

FIRST & BEST

DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY SERVE GROUP GUIDE



2
0
2
5



Serve Group **Vision & Values**

At StoneWater Church, we believe that groups are God's provision for you and those you do life with. Forming relationships and being connected in our church family is a gift that ensures that we are cared for, loved, encouraged, prayed for, and spurred on as believers of Jesus Christ. Being part of a group is also an incredible opportunity to be used by God in someone else's life.

Your Serve Group gathers 15 minutes before serving begins for a brief 10-12-minute meeting, ensuring everyone has a couple of minutes to get to their designated spots on time.

Each week, we will circle up around God's Word through a short devotion led by someone in your serve group, God's Spirit by praying for one another, and God's people through your time interacting and encouraging each other. As our serve groups grow, finishing on time will become a challenge, so we encourage you to continue the connection throughout the week.

As you grow more intentional with your Serve Group, you might wonder how much impact such a small amount of time can make. Be encouraged! Time and time again, we've seen that prioritizing and participating in Serve Group creates small weekly deposits that add up to something far greater than we often realize. So, buckle up and watch God work in ways only He can. You'll witness prayers answered, needs met, lives transformed, and together, we'll praise God for His faithfulness.

Thank you for being faithful in serving our church family and your fellow leaders. You are such an important part of what God is doing at StoneWater Church!



Growing your **SERVE GROUP**

What a privilege it is to have a front-row seat to watch God work in and through others as they experience connection in Serve Group! Remember, as you lead your group in a new direction, it may take time for everyone to catch on. Be patient, celebrate progress, pray for your group, and continue to lead with excitement.

GAINING MOMENTUM IN YOUR SERVE GROUP

- **Make a personal invitation**

Share your excitement about walking through the Discipleship Journey and your expectancy for God to show up in incredible ways with every person in your group.

- **Choose a consistent space and start on time**

Your role as a Serve Group Leader is to create a space for others to gather. Arrive a few minutes early and stand in the place where you'd like your group to meet (be careful not to appear busy during this time). Starting on time, even if there is only one person there, communicates that you are ready for your people and that their time is valuable to you.

- **Model God's Word, God's Spirit, God's People every time you meet**

Prioritizing this layout will show others that you have something FOR them and will give them an opportunity to be seen and cared for during your time together. It may be tempting to want to share about logistics, but remember that our goal is to help people connect with each other. Share logistics in your weekly email or via a text before their arrival.

- **Care for each person outside of Serve Group time**

Checking in on each person once or twice a month communicates care and belonging. A simple text or phone call to follow up on a prayer request, to ask, "how can I pray for you?" or "how's it going with _____?" goes a long way in developing meaningful relationships!

Celebrate what's happening with those in your group, your Campus Pastor and/or leadership team!

WELCOME TO THE DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY

"Am I giving God my first & best, or are there areas of my life that I have not fully surrendered?"

WHAT IS THE DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY?

- Our Discipleship Journey aims to help us grow as mature disciples of Jesus who prioritize spiritual growth.
- Over the next two years, we will take practical steps to give God our FIRST & BEST in every area of our lives.
- All StoneWater ministries will align, and every message series will offer a clear action step to help us hear the Word and live it out, transforming our daily lives as we deepen our faith and grow in maturity as disciples of Jesus.

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

A disciple is someone who follows Jesus, is being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus. Our journey reflects that discipleship isn't a destination but an ongoing process that God uses throughout our lives and isn't complete until we are with Him.

CORE TRUTHS OF THE DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY

- God is first & best.
- God gave His first & best (Jesus).
- We worship Him as first & best.
- As an act of worship, we give Him our first & best in every part of our lives.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE JOURNEY?

- Grow in biblical knowledge
- Deal with emotional baggage that holds us back
- Learn to walk in the Spirit
- Give God our first & best in every aspect of our lives

MILEMARKERS ARE STOPS WE WILL MAKE ALONG OUR TWO YEAR JOURNEY →

With every mile, we will have an action step requiring us to practice what we are learning. The purpose is to become "doers" of the word and not "hearers" only. These action steps will be shared on Sunday mornings and celebrated and supported through all church ministries.

MILEMARKERS



Freedom

Idols

Relationships

Spirit

Truth

&

Be Loving

Eternal Perspective

Serving Others

Transforming Community



August 3

SUMMER SHADES

FRUIT OF WALKING WITH THE SPIRIT

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
Galatians 5:22-23

When we choose to follow Jesus, He doesn't just improve our behavior—He transforms us from the inside out. Galatians 5:22-23 tells us what that transformation looks like: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” These aren't traits we can manufacture through willpower—they're evidence of a life surrendered to the Holy Spirit. As we stay connected to Jesus, like branches to a vine, His character begins to grow in us. We don't force the fruit—we yield to the Spirit and allow God to shape our hearts.

But the world around us pulls us in the opposite direction. Culture tells us to react in anger, prioritize ourselves, and push for control. That's why we need reminders of who we really are in Christ and what His Spirit is producing in us every day. When life feels chaotic, frustrating, or overwhelming, we can return to these truths. Let them guide your thoughts, steady your emotions, and shape your responses.

- What if today you declared truth over your life and invited the Holy Spirit to bear His fruit through you?
- I am rooted in God's love, and I choose to love others—even when it's hard. – 1 Corinthians 16:14
- The joy of the Lord is my strength, and I choose gratitude over discouragement. – Nehemiah 8:10
- God's peace rules my heart, and I rest in Him no matter the storm. – Colossians 3:15
- I am patient, trusting God's timing in every situation. – Ephesians 4:2
- I am kind and reflect God's goodness in my words and actions. – Ephesians 4:32
- Goodness flows from my life as I walk closely with the Father. – Matthew 5:16
- I am faithful, steady, and trustworthy because God is faithful to me. – Proverbs 3:3
- God is making me gentle, strong in spirit, and tender toward others. – Philippians 4:5
- I walk in self-control, led by the Spirit and not by my emotions. – 2 Timothy 1:7

Discussion & Prayer

Which fruit of the Spirit feels the hardest for you to live out right now, and why?

Follow-up: What would it look like to invite the Holy Spirit into that area this week?

Holy Spirit, grow Your fruit in me. I don't want to be ruled by my emotions or circumstances—I want to reflect You. Shape my heart so that love, joy, peace, and all Your fruit are what flow out of me. Give me eyes to see where You're at work and the strength to respond with grace and truth. Today, I choose to surrender again and live by Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.

1000 TABLES

HOSPITALITY

A STATE OF BEING

August 10

“Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay.” 1 Peter 4:8-9

What makes someone hospitable or a great host? Is it having a beautifully decorated, clean home? Being a great chef? Having enough room for everyone? Does hospitality only mean having people in our homes? Perhaps it's something more—something we carry. A state of being that invites people into our humanity and offers them a safe place to share theirs. Because love covers a multitude of sins.

Sometimes it's easy to disqualify ourselves when we walk in comparison or live in embarrassment over what we believe we lack—fearing judgment. But what if we chose to believe that we are already qualified? What if we offered up a place to belong in the mess—sharing our messy hearts and our messy homes in authentic vulnerability?

The word for hospitality in Greek is *philoxenia*. Its root words are *philos* (friend) and *zenos* (stranger). Put together, hospitality simply means “love of stranger.” And a stranger? That's anyone who is not you. This kind of love doesn't require a perfect house or a planned dinner. It can happen at the grocery store, in the parking lot, at the laundromat, in the waiting room at the doctor's office. Hospitality is what we carry in our hearts when we show ourselves friendly to everyone—strangers, friends, family, and even those who make us cringe.

When we offer honest openness that says, “You're welcome here. You're safe here. It's okay if you're a mess—so am I. But here's a hug, here's a smile, here's a meal, a warm place to stay, a couch to process on, a friend to process with. Whatever I have—I share with you freely, no strings attached,”—this kind of cheerful openness gives us a chance to share the truth of Jesus with people. It allows us to host His presence as we counteract culture and love others biblically.

Discussion & Prayer

In Romans 12:13, the Bible tells us that hospitality is something we must practice.

- How are you practicing hospitality right now?
- Is it something you confine to your home, or something you carry in your countenance?

Think of a practical way you can begin to offer hospitality this week. Step outside your comfort zone—maybe that means laying down your fear of judgment, or simply showing kindness to a stranger in the community. Whatever it is, do it openly and honestly.

Dear Heavenly Father, You showed us the ultimate example of hospitality by sending Your Son, Jesus. You loved us first—even when we were strangers and far from You. Teach us to host Your presence wherever we go, and may it create environments of love that make people feel safe enough to let their guards down and let You in. Help us lay down our fears of failure, judgment, and insufficiency so that we can be available to You in loving others well. Amen.



STONEWATER
CHURCH

August 17

1000 TABLES HOSPITALITY

BATTER UP. IT'S YOUR TURN!

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:16

Sometimes we feel like we don't have anything special to offer—like we're just “okay” at a lot of things but not great at any one thing. Maybe you've even said to yourself, “I'm a jack of all trades, master of none.” That's a lie. The truth is: God has given you something on purpose, for a purpose. Your gifts, skills, passions—even the ones that feel small or ordinary—can be used to bless others.

Hebrews 13:16 says, “Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” So what do you have to give? Can you sing? Fish? Cook? Paint? Host people in your home? Build things? Encourage others? Whatever that “thing” is—that passion or talent—it's not just for you. It's a way to reflect God's love to the world. Hospitality isn't just having people over for dinner; it's using what you have to serve someone else.

Sometimes we sense a need and think, “I could do that...” but we hold back, assuming someone else will step in. But maybe—just maybe—it's your turn. You've been placed right where you are, at just the right time, to say yes to what God's asking. 1 John 3:17 says, “If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?”

God doesn't need perfect people. He's calling available people. When you say yes—when you step in and serve—something amazing happens. Your gift blesses others, your faith grows, and the people around you start to see Jesus more clearly. That's the Kingdom in motion.

So... what are you waiting for?

Discussion & Prayer

What's something you love to do that you've been hesitant to offer for God's purposes—and what's one small step you could take to use it this week?

God, thank You for the gifts You've placed inside of me. Help me see where I can use them to bless others. Give me boldness to say yes when You call. Teach me to live open-handed, with a heart ready to serve and share. I want to be part of what You're doing—starting today. In Jesus' name, amen.



STONEWATER
CHURCH

August 24

1000 TABLES HOSPITALITY

INTERRUPTIBLE

Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it." – Hebrews 13:2

Hospitality isn't always planned. Sometimes, it looks like an interruption.

In our culture, we glorify busyness, schedules, and productivity—but Jesus often stopped in the middle of His plans to love people right where they were. The woman at the well. The bleeding woman who touched His robe. Zacchaeus in the tree. Over and over again, Jesus allowed Himself to be interrupted. And each interruption became an invitation—for someone to encounter the living God.

Hebrews 13:2 reminds us that we might not always recognize who we're welcoming when we choose to pause and be present. That person may be struggling silently. They may be an outsider or a wanderer, or someone who has never experienced unconditional love. They may even be a divine appointment we would have missed if we'd just stayed in our own lane.

True hospitality is less about performance and more about presence. It's a willingness to say, "I see you. I have time for you. You matter." It can happen on a front porch or in a fast food line. It's the sacred work of welcoming people into a space—physical or emotional—where they feel seen, valued, and loved.

What if we lived with an open door in our hearts? What if we let interruptions become invitations to love like Jesus?

Discussion & Prayer

- Are you too busy to be interruptible? What might God be inviting you to pause for?
- What would it look like to offer someone your presence this week—not just your plans or possessions?

Jesus, thank You for always making time for people. You never rushed past pain or ignored those who reached out for You. Teach us to walk slowly, to listen deeply, and to be interruptible. May we carry a spirit of hospitality wherever we go—a heart that welcomes the lonely, the overlooked, and the hurting. Help us see divine opportunities in what may feel like disruptions. In Your name, amen.

August 31

1000 TABLES HOSPITALITY

FROM THE HEART

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Colossians 3:23-24

Hospitality is more than a meal or a smile—it's a reflection of the heart of Christ. Colossians 3 reminds us that every act of love, service, and welcome is ultimately for Him. When we show kindness and care, even when it's difficult or inconvenient, we're revealing a glimpse of God's love to others.

This is especially powerful when it comes to people who are hard to love. Maybe they're rude, demanding, or closed off. Maybe they've hurt you. But Christ didn't only extend His love to the kind and grateful—He poured out grace while we were still sinners. That same grace is what those difficult people need most, and sometimes your kindness is the clearest glimpse of God they'll see.

Jesus said in John 13:35, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Our love—not our arguments, achievements, or perfection—is what marks us as His. When we love the hard-to-love, we reflect the very heart of Christ: sacrificial, unconditional, and full of grace. That kind of love doesn't make sense to the world—but it points straight to Jesus.

Discussion & Prayer

Can you think of someone in your life who may be hard to love—but who might be in need of the kind of grace only God can give through you?

Jesus, thank You for loving me when I was hard to love. Thank You for welcoming me with grace I didn't earn. Help me reflect that same grace to the people around me, especially those who are difficult. Teach me to see them the way You do—not as interruptions, but as invitations to show Your love. Let my actions speak louder than words, and may people come to know You by the way I love. Amen.



**Let's celebrate all that God is doing
in and through your Serve Group!**

Submit Celebration Stories Here

