



SESSION FOUR: STRUCTURING YOUR TIME

SESSION TOPICS

- Creating the right environment
- Allocating your time
- How long the relationship should last

A background image of a man with a beard and short hair, smiling and looking to his right. He is wearing a dark sweater over a collared shirt. He is sitting at a table with a white coffee cup and a laptop in front of him. The background is a blurred cafe or office setting.


Creating the environment

Where you meet can greatly impact the quality of your meetings. An office or home offers the ideal environment, but many discipleship meetings also occur during a mealtime. Things to consider when selecting your location:

- **Interruptions (like wait staff)**
- **Noise level**
- **Internet connection**
- **Privacy**
- **Availability each week**

Allocating the time

We've talked about focusing on the person and not a program, but a common pitfall is spending most of a meeting talking through life updates and leaving little time to explore new content, prayer or application and goal-setting. However you decide to structure your meetings, discuss it with the person you're discipling and gain agreement so they won't be surprised when you put a bookmark in your discussion and move on.



Here is a simple 4-part model you might find helpful for allocating your time. Simply divide your time into four equal periods, and spend each as follows:

PART 1 - UPDATE.

Get an update on what's happened since you last met. Use discernment about how much time or detail to go into, knowing that this can easily take up a full meeting. You'll want to be sure to ask

- **how their time with the Lord has been**
- **what they feel God has been showing them**
- **how did they do with their action-items from the prior meeting**
- **joys/victories**
- **setbacks/failures**

PART 2 - LEARN.

Discuss the assignment they've completed for this session. Take time sharing your answers with each other, but keep the pace moving forward so they feel a sense of accomplishment with each meeting. Remember that the goal here is to help them establish a firm grasp on knowing and applying God's Word to their lives.

PART 3 - PRAY.

When left to the end of a meeting, prayer time is often rushed. Move it into the middle of your meeting to give ample time to pray over the needs already shared and the topic discussed. Incorporate gratitude, intercession and personal requests. Make sure each person prays.

PART 4 - APPLY.

Encourage them to identify at least one action item based on your discussion and set a measurable goal for the upcoming week. These goals should not only be for their personal walk, but for investing in helping others know and follow Christ as well. Constantly re-cast the vision for them bringing someone else along the same path that you are leading them on.

How long the discipleship relationship should last

How often you meet will be up to you, but it will be tough to maintain momentum if you aren't meeting at least every other week. Ideally, you will meet weekly for an hour in a location that is free from distraction and affords for very personal conversations and prayer time.

It is recommended that you continue meeting consistently until you have at least completed the discipleship curriculum that you are working through. (Highly recommended: CBMC's Operation Timothy) The reasons are:

- 1. You want to make sure they have a firm foundation in their own spiritual walk**
- 2. You want them to have firsthand experience with a discipleship tool that they can use with someone else. (There's a difference between knowing how a tool works and having actually used the tool!)**

Typically, you should have already established a trust bond and seen evidence of spiritual discovery and life change within the first six months. At that point, you should be encouraging them to pray about whom they might start working with, even as you continue your meetings with them. It is important that they understand that a critical part of their spiritual maturity is them discipling someone else. Just as there's a difference between a 30-year-old adult and a 30-year-old parent, there's a difference between a disciple and a disciple-maker. Jesus has called all believers to be disciple-makers!

Once firmly established, a discipleship relationship never really ends. It will, however, reach a point where you agree to meet less frequently to allow time in their schedule to disciple someone else.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Of the 4 parts of a discipleship meeting (update, learn, pray, apply), which one do you think will present the greatest challenge for you?

2. Why is it important that we have an ending in mind when you start meeting?
