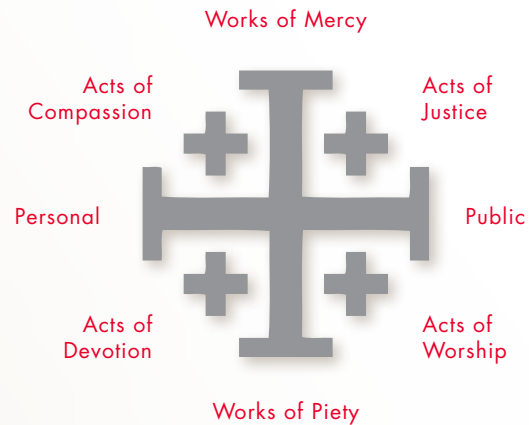


## Covenant Discipleship Groups Are...

- up to 7 persons who meet for one hour each week
- guided by a covenant they write, shaped by the General Rule of Discipleship
- where Christians give a weekly account of how they have witnessed Jesus Christ in the world and followed his teachings, guided by the group's covenant.
- where Christians help one another become more dependable disciples of Jesus Christ.
- a proven and effective way of nurturing and identifying leaders in discipleship the church needs to live out its mission with Christ in the world.



## The General Rule of Discipleship

... helps Covenant Discipleship group members to practice a balanced and varied discipleship. The General Rule is a contemporary re-statement of The General Rules John Wesley developed for the Methodist societies in 1742. It is simple and elegant:

*“To witness to Jesus Christ in the world and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”*

A Covenant Discipleship group writes their own covenant together. The covenant is shaped by the General Rule of Discipleship. It serves as the agenda for the weekly one-hour meeting.

## Recommended Resources

### ***Accountable Discipleship: Living in God's Household***

by Steven W. Manskar

Provides Biblical, theological & historic foundations for Covenant Discipleship.

### ***A Disciple's Journal***

by Steven W. Manskar

Designed for use by Covenant Discipleship group members, the book is a guide for daily prayer, Bible reading, and discipleship shaped by the General Rule of Discipleship.

### ***Covenant Discipleship: Christian Formation through Mutual Accountability***

by David Lowes Watson

The essential resource for Covenant Discipleship group members. Provides valuable information on how to form groups, how to write a covenant, and how to lead a meeting.

### ***Forming Christian Disciples: The Role of Covenant Discipleship and Class Leaders in the Congregation***

by David Lowes Watson

Is written for congregational leaders to help them understand where Covenant Disciples fits in the missional life of a congregation.

### ***Class Leaders: Recovering a Tradition***

by David Lowes Watson

Introduces congregational leaders and Covenant Discipleship group members to the historic practice of Methodist lay pastoral leadership that the church of today needs.

## To Learn More...

Visit the web site at [www.gbod.org/covenantdiscipleship](http://www.gbod.org/covenantdiscipleship)

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**DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES**

The United Methodist Church



# Covenant Discipleship Groups



**DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES**

The United Methodist Church



## Covenant

... means there is a reconciled relationship. Covenant tells us God seeks and keeps reconciled relationships with others. Jesus Christ is God's covenant love in flesh and blood. We experience this love as costly grace, God's hands open and outstretched to the world on the hard wood of the cross.

Christians are people who accept God's offer of covenant love in the water of baptism. They respond by turning away from sin and accepting the freedom and power God gives to resist evil. They confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put all their trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as Lord within the community of the church. Christians understand that the life of covenant love cannot be lived alone; it requires a community of prayer, forgiveness, and love.

Christians are covenant people.

## Discipleship

... is how Christians live out the Baptismal Covenant. It is the way of life shaped by the teachings of Jesus Christ, summarized by him in Mark 12:30-31

*"you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. ... you shall love you neighbor as yourself."*

A disciple is a person who allows his or her life to be conformed to the life of a beloved teacher. A disciple seeks to become

like the teacher. Disciples of Jesus Christ are people who align their own desires, goals, and habits with the desires, goals, and habits of Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul describes the goal of discipleship in Philippians 2:5,

*"Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus."*

## Groups

... are discipleship incubators. It takes a Christ centered community of love and forgiveness to make disciples.

Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment:

*"... love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:34-35).

Disciples obey this new commandment when they meet regularly in small groups. They pray for one another, the church and the world. They also give an account of how they have walked with Jesus in the world since they last met. The group works together to help one another become more dependable and mature disciples of Jesus Christ; and leaders who disciple others and help the church live out its mission for the transformation of the world.

## Wesleyan Disciple-Making

Small groups that focus on mutual accountability and support for discipleship are the "method" of Methodism. These groups have their roots firmly planted in the Wesleyan tradition. The roots go even deeper when you consider that John Wesley described Methodism as his attempt to re-tradition "primitive" Christianity. He said, *"The soul and the body make a [person], and the spirit and discipline make a Christian."*

Covenant Discipleship groups help Christians to grow in loving God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength and love their neighbor as themselves. They are a proven and effective way of forming leaders in discipleship who help the congregation to live out its mission with Christ in the world.



Covenant Discipleship groups form Christ-centered people who help to lead Christ-centered congregations that participate in Christ's on-going work of preparing the world for the coming reign of God, on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2).

