



Introduction

This document is meant to explain our renewed vision for the groups' ministry of Vineyard Groningen. During the covid-19 season, we discovered again that a healthy groups' ministry is invaluable for the life of our church. After this period with so many changes and due to the heavy restrictions in the Winter of 2020/2021 where most of the groups stopped meeting, we now see an opportunity to build the ministry from the ground up. A new vision is developed and new leadership for this important ministry is selected.

Discipleship

The reason we've changed the name of the ministry from 'home groups' to 'discipleship groups' is because we seek to make discipleship growth front and center in this ministry.

True spiritual growth happens in intimate and authentic community – something we find in the setting of a small group of people. In the coming time, we want to become more explicit about what discipleship growth looks like. It will at times be more radical. We believe this will lead to renewal in the lives of those who take part in our Discipleship Groups.

So, what is a disciple? A disciple is essentially four things: a follower, a student, a confidant and an ambassador. We are building the ministry around these four aspects of discipleship:

- As followers of Jesus, we fellowship around Him, caring for one another
- As students of Jesus, we discuss, digest and apply what we are learning together
- As confidants of Jesus, we pray together and share about our lives
- As ambassadors of Jesus, we bless the city through intercession, serving, evangelism

Our vision is that all four of these aspects are represented in every group. Groups can determine themselves how much time they want to spend on each element.

Structure

In order to provide an optimal setting for all these four aspects of discipleship, we are going to start working with different settings within the groups and within the ministry. The main structure we propose is a group of 6-12 people that meets bi-weekly in the full group, and bi-weekly in Triads (a group of 3-4).

The focus of the bi-weekly meetings in the 6-12 group would be on learning together. Groups this size form the ideal setting for connection, discussion and study. Perhaps groups will also take on the habit of eating together whenever they meet – a proven habit of intimate community.

On the other weeks, the group would split up in Triads; a single gender (only men or only women) group of 3-4. This setting provides a more intimate setting, ideal for sharing, authenticity, prayer and accountability.

We believe that through this hybrid model with different settings, there is an opportunity to grow in all aspects of discipleships.

We see the frequency of bi-weekly meetings in Discipleship Groups and bi-weekly meetings in Triads as the best way to go. Yet, groups are free to choose a different frequency. If a group doesn't grow beyond 5, they stay together as one large Triad until they can split up in multiple Triads.



Study Material

In both October-November and February-March we will run a message series of about 8 weeks focusing on discipleship. These message series will provide the main discussion material for the groups. Each week, the groups will receive prepared material, directly connected to Sunday's message providing discussion questions to help digest and apply Sunday's message. We believe that, through this, there will be a stronger connection between Sunday services and the groups, it will reduce pressure on the preparation of group leaders, and it will help to keep discipleship front and center in the groups' ministry.

Groups are free to choose a different topic for their gatherings. Yet, we see this rather to be the exception instead of the standard. After the 8 weeks of the message series, all groups can choose their own topic to discuss for their meetings.

Bless the City

We encourage every group to include the four aspects of discipleship in the life of their group: fellowship, study, prayer and mission. Including the first three aspects seems clear, but how are they going to include mission as well?

We want to focus our mission around three terms that are an expression of the word BLESS:

1. Intercession – praying for the city
2. Service – serving the city
3. Evangelism - reaching the city

In the coming year, we hope to organize Bless the City events and activities around intercession, service and evangelism. Groups are strongly encouraged to participate in one of these events at least once per semester (twice a year).

Leadership & Coaching

Every Discipleship Group needs to have a leader. Triads, however, function without leadership. Discipleship Group Leaders will be connected to group coaches and regularly meet together regularly in a huddle (group of 3-4 with a coach).