

The Emmaus Model of Discipleship

The experience of Jesus with His two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-35) provides a model for small group discipleship. Consider the following facets of the encounter:

- It involved only three persons.
- It had a limited duration.
- It focused on the Scriptures and on a specific topic.
- It incorporated the basic methodologies of Questions and Answers/Dialogue and Discussion.
- It took place “as they were going.”
- Their minds and hearts were opened.
- It was personal and powerful.
- They went and told others.



These tenets provide a basic framework for small group discipleship. Here is how these can be incorporated in one dimension of discipleship.

- The group will be composed of three persons—one will serve as the coordinator who enlists the other persons. Some groups have had four persons, however, the larger the group, the more complicated the coordination/communication and the longer the discussion session. The coordinator arranges the time and place for meetings. If possible, meet in someone’s home. However, any place will work—a restaurant, someone’s office or work space. It might be better not to meet in church spaces simply because a sense of “institution” is sometimes conveyed.
- The groups will be comprised of all men or all women to help facilitate discussion.
- Two cycles of three months each comprise the process.
- The groups read a specified sequence of New Testament books. In the first cycle, read: 1 John, 1 Peter, James, Ephesians, Mark. In the second cycle, read Romans and Philippians. The detailed reading plan is attached.
- Each person reads the assigned text (five times if possible) on their own personal schedule. Then, once a week the group will meet to discuss the text (and specifically, answer the question, “What has God been speaking into your life from this text?” The objective is not to have a Bible study as such. It is to read the Bible in order to hear the voice of God as He guides each of us in being conformed into the image of Jesus. The sessions allow accountability for the practice of the Christian disciplines of reading the Scriptures, prayer, ministry, witness.
- The period of reading in each cycle takes approximately three months. At the conclusion of the first cycle, each of the three persons will each enlist two other persons that they can guide through the same reading plan they have just completed. The original group will begin reading Romans and Philippians and will discuss the progress of their discipleship groups in what is effectively a coaching session.

- At the conclusion of the second cycle, the original group disbands. The reason for this is that each person will be involved in two reading cycles at the same time. Our objective is to be multiplying disciples and not merely a small clique—even if it a holy clique.
- The primary focus is developing the consistent practice of Christian discipline, allowing God to transform our lives into the image of Jesus. The initial domain is the affective domain—feelings, attitudes, and values. If we can through this process help persons fall in love with God, they will seek the other dimensions of knowing God, His Scripture, the doctrines of the faith. They will seek to introduce others to the Lord and engage them in the discipling process.



The Emmaus Model

Reading Plan for Cycle 1

Four letters were written in the first century to early Christians. These letters were written to help these followers of Jesus understand what God had done to bring them salvation. The writings helped them know how to live in community with one another and as witnesses to the world. They provide instructions to us today for being followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Over the next few weeks, we will lay a foundation for faith. Although times and technology might have changed, God's instructions to His people have not.

Our reading will be capped by reading the Gospel of Mark. It was the earliest of the gospels. It is a fast-paced, action-packed account of what Jesus did.

The insights we gain from our reading will give direction to our lives. We are grateful that you are part of this exploration.

In service,
Larry Garner



Directions: This process will take 12 weeks to work through four key New Testament letters and the Gospel of Mark. Each week, read through the assigned passage five times.

Week 1: 1 John 1:1-3:10

Week 2: 1 John 3:11-5:21

Week 3: 1 Peter 1-3

Week 4: 1 Peter 4-5

Week 5: James 1-2

Week 6: James 3-5

Week 7: Ephesians 1-3

Week 8: Ephesians 4-6

Week 9: Mark 1:1-4:41

Week 10: Mark 5:1-8:38

Week 11: Mark 9:1-12:44

Week 12: Mark 13:1-16:8

A model of a layout follows. It is designed to allow participants to note observations and questions in the space provided beside each column. Read the section each day as specified. We will meet each week to discuss our findings and observations regarding the text we have just completed and pray for and with one another.

1 John 1 (ESV)

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1 John 2

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.² He

The Emmaus Model

Reading Plan for Cycle 2

Two letters reflect some of the greatest Christian theology and emotion captured in the New Testament—Romans and Philippians. Romans is the “king” of the letters. It presents the clearest statement of the Christian faith ever penned. Philippians is the most joyful of all the letters—even though it was written while Paul was a prisoner of the Roman Empire.

These letters provide tremendous insight, detail, and expression of Christian faith and life. They will cap our experience of the Emmaus Model of Discipleship. The reading will conclude this groups experience together, but the process will continue as we engage others in small-group discipleship.

In the Southwest deserts grows a creosote bush. It begins life as a single plant. As it spreads the original plant dies as the plants continues to push out collecting water. Large circular plants are found after years and years of the plant reproducing and dying off, reproducing and dying off. That plant provides an image of what will happen as we continue the process of discipleship.

Thank you for your faithfulness in reading God’s word and sharing it with others.

In service,
Larry Garner

Directions: This process will take 12 weeks to work through two key New Testament letters of Paul—Romans and Philippians. Each week, read through the assigned passage five times. Then gather and discuss what God has been speaking into your life with the others in your group.

- Week 1: Romans 1:1-32
- Week 2: Romans 2:1–3:20
- Week 3: Romans 3:21-5:21
- Week 4: Romans 6:1–7:25
- Week 5: Romans 8:1-39
- Week 6: Romans 9:1-11:36
- Week 7: Romans 12:1-12:21
- Week 8: Romans 13:1-15:6
- Week 9: Romans 15:7-16:27
- Week 10: Philippians 1:1-30
- Week 11: Philippians 2:1-30
- Week 12: Philippians 3:1-4:23

Use the format of the reading model provided. It is designed to allow you to note observations and questions in the space provided beside each column. Read the section each day as specified in the outline. We will meet each week to discuss our findings and observations regarding the text we have just completed and pray for and with one another.

