

Discipleship

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Am I supposed to be making disciples?

A: When Jesus gave the Great Commission, He sent all believers to “go and make disciples of all nations.” Discipleship is not a specific call for only a few to carry out. Jesus is commanding you to make disciples, no matter your gifts, age or level of spiritual maturity.

Q: How do I disciple someone?

A: Find a F.A.T (Faithful, Available, and Teachable) believer and pour into them, training them in Word, in Relationship, and in Ministry. (For more info read The Three Components)

Q: How do I find someone to disciple me?

A: If you desire to be discipled, begin with a teachable posture. For example, if you are middle-aged and married with four kids, humble yourself and know that it is okay if you ask a single twenty-something to disciple you. Then, make a list of men or women in your life that you would like to disciple you. Pray that the Lord will open his or her heart and then within a few days, approach the person and discuss entering into a discipleship relationship. Start by building conviction about the discipleship process together. Then, seek to establish a balanced diet of Word, Relationship and Ministry.

Q: What if I am too busy for discipleship?

A: Christians who maintain an eternal perspective should know that they are never too busy to obey what Jesus has commanded. But knowing that most are strapped for free time, a few hours a week can easily be carved out for discipleship-relationships.

Q: What does discipleship practically look like?

A: If you are discipling someone, you might meet them once a week for an hour or two. You are teaching them Scripture, taking them out to share your faith with others, or having quality relational time. Proper balance within the Word, Relationship, and Ministry components is key.

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Q: What characteristics do I look for in a potential disciple?

A: If you are looking for a person to disciple, find an individual who is a F.A.T. believer (faithful, available and teachable). Faithful describes a trustworthy person; Available describes a person who can be around enough to be developed; Teachable describes one who is capable of receiving guidance, correction, rebuke and exhortation.

Q: What do I do if my church is not holistically making disciples?

A: Spend time in prayer and ask God to reveal to your leaders the outage that exists within the church. Pray that God would prepare your heart to share your concern and that God would prepare their heart to receive exhortation. With great kindness, probe into why discipleship is not a priority and begin the dialogue toward change.

Q: What if I feel I am not quite ready to make disciples?

A: Right age, certain sex, biblical expertise: none of these are prerequisites to disciple others. God desires our hearts to be humble, for us to be convicted that He is worth everything, and for us to be committed and authentic to those we care for. We will always mature and we will always grow in our theology, but do not make the mistake of neglecting the Great Commission because of feelings of inadequacy.

Q: What is the difference between discipleship and fellowship?

A: Fellowship might fulfill a part of the Relationship component of discipleship (though it still may lack the intentionality needed to faithfully do that!), but fellowship does not contain the Word and Ministry components. Though Jesus was a close friend with His disciples, He trained them in Scripture and served alongside them as well. We must follow the model that He set.

Q: What is the difference between discipleship and accountability groups?

A: Accountability is a necessary element of the Relationship component, but the absence of Word and Ministry renders it an incomplete understanding of discipleship.

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Q: What is the difference between discipleship and my Bible study or discipleship class?

A: Theological training is vital, but it does not constitute all of discipleship. To learn the Bible but not be poured into by an individual nor mobilized to share your faith and serve others is a fraction of what discipleship calls for.

Q: What is the difference between discipleship and evangelizing/making converts?

A: People often interpret “making disciples” as “making converts” and then they stop there. Producing masses of unhealthy, undeveloped and ill-equipped Christians is counter to what Jesus’ ministry modeled. He poured into His twelve disciples, those twelve poured into others, and so on. Likewise, we are to disciple people, not merely convert them and then evangelize to the next person.

Q: What if my ministry has a lot of people ready to be discipled but not enough people ready to disciple them?

A: This is a great problem to have. We want to challenge you to do something contrary to our culture: start slow. First, make sure you and your leadership own the vision of discipleship; build conviction and practical understanding of it. Then, begin discipling your top leaders and have them begin discipling some of the others. Until you have others who can disciple those in the queue, we strongly suggest those in the queue be in small groups where they can still get other necessary nutrients for spiritual formation. Continue to periodically encourage them to stay patient until you are able to have more people to begin the discipleship process.