

WAY OF DISCIPLESHIP BEING WITH GOD

SESSION 1: STARTING ON THE WAY FACILITATOR'S NOTES

6.45PM CHECKLIST

- Have I got a good sense of the signposted resources? Which would be good to highlight with my group?
- Have I got the technology set up, and does it work(!)?
- Is there a visual focus I want to offer for worship this or next week – image, candle, video?
- Who is doing tea/coffee?
- Are there any notices I need to share?
- Is there anyone in my group who has pastoral needs we should be aware of at the moment?

WITH YOUR CO-FACILITATOR

- Are we using our different gifts well tonight?
- If we are running out of time, what shall we miss out or postpone?
- (There is a lot of content tonight – you may want to split this over two sessions (if you are able) or point people towards certain sections in their own time)
- Who is doing what in the session? Clarity about who is leading which section really helps!
- Who among the participants can we encourage to use their gifts in leading, praying, or facilitating tonight or next week? How much preparation will they need?
- What and who do we particularly want to pray for at the moment?
- How are we offering a good variety in our worship and prayer styles?

REVIEW THE OUTCOMES FOR THIS SESSION

- Meeting each other
- See discipleship as growing in lived experience.
- Establishing honesty and vulnerability as appropriate and possible.
- Understanding discipleship as being with, becoming like, joining in with God.
- Understanding formation as needing content, modelling and praxis.
- Reflect on the experience and the role of accountability in my transformation.



FOR THIS SESSION YOU WILL NEED

- TV / Laptop / Wifi
- Ppt for session 1
- Any prayer materials or visual focus.

7PM PREPARING MYSELF

You might like to reflect on Matthew 11: 28-30, remembering that you are first and foremost a disciple, and your Rabbi's yoke is easy:

28 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'

Take a moment to pray for each person in your group.

Commit yourself to the Lord this evening. You may like to use this covenant prayer of commitment:

I am no longer my own but yours.

Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you,
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.

7.30PM OPENING WORSHIP

Feel free to use the suggested activity, which aims to draw on different styles, or approaches, or to do something which reflects your own context or tradition if that is more helpful. If you are using responses you will want them printed out or available for participants to use.

Start with some quiet, inviting people to set aside this time for God. They may want to turn off phones, take off watches, as a way of doing this. Use this verse as a focus.

James 4:8: "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."



Finish with this prayer

Praise to you, God our Father, for the blessing of being your children,

We give thanks that we may call God our Father.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus, for you have redeemed us and made us part of God's family,

We give thanks that we may call Jesus our Lord.

Praise to you, Holy Spirit, for you unite us to God and to one another,

We give thanks that God's Spirit is at work in our lives. Amen.

7.35 PM INTRODUCTION - AIMS FOR THE EVENING

(You may want to miss this out if your group is less formal, or you are using the material one to one).

- To begin to get to know each other
- To establish some understanding of how the group works
- To understand what discipleship is, how we grow as disciples, and how the modules help with that.
- To think about the kinds of relationships we need to help us really grow.

N.B. There is a lot of overview content in the first three sessions, as we begin the journey – throughout the modules different areas will be returned to in more detail.

Ask people to briefly introduce themselves, starting with you.

In pairs ask people to discuss two questions: Why are you here? Do you have any immediate questions?

Feedback to the group.

7.50PM CORE TEACHING CONTENT

The core content is designed to be as user-friendly, and as flexible/context-friendly, as possible. You can use the script and powerpoint provided, or adapt the bullet points, using your own material or approaches to reflect your context and teaching style. Because truth in the Scripture is often perceived through metaphor and story, the content will include at least one story example (although other "stories" are found in the Modelling section), and at least one visual example.

The whole of the content is produced in a booklet for each session – if you are not covering all the material, you may want to point participants to reading the booklet between sessions.



Start with practicalities – how you are going to communicate as a group / coordinate travel / where the fire escapes are.

Ask people to bring Bibles – approximate or the same version as much as possible – or provide them yourself.

Establish key values – honesty, safety, everyone's participation and input being encouraged, though only as much as they feel comfortable with, on the other hand people don't have to share if they don't want to, confidentiality, punctuality, no question is stupid, letting people know if not coming and any others you feel are important.

Explain that there is a bit more input in this first session as we begin, and we will take 15 minutes longer than normal. From next week there will be one block of input – tonight there are two.

Cover the first three sections of the content, using the ppt or bullet points:

What is a disciple and where do we see discipleship today?

Why is being a disciple a good way of life?

What was the life of a disciple in Christ's day? What is the aim of discipleship?

8.15 PM MODELLING/REFLECTION

Video and own experience. Show the video and, if time share from your own experience, remembering that real struggles can be as helpful as victories!

Discuss in pairs, and then together:

Who has been important in shaping your life? Why?

What questions do you have?

Model a response as facilitator(s) by offering your reflection first.

8.30 PM SECOND CONTENT BLOCK

Cover the remaining content. You will need to decide beforehand if you wish to deliver all of this, or point people to sections they can look at during the week. The less essential material is italicised. You may like to offer time for reflection / questions throughout, or at the end.

How are these aims reflected in the Way of Discipleship?

I understand becoming like Christ, and joining in doing the things God does, but how do I grow in being "with God"?

How do the modules "work"? How do disciples grow?

How is that reflected in the Way of Discipleship?

Can I really be a disciple?

Can we really disciple each other?

What will this mean for my life?



9 PM PERSONAL RESPONSE AND ACTION FOR COMING WEEK.

Having learnt content, seen it modelled, reflected and heard each other, and listened to God in Scripture, each disciple will end with the questions, "What is God saying to me and what is my response?" Any actions they take will be self-generated. But the following week they will be encouraged at the beginning to report back to one other person.

Ask people to reflect on this in pairs – they will never have to report back to the whole group. If they wish to help one another by writing down any actions and praying for each other then encourage them to do so.

There is no group feedback, but as facilitator you can share what you feel able in order to model gentle accountability and trust.

9.10PM SIGNPOSTING

Look at the suggested follow on materials described in terms of quality and length. You may like to highlight one or two, depending on the make up of your group.

Ask people to bring Bibles with them if they have them to following sessions.

See handout "Extra Reading or Listening Suggestions" as follow up material for this week, and point people towards the Session booklets for this session and next week - you might agree on sections they read beforehand in order to free up more discussion time in the following session.

For next week, for those who want to prepare, good suggestions would be:

Four pages on how the first line of the Lord's Prayer helps frame our relationship with God from How to Pray by Pete Grieg.

Six pages on the theme of covenant throughout Scripture and how it shapes who we are.

Four page article by Jane Williams on the nature of God as Trinity from the Emmaus course.

Bible Project: God. 8 minute video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAvYmE2YYIU>

The God portrayed in the Bible isn't easy to understand, but what if we could better understand what it is that we can't understand? In this video, we will explore the complex identity of God displayed in the storyline of the Bible, and (surprise!) it all leads to Jesus.

N.B. this is accessible but complicated!

9.15PM CLOSING PRAYER

Use the suggested prayer or pray in whatever way is helpful.

Read out Matthew 11: 28-30 to the group and pray the Lord's Prayer together (same version!)



REVIEW AFTER GROUP HAS LEFT

What went well?

Where did I sense God's presence?

What can I do better?

Was anyone absent that I need to follow up on?

Looking ahead to next week, what might I (or the co-facilitator) share from our lived experience in the "Modelling" section?

