

# The DNA of Your Church – What makes us who we are?

## Why Groups?

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### FACILITATOR'S NOTE:

**Regarding COVID:** While stress from the COVID-19 pandemic is still high, be sure to check in with group members with what has come to be known as **CPR** (Care, Prayer, Remember):

- **Care** refers to loving and supporting each other, from helping one another with tangible needs, rejoicing in celebrations together, and supporting personal struggles with encouragement and empathy
- **Prayer** refers to bringing our worries and needs before God and depending on him for the answers as we pray for each other, our community, and the world
- **Remember** refers to reflecting on God for who He is, what He has done in our lives, and what He is capable of doing

For more resources on care and prayer, check out the Slack channels.

### Using the Discussion Questions:

- Start your group discussion with the “Check-in” question to help your members reflect back on their week and follow up on last week’s application challenge.
- Review the “Big Idea” to help you gain clarity around the heart of this week’s message.
- Read this week’s scripture passages together and guide your group through the “Discuss” questions to initiate meaningful dialogue around key concepts or insights from this week’s message.
- Move your group discussion to a deeper level by leading them through questions in “Apply”. Use discernment to customize these application questions to meet the needs & dynamics of your group.

**NOTE:** You do not have to cover all the “Discuss” or “Apply” questions.

- Connect with God together as a group through this month’s “prayer practice”, which can be in the form of a prayer exercise or some guidance on what to pray for in relation to the message or application.

<b>CHECK-IN</b>	Our church is a 4 G church. It's part of our DNA. We Gather, we Group, we Give and we Go. Which of the 4 G's do you personally enjoy the most participating in?
<b>BIG IDEA</b>	Right living, belonging, human weakness, hurts, habits, and hang-ups...we all have them... WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS IN OUR GROUPS THAT WE CAN EXPERIENCE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH. True personal growth can only take place in groups.
<b>DISCUSS</b>	<p><b>Matthew 5:13-16, The Message</b> <i>"Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth.... Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill.... By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven."</i></p> <p>Romans 14:1 in the Message paraphrase. <i>"Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with. Even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently."</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. God makes it very clear throughout the Bible that our personal growth is best practiced in groups. Can you give any examples when you have experienced this to be true?</li> <li>2. There are many "one another" passages in the Bible. We are called, commanded even, to: love, be at peace, be</li> </ol>

	<p>devoted to, encourage, have unity, accept, pray for, etc 'one another' (ah-lay-loan).</p> <p>Why is it so difficult for our individualistic society to accept help from others?</p> <p>How do we practically live our God's ideal?</p> <p>3. Pastor Brian quoted Brené Brown:</p> <p><i>"What we know matters, but who we are matters more. Being rather than knowing requires showing up and letting ourselves be seen. It requires us to dare greatly, to be vulnerable."</i></p> <p>Have you been vulnerable at life group, showing up? If so, how? If not, what has been holding you back?</p>
<p><b>APPLY</b></p> <p>How do we respond to God's teaching in meaningful ways? What might God ask of us in mind, spirit, or actions?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The truth is ... when we get hurt we hide. People in community can still hide from one another. Has there ever been a time in your life when you hid from people? Maybe even your life group?</li> <li>2. Pastor Brian said that part of the growth process is to find the courage to come out of hiding. What keeps people hiding? What stops true community and genuine acceptance?</li> <li>3. 2 Corinthians 2:7 God's encouragement. <i>"When people sin you should forgive and comfort them, so they won't give up in despair."</i> Sin tries to use shame to isolate us from community. Have you ever experienced this? How is trust formed in groups?</li> </ol>

**PRAYER PRACTICE**  
(15 minutes)

Please use **ONE** of these two options to lead your group through prayer. Choose the one that fits best with your group:

**Palms Down, Palms Up Prayer Practice**

**Step 1:** Sit in a comfortable position with as little background distraction as possible. Turn off cameras and audio on Zoom. Take a few deep breaths.

**Step 2:** (Two minutes with timer) Put your palms down as a symbol of letting go. Talk to God as if he was sitting across from you. Tell Him what's on your mind as if your best friend were sitting beside you. Talk about your hurts, your distractions, your cares, what happened today or what made you happy or you are looking forward to. Share whatever comes to mind.

**Step 3:** (2 minutes with timer) Now turn your palms up as a symbol of surrender and receiving. Sit in silence listening to God. It is natural for your mind to wander. When it does, gently bring it back to focus on God, listening to what He has to say in response to you.

**Step 4:** (5 -7 minutes) Debrief with the group.

Let these questions guide you:

- What was your experience during this exercise?
- What did you hear God say to you?

**OR**

Ask if someone could write down prayer requests for the group.

**Step One:** Begin the time of prayer by asking each member of the group to share one thing they need help with connecting their calling to real life.

**Step Two:** Explain to the group that we will be praying for each other's prayer requests. Tell them that we will ask those who feel comfortable to pray for one of the requests given. Emphasise that everyone has the right to pass.

**Step Three:** The leader will lead first by praying for one of the requests and then leave a time of silence for others to join in.

**Step Four:** After the time of silence (one minute), the leader will then close the meeting by praying for any missed prayer request and close the evening in a final prayer:

“Lord may we discover who we are in You. Give us ears to hear your calling. Help us Lord to be obedient to use the gifts you have given us for the benefit of others. Use us to bring change to our communities, to comfort those who need comfort and to serve those you put in our path.

Amen.