

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



1-TO-1 DISCIPLESHIP

A) 1-to-1 discipleship explained

What is 1-to-1 discipleship?

1-to-1 discipleship is the Biblical principle of a more experienced Christian spending regular 1-to-1 time with newer Christians to help them grow spiritually.

Discipleship is not an event and you don't develop spiritual maturity in a course. Instead, it's a lifelong journey of becoming more and more like Jesus. Ensuring someone has a solid understanding of the gospel, an overview of the Bible and habits in place to help them learn and develop daily will set them up well for this lifelong journey.

Note: If you are a mature disciple looking for your own spiritual growth, you might like to consider a spiritual accountability partner instead. A separate Spiritual Partners guide is available for this purpose.

Why is 1-to-1 discipleship important?

If someone wanted to learn to swim, would you throw them in the deep end and hope for the best? Or if someone new turned up to play golf, would you get upset at them if they didn't follow the etiquette? Hopefully not, yet this is often our approach to supporting 'newer' and 'younger' Christians, expecting them to behave like us, then largely leaving them to it.

Jesus' final words were to ask his disciples to "*go and make disciples of all nations, ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*" Matt 28:19-20.

The best way to make disciples is to have someone with more experience help someone with less. Jesus spent time developing 12 disciples, and more with Peter, James and John. Paul invested in Timothy.

The more experienced Christian doesn't need to know all the answers—just be available to help put in place good spiritual practices, be prepared to pray for the other person, and be a support along the way.

We often assume that a life group will look after new believers, but typically life groups operate at a different level and don't go back over the basics.



1-to-1 discipleship is also an intentional strategy for growth. Paul developed Timothy and gave him this instruction: "*The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.*" 2 Tim 2:2. It's expected that disciples will eventually move on to discipling others.

How does it work?

The basic idea is that a Discipler and a Disciple (or Disciples) agree to work together for a set period for the purpose of spiritual growth.

The exact format is up to you, but tends to work best when you:

1. **Meet regularly:** e.g. monthly, weekly
2. **Follow a plan:** having content in your discussion is important for growth (and using set material saves work)
3. **Prepare:** the primary purpose is spiritual growth, so pre-reading, or practicing skills in between meetings is important
4. **Pray:** for each other, and your growth.

To allow for an honourable exit point, the two people commit for a set period (e.g. three months / a year), with extensions if agreed.

If you think 1-to-1 discipleship might be for you, turn the page to find out about choosing a partner...



B) Choosing a Partner

Who to work with?

The hardest part of a 1-to-1 relationship is choosing a partner. Usually the relationship is formed in one of three ways:

1. A formal church system to match people
2. A Discipler looking to help someone
3. A Disciple looking for someone to help them.

Regardless of how the relationship is formed, there are two key principles that apply to all relationships:

1. Same gender (except immediate family)
2. The Disciple is a disciple of Jesus, not the Discipler—so prayer must guide every part of forming the relationship. Jesus spent a whole night in prayer before choosing his 12 disciples (Luke 6:12-16), and Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us not to lean on our own understanding.

1. Formal church system

A formal church system is a great way to establish relationships and makes things less awkward.

You need to have in place a process for helping people who have made first time decisions. Ideally, you'll also have a focus on your teenagers, young adults, and those new to faith. To get things rolling, ask for volunteers and shoulder tap a few people as well.

Disciplinganother.com has some great videos for advertising discipling in your church.

The guidelines below for choosing Disciplers and Disciples also apply to your formal church system.



2. Choosing someone to disciple

Sometimes, choosing someone to disciple is obvious—you've led someone to faith, you're their ministry leader, you have an existing relationship with someone, you feel God prompting you to invest in someone, etc.

But what do you do if you think you'd like to help someone, but you're not sure who? A good place to start is by talking to your Corps Officer, Recruiting Sergeant or Youth Leader, who may be able to identify potential people for you to disciple.

It's interesting that Paul used only one adjective to tell Timothy what to look for in people to invest into—'reliable' (2 Tim 2:2). The young people or newer Christians who reliably turn up each week and who are prepared to help out might be a good place to start.

One approach is to identify a few potential people, then speak intentionally to each of them every week for a month. You may find that you connect more naturally with one or two so these might become obvious people to offer to help.

3. Choosing someone to disciple you

Again, choosing someone to disciple you may be obvious—a small group leader/course leader/youth leader, or someone you have a good relationship with already.

Otherwise, look around for someone who you think reflects the type of faith that you'd like. Someone who seems genuinely passionate about God, and whose faith seems to be reflected throughout their life.

The Approach

Once you think you've found someone, pray again, and if after praying, you still feel good about the person, approach them to explain your desire to start a 1-to-1 discipling relationship.

Provide them with a copy of this guide, ask them to consider your request prayerfully and arrange to follow up later to discuss (over coffee or food always helps). If they're open to the idea, but are not sure, perhaps just commit to an initial meeting.

The rest of this guide provides a potential structure for your meetings and suggested content.



C) Your First Meeting

The goal of your first meeting is to build your relationship and confirm expectations. We recommend you start by each sharing your personal faith journeys and your hopes for this process.

You will also need to confirm arrangements for your future meetings, including:

1. How often will you meet?

For most people, we suggest at least monthly, and more frequently if you can fit it in comfortably. Where the Discipled is meeting with multiple people, be careful not to become overloaded.

2. Where and when will you meet?

Meeting over food provides a good space for conversation and we all need to eat, but it does add cost. Some ideas include meeting for breakfast or lunch, coffee at a café, heading out for a walk, meeting at church or at one of your homes. If you choose to meet over food, who will provide/pay?

We suggest you plan to meet for at least one hour.

3. What will be your content?

There are two main approaches for 1-to-1 discipling. Some people prefer to work through set content, while others prefer set questions. Which you decide is largely about personal preference, but set content has the benefit of a clear focus and ending. At the end of this guide is a list of suggested resources.

4. How long will you commit for?

To allow for an honourable exit, we suggest you start with an initial commitment that can be extended by mutual agreement. For example, commit for the number of sessions in your chosen content, or for a set period such as three months or one year.

D) Regular Meetings

Here is a potential outline for your ongoing regular meetings. Please adapt it to suit your purposes.

1. Prayer

It's important to keep God as the focus for your meeting, and prayer signifies that you're starting.

2. Check in

Start wide with general questions about how things are going for the Disciple. For example, ask how they have been, or to tell about a high and a low this week.

3. Content

A significant portion of your time should be spent on the topic for the day. If you are using a book or resource, this will be easy.

You could pre-read a book chapter or Bible passage, and discuss it. Here are four great questions to use:

1. What stands out to you in this passage?
2. What do you think the main point is?
3. What would it look like if Christians totally applied this lesson in their lives today?
4. What is one way you can apply this truth to your life this week?

An alternative approach is to ask questions to ensure understanding of concepts, such as:

1. Identity: you know who you are in Christ
2. Destiny: you know your purpose
3. Family: you are establishing good relationships at home and in the church
4. Warrior: you are involved in training with mission and discipleship
5. Servanthood: you bring a good attitude to serving and are serving well.

As 'engaging with Scripture' is the number one predictor of spiritual growth¹, it's important that you help the Disciple put in place a regular Bible reading and reflection habit, with the skills to do this well.

4. Goals

After a few meetings, when you're both feeling comfortable, add personal accountability goals.

God is always challenging people in some area of their life, so ask them what it is and follow up with them each meeting. Having the Disciple also share an area they'd like to be held accountable in helps build trust.

¹ *Reveal, The Shape of Faith to Come*

Goals can be anything that is important to the Disciple, but are usually spiritual (e.g. daily Bible reflection, prayer for non-Christian friends), about important relationships (e.g. date night with your spouse, leaving work on time?), about work or ministry goals, or to address specific sins.

5. Homework

Agree what should be done before the next meeting, such as reading a portion of the Bible or chapter of a book, trying a new style of Bible reflection, etc.

6. Prayer

Close your time with prayer for each other—in particular for your spiritual growth, families, accountability goals and the people you'd each like to see come to faith.

E) Topics to Cover

While there are no set topics that must be covered and the Disciple should always tailor the content to suit the needs of the Disciple, there are some topics that every Christian should have a good understanding of, including:

1. **The Gospel:** confirm their faith and basic beliefs
2. **The life of Jesus:** read the gospels to learn about Jesus and His teachings
3. **Spiritual disciplines:** establish good self-feeding practices, including Bible reading and reflection, prayer and worship
4. **Bible overview:** helps with on-going Bible reading
5. **Avoiding and addressing sin:** confession and repentance; temptation; addressing sin
6. **Applying faith in everyday living:** becoming more like Jesus and how this affects our work, relationships, outreach, etc.
7. **Discipling others:** we are all called to 'make disciples'. The real measure of your success will be to see the Disciple move on to disciple others.



Resource Ideas

Recommended Discipleship Programmes

- **Multiply** (Francis Chan) (available free at multiplymovement.com): a 24-session programme including a book (download free), session questions and video coaching. Explains discipleship, the church, Bible reading and a comprehensive Bible overview.
- **Omega Discipleship** (Ian Malins) (omega-discipleship.org.nz): My First Steps (15 sessions perfect for new believers), Come Follow Me (great follow up resources—3x10 sessions)
- **Discipleship Training Series** (Tim Hawkins): good for youth (available from Koorong.org). Five books in series—roughly 10 sessions each

Overview of Christian Faith

- **Christianity Explained** (Scripture Union)
- **Alpha youth series** (Alpha.org.nz)
- **Starting Point** (North Point Ministries)

Developing Spiritual Practices

(If not using Discipleship Programmes above):

- **Five Things God uses to Grow our Faith** (Andy Stanley)
- **The Life You've Always Wanted** (John Ortberg)
- **Celebration of Discipline** (Richard Foster)
- **Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life** (Donald Whitney)
- **Too busy not to pray** (Bill Hybels)
- **Ordering your Private World** (Gordon MacDonald)

Bible Overview

- **Multiply** (Francis Chan) (see above)
- **E100 reading plan** (Scripture Union)
- **What's in The Bible** (Phil Visser) - children's series available free on Right Now Media

Other Resources

- **RightNowMedia.com**: has an abundance of video resources that you can access for free (contact the Mission Team to find out how)
- <http://disciplinganother.com/> has great short videos for advertising discipling in your church.

For more information, please contact the Mission Team (missionteam@salvationarmy.org.nz).