

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

APRIL 5

EASTER HEAVY STONES

WRITTEN BY KORI RICHTER

Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?” But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. (Mark 16:2-4)

In a recent series, we learned about WLVS—how the world wounds, the devil lies, our flesh vows and strongholds take root. It’s these vows we make to seemingly protect our broken hearts that actually bind us to a life of slavery. When reading through each of the four gospel accounts of Jesus’s death, burial, and resurrection, the stone rolled in front of his tomb reminded me of these self-preserving vows.

After Jesus’s crucifixion, his body was placed in a tomb and as was the cultural custom, a stone was rolled in front of the entrance. This stone was used to protect the body from animals or grave robbers. But that wasn’t all in the case of Jesus’s burial. In Matthew 27 and 28 we see the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate and requested that Jesus’s tomb be made even more secure, lest his disciples fool others into believing he had risen from the dead. They called Jesus “that impostor” (Matthew 27:63) and they wanted a guard of soldiers—maximum security—outside his tomb. Nothing out, nothing in— it is finished. As the song says, “darkness rejoiced as though heaven had lost.” A heavy stone, an armed guard, all to protect a dead body.

It led me to ask this question—What stone is in front of my tomb? What needs to be rolled away in order for new life to be revealed? Are the guards of shame, guilt, fear or doubt “securing” my chains of slavery to a life not fully lived? I breathed a sigh of relief as I remembered... There is good news. The stone was rolled away. Darkness and death didn’t have the final say. Three days later, Jesus walked out of the tomb into new life and he invites us to do the same.

Yes, he moves the stone, but we must walk out of the grave.

Discussion & Prayer

With a great stone ahead of him, Jesus walked in:

Prayerfulness (Matt 26:39) | Faithfulness (Matt 26:42) | Courage (Matt 26:50) | Obedience (Matt 26:52)

What can we learn from Jesus’s spiritual practices as we walk out of the grave and into new life with him?

Heavenly Father, you are good and your name is to be praised. You are the chain breaker and the stone mover. You lead us in paths of righteousness for your name’s sake. Meet us in our times of prayer. Grant us faith in the midst of uncertainty, courage in the midst of fear, and obedience in the midst of trials. Move the stones in our lives as we walk in the new life you freely offer to us by the blood of your son, Jesus. Amen.

APRIL 12

FAMILIES BUILT TO LAST

CALENDAR REFLECTIONS

WRITTEN BY MEREN MARCINIAK

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. (Deuteronomy 6:4-7)

Time is one of our most valuable resources. We place priorities on our calendar. Does your calendar list specific times where you get to be together as a family, eat a meal together, have a family game night, go on dates, or a vacation together?

Giving our first and best as a parent means showing our kids they are a priority to us. We do this by giving them our time in intentional ways. Our calendar should be a reflection of that intentionality. God provides an outline for intentional parenting in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. In these verses, God gives us specific moments within our daily routine he has designed for us to point our children to him.

When you sit at home.

When you do daily tasks.

When you travel to and from school or activities.

When you put them to bed.

As parents we know these are the times our kids tend to talk more and share about their interests, thoughts, worries, or experiences. These are the moments to make space on our calendars for, because they are the moments that show our children they're a priority. It often looks like simply putting their needs or interests above our own. Making time to get involved in something your kids love even though it doesn't excite you or learning about your children by watching them explore the world around them, introducing them to new things and having fun, regardless of the occasion. If you want to raise a godly child, you must first model godliness in your life and parenting. Your calendar will look different than most, because you'll be prioritizing parenting in a way that reflects the life and words of Jesus— you'll be giving God, and your children, your first and best.

Discussion & Prayer

Take 1 min to look at your calendar. What things have taken priority over intentional, focused time with your kids? Add a family night where you put your phones away and spend quality time together. How can you point your children to God during that scheduled time?

Lord, thank you for the gift of our children. Thank you for the gift of sharing who you are with them. Show us where we can adjust our calendars to honor you with our time. I pray for a strong relationship with our children and I pray they all make you their Lord and Savior one day. Thank you for your love, guidance, and provision for all of our needs. Amen.

APRIL 19

FAMILIES BUILT TO LAST

BUILDING OUR HOMES WITH WISE WORDS

WRITTEN BY ANNIE DUECK

**“The wisest of women builds her house,
But folly with her own hands tears it down.”**
Proverbs 14:1

Imagine home as a mini sanctuary in this broken world. Like a temple, where God’s presence is evident, where each member is valued, cared for and ministered to. Where God is worshipped and His Word is taught and children are carefully trained to obey Him through loving and patient parents whose heart reflects God’s very own.

What an ideal, right? But, is it attainable?

With God all things are possible! Words, simply spoken, are one of the greatest tools He has given us to achieve this dream. We know from the creation account how powerful His own words are and as His image bearers, our words have power as well. Throughout Scripture, God reminds us of the power in what we choose to say, teaching us to use the words of our mouth for healing and life and to build others up (Prov 12:18 & 18:14, Eph 4:12). Our words should be like God’s words. This means we must give special attention to our words as we build our home— our sanctuary.

As we continue to grow, making God first and best in all areas of our life, let’s ask Him to help us build our homes wisely, with words that build each member up in the goodness and knowledge of God.

Discussion & Prayer

- Would you describe your home as a mini-sanctuary-- where God’s presence is evident and each member is valued?
- How can you use your words to express value to the members of your home this week?

God thank You for our homes and family members. Thank you for giving us everything we need to make our homes mini sanctuary-temples on this earth as we invite Your Presence, Your Spirit, Your Word, and Your Truth into the midst of our families. Help us to use our words to build up each member of our home in healing and life-giving ways. In Jesus’ name, Amen

APRIL 26

FAMILIES BUILT TO LAST

THE BEAUTY OF GOSPEL LIVING

WRITTEN BY LINDSAY HAFFMAN

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them together in perfect unity.” – Colossians 3:12-14

Relationships can be messy. Jesus knows this. Not only as Creator but, also, as our sympathetic Savior. He came to Earth, endured the cross, and was despised and rejected by those who were once closest to Him. In the divinely inspired Scripture above, our Savior tells us to “bear with each other.” I can’t think of a more real place where this is lived out than in the walls of our own home with our own family.

To bear with each other literally means to “endure or put up with each other.” Thankfully that is not all Scripture is commanding us to do here. We are called and commanded to do so much more than put up with each other! We are to take it a step further and forgive in love. When we walk in forgiveness and extend it toward those in our family, we embody our Savior. We forgive as Jesus first forgave us. When families actively walk in forgiveness toward one another our homes become a safe space for all who live there.

So how do we talk this out? By living in our true identity— “God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved.” Do you believe that? In spite of our deepest sins and failings, God chose us, loved us, and made us holy. When we live out of the overflow of this reality, we will find ourselves walking clothed in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience toward those around us, especially those within our own families. We can bear with one another and forgive because we have been forgiven.

Tomorrow morning when you get up, remember first your true identity in Christ, then imagine “clothing yourself” or putting on these attributes found in Colossians 3 and living them out throughout the day. Ask the Lord to help you, because you will undoubtedly fall short. But that is the beauty of Gospel living. Walking in love, humility, and forgiveness as we humbly accept the love and forgiveness that first Christ offers us.

Discussion & Prayer

- How will the tone of your home, work environment, and day change if these are the attributes you ‘put on’ at the start of every day?

Heavenly Father, thank you for your forgiveness and your love for me found in Christ Jesus. Help me to walk in love, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness in the walls of my home and in the world around me. We forgive because you first forgave us. We love because you first loved us. May my heart be so overwhelmed by that reality that those around me are affected by it in the most eternally significant way. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

MAY 3

FAMILIES BUILT TO LAST PRESENCE OVER PRODUCTIVITY

WRITTEN BY KENDALL GALVIN

Luke 10:38-42 (ESV): Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

How often are we like Martha? It says she was distracted by her serving. Why would Luke say it that way? Isn't serving a good thing? Of course. But in her serving, Martha missed the point – the person in her home, Jesus.

We get caught up in the tasks – the on-going to-do list, the expectations at work or school, the routines of dishes and laundry and schedules. Even serving in our serve groups can become more like clockwork than service. But Jesus didn't care about the dishes.. He cared about her presence with Him. He called it the one necessary thing and the good portion. Jesus wants our presence over productivity – with Him and with others. Productivity keeps the coffee pots full and the laundry done. Presence positions us to encounter the Lord and HIS mission.

Serving and finding rhythms for tasks is not an inherently wrong concept. But it becomes a distraction when we miss opportunities for deeper presence with Jesus, with family, and with others—and deeper presence with others will only flow as we walk deeper in presence with Jesus.

Deeper presence may cause us to notice and pray for a mom who made it into church hanging on by her last thread of hope and energy instead of just seeing a kid needing a nametag. It may cause us to notice a spouse coming home needing truth and identity spoken into them instead of just seeing that they were late for dinner. It may encourage deeper conversations with our teenagers about the struggles and lies they're listening to instead of just seeing homework going undone while video games are played.

Does the culture of your home need to shift from productivity to presence? What about outside your home? It all starts by sitting at His feet.

Discussion & Prayer

- Where do you notice opportunities for presence rather than productivity today and this week?

Heavenly Father, thank you that you don't ask us to strive. You ask us to rest in presence and relationship with you. Forgive us when we get distracted and miss out on the people in front of us and we miss out on you. Teach us to sit at your feet like Mary, reminding us that looking more like you flows from deeper intimacy with you. Amen.

MAY 10

FAMILIES BUILT TO LAST FROM THE INSIDE OUT

WRITTEN BY _____, LACEY ZAWADZKI

“She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.” Proverbs 31:26-28 (ESV)

When God is first in a mother’s heart, He becomes first in the home — and the culture of the family reflects Him. This scripture doesn’t just describe a woman — it reveals a spiritual ecosystem within our homes:

Words | Values | Leadership | Atmosphere | Legacy

This is how families are built to last — from the inside out.

Words Create the Culture: “She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.” The culture of a home begins with its language. When God is first, our words reflect Him—wisdom replaces chaos, kindness replaces criticism, grace replaces pressure, truth replaces fear. Faith becomes the tone of the home, not just a topic of conversation.

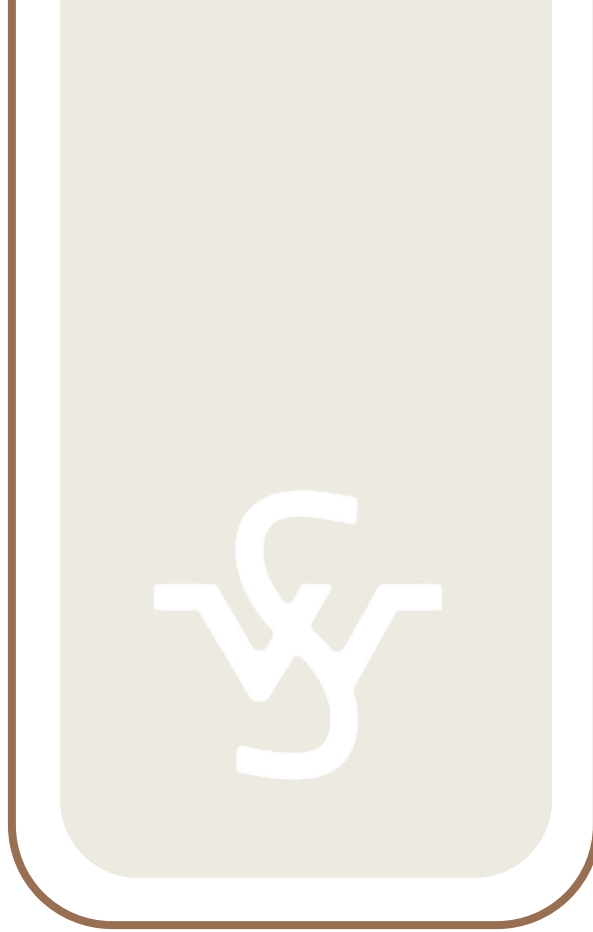
Faithful Leadership Shapes the Atmosphere: “She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.” This is not control— but care. Not perfection— but presence. Not dominance— but devotion. This type of spiritual leadership in our home is achieved through intentionality, prayer, discernment, vision, and consistency.

Honor Is the Fruit of Faithful Living: “Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.” Honor flows from spiritual investment, not performance. Legacy comes from faithfulness, not flawlessness. As we place God first in our hearts and homes, our influence lasts, faith multiplies, and culture reproduces. God-centered homes create God-centered generations.

Discussion & Prayer

- What tone defines your home?
- What language fills your rooms?
- What faith rhythms shape your days?

God, we thank You for the gift of mothers and all spiritual leaders who shape the culture of our homes. Let our words be filled with wisdom and kindness. Let our homes be marked by faith, peace, and Your presence. Help us to put You first in every relationship, every decision, and every season. Build our families on Your truth, Your love, and Your grace. May our homes reflect Your heart, and may our legacy honor You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



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

Submit Celebration Stories Here

