloud for us tonight?

Observation Round (2–3 minutes)

In silence, each person notes **what stands out**: repeated words, commands, promises, images.

Interpretation Pairs (4–5 minutes)

Turn to a neighbor. Share your observations briefly, then discuss: **“What do you think the author meant here?”**

Paraphrase key phrases in your own words.

Group Application Sharing (6–8 minutes)

Reconvene. One by one, finish **“Based on this passage, I should ...”**

Focus on one personal application each—whether a change in attitude, an act of obedience, or a prayer request.

Leader Debrief & Prayer

Summarize the main insights from Observation, Interpretation, and Application.

Close with a prayer thanking God for His Word and asking for strength to live it out.

Repeat as time allows—or simply linger in prayer around these applications.

Read The Practice for the Week Ahead

This week, pick one passage (5–8 verses) and work through the three questions on your own or with a friend. Journal your **Observation**, **Interpretation**, and **Application**, then consider sharing your application with someone via text or a quick coffee chat.

End in Prayer

(Leader: Close in prayer, thanking God for your time together tonight.)

How to Use Future Discipleship Weeks

Continue following the D-Group Arenas for each Rhythm. If a week lacks a guide, revisit past Arena's.

Week 4: Mission Overview

Tonight, we'll eat dinner and observe communion for the first half of our time together. And once dinner's over, we'll explore our third and final of the Rhythms of D-Group Life: Mission. Once a month, as a way of taking spiritual responsibility for Austin, our D-Group will be actively engaged in a mission initiative.

Our goal for tonight is to choose and work out the details of an initiative that puts us proximate to those on the margins in our city.

The purpose of this Rhythm is to push us outside of our comfortable living rooms and into proximity with those on the margins of Austin. Jesus was always making friends and hanging around the poor and the lost, so we want to as well. At some point in the future, our D-Group will pick a monthly mission initiative based on group discernment and prayer, but to start, we are going to pick based on our D-Group's limitations. We just want to start somewhere and the quickest way to make this decision is based on what works best for most people. So our guide for picking an initiative tonight is going to be our D-Group's limitations (e.g. ages of kids, day and time that works, etc.).

There are 5 areas of mission in which Southwest is involved: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.

Because some of these take more time to get involved in and require a long term relationship, we are going to start off with initiatives that don't require organizational partnerships. Let's read through the list below, have a conversation about our limitations, and pick one that best fits our D-Group:

- **Neighborhood Clean-Up:** Adopting a few block radius in your part of the city that could use some cleaning up, that you will continue to visit and clean up each month. The goal is not simply to clean up, but to build relationships with those on the margin in that neighborhood. (Be sure to not clean up anything that may belong to someone.)
- **Adopt a Vulnerable Individual or Family in Your Network:** Within your own circle, identify an individual or family who could use some extra love and support in this season. This can include things like tangible needs that you or your D-Group can meet (e.g. clothing, food, toys, yard care, home maintenance, dog walking, childcare, etc.) and building relationship by doing life together.

- **Brown Bag Meal Creation & Distribution:** Put together a number of sack lunches containing prepackaged food items for those experiencing houselessness. Then, adopt a few block radius that you will return to each month, distributing the meals and getting to know those to whom you're giving them.

Lastly for tonight, who wants to be the Mission Coordinator(s), who helps oversee the details and structure of our Mission Rhythm?

How to Use Future Mission Weeks

- Do your monthly mission
- Pray for your part of the city
- Consider giving financially to an organization

Our D-Group Plan

Use the following chart and fill out all the decisions your D-Group made over the last month. When this form is completed, please type it up or take a picture and send it to the Discipleship Team at tcruz@southwestbible.org

Day: _____ **Time:** _____ **Location:** _____

of Adults: _____ **# of Kids:** _____ **Plan to Integrate Kids:** _____

Communication Platform: Slack / GroupMe / WhatsApp / iMessage

D-Group Leader(s):

Coordinators:

Communication:

Food & Hospitality:

Communion:

Mission:

Other Roles:

Dinner Plan:

Communion Plan:

Mission: Neighborhood Clean-Up / Vulnerable Family Adoption / Brown Bag Distribution / Other: _____