

Biblical Basis for small group (2 – 5) discipleship – Inferred and observed

The Bible never describes how to disciple anyone or prescribes what a discipleship relationship must look like or what disciples must do when they get together. Being a disciple was a very common part of life in the New Testament times. It was practiced by the Pharisees as well as Greeks (e.g. Plato was a disciple of Socrates). Therefore, we need to look at the examples we find in Scripture, primarily Jesus and Paul.

- Jesus and the chosen 12, Mark 3:13-14 – Jesus called just the 12 disciples out of all His followers to Himself, alone on the mountain (before sending them out)
- Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:1-8; Luke 9:28-36, Jesus chose 12 disciples to be with Him, yet He was closest to 3 – Peter, James, and John; only these 3 saw His Transfiguration
- John 21:15-22, Jesus and Peter alone
- Luke 10:1 – Jesus sent disciples out in pairs
- Jesus in boats, with just His disciples
- Jesus explains parables to His closest disciples
- Jesus explains privately why the disciples couldn't drive out a demon – Matthew 17:19
- Matthew 18 – Jesus talks about the Ekklesia to His disciples
- As the crucifixion draws closer, Jesus focused on His disciples and prepared them for what was to come – Matthew 20:17
- Jesus shared His Last Supper/ Passover meal with His disciples
- Other examples: Peter & John; Paul & Barnabas; Paul & Timothy; Paul, Silas, Timothy; Barnabas & John Mark – these were all actively engaged in ministry and the work, but we can infer that they spent a lot of time together as they traveled when not in active work or ministry, being disciples together
- Things that happen best in DNA small groups are: accountability, transparency, confession, admonishment (Eph. 4:15; James 5:14)

Note: The believers in the Acts were not called disciples until chapter 6. Up to that point, the apostles were teaching them to keep all Jesus commanded them (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:42). Once they had the mindset of keeping all that Jesus commanded them and began to keep His commandments, they were disciples who could make disciples.

Discipleship was a way of life in Jesus' time. The New Testament primarily focuses on the work and the expansion of the Ekklesia but does not "explain" a discipleship process. We can infer from the discipleship relationships in the Work that they would be similar within the Body. What we call DNA is not prescribed in the Bible. Given our culture and time in history, the Spirit gave us the concept of DNA, which is way of being disciples together as we follow Jesus and keep His commandments.