

**Discipleship &  
Leadership Development**  
**Our Lord's Method for Building His Church**



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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this manual is to examine our Lord's method for building His church through "making disciples." Specifics will be given in developing a discipleship ministry in the local church with an emphasis on raising up leaders who do the work of the ministry.

## **A. The importance of having a vision.**

God expects leaders to give vision and direction to their ministry. We need to know where we are going and how we are going to get there.

"Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained" (Pro 29:18).<sup>1</sup> Having no vision leads to a life of sin. One author thus concludes, "No greater calamity therefore can there be than the removal of the vision."<sup>2</sup>

"Where there is no guidance the people fall" (Pro 11:14).

The example of Israel: "Moses saw that the people were out of control—for Aaron had let them get out of control to be a derision among their enemies" (Ex 32:25). They were unrestrained. Aaron, the leader, was responsible for letting them get out of control.

It is our duty as leaders in Christ's church to give His people a vision of what Christ wants them to be and do. This is a sobering responsibility, but God has called us to this task (cf. Heb 13:17).

We need to have a biblical vision (Pro 29:18). We are to help people see what God wants them to be and how God wants to use them.

**B. A biblical vision for the church.** What are we trying to achieve as a church? Why do we have all the ministries that we do? The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the head of the church, has given us our vision. He has commanded us what to do.

**1. Acts 1:8.** "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations are taken from the *Updated New American Standard Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Charles Bridges, *An Exposition on Proverbs* (Marshallton, Delaware: Sovereign Grace Book Club, nd.), 576.

- What we are to do: be Christ's witnesses.
- Where we are to go: our objective is to begin where we are at and reach the remotest parts of<sup>the</sup> earth. Our vision, then, must be more than our local church. It must be more than simply reaching our community. It must be more than simply reaching our people group. It must be broad enough to reach the remotest part of the earth! And the reason it must be this broad is because of the person we are proclaiming.
- How we are to accomplish this: Christ gives us all the resources we need through the power of His Spirit to accomplish the task He has set before us.

**2. John 20:21.** "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." The Father sent the Son into the world to save the world (John 3:17). We are sent on the same mission. We are to go into the world proclaiming the gospel (John 17:18).

**3. Luke 24:46-48.** "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." Luke stresses the content of our message. We are to preach Christ, His suffering and resurrection and what it accomplished for us—forgiveness of sins for those who repent.

The scope of this task is to go to the nations, beginning in Jerusalem.

**4. Mark 16:15.** "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."

**5. Matt 28:16-20.** "But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'"

These passages are the last recorded words of Jesus before He ascended into heaven. They stress therefore the significance and priority of these words. They are our King's last commands to His troops before He left. This is the business we are to be occupied with until He returns. We are to be making disciples. This is our mission.

# Chapter 1

## **The Importance of Having a Correct Vision of THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST**

We need to have a correct perspective of Christ so that we will have the right motivation for making disciples. Everything hinges on what you think of Christ.

**A. The power of Christ (Matt 28:18).** Jesus has been given all authority. He has the power to act and do as He pleases. He alone has dominion.

**1. Jesus possesses authority.** It was given to Him.

**2. Jesus has all authority.** He has universal dominion in heaven and on earth. “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed” (Dan 7:13-14).

Jesus has the right to exercise authority. He is Lord of all. Every knee will bow to Him in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

How do we see the Lord exercising His authority today? Jesus’ authority is being wielded today in His church (Matt 16:18). He has defeated the devil and He will soon crush him under our feet (Rom 16:20). His power is seen in that Jesus is calling men out of darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God (Acts 26:18). Christ has awesome power and the proof of it is the transformation of lives.

What is incredible is that Christ's authority and power is being exerted through His people! It is through us that Jesus is calling a people. It is through our making disciples that Christ is exercising His power.

The apostle Paul understood this. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom 1:16). "I pray that ... you will know ... what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe" (Eph 1:19). "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen" (Eph 3:20-21).

When Jesus commands us to go make disciples we need to remember who it is who is ordering us to do this: our King and Lord, the one with all authority.

We also need to take encouragement from this. We go in Christ's power, which means we will be successful. This is what He is doing and His plans will not fail because He has all authority.

## **B. The pronouncement of Christ (Matt 28:19-20).**

**1. The command of Christ for His followers: make disciples.** The emphasis of this command is on immediacy. Get started right away.

The church does not decide what its agenda should be. Our vision comes from our head, the one who has all authority in heaven and earth. This is why Jesus says, "Go *therefore* and make disciples." "Because I have all power, because I am head over the church, therefore, go make disciples." This is what He is commanding us to do. There are no options in this. And because we have this vision of who Christ is—the one with all authority, all glory, all dominion—there should be no hesitation on our part. We are to make disciples.

**2. The course of action.** The command is to make disciples. Go, baptizing and teaching are participles that modify the command.

Going is evangelism. We go with the gospel message, the good news that sinners can be made right with God and not have to face condemnation for their sins.

We are to baptize those who believe (Matt 28:19). All believers are commanded by Christ to make a public commitment to Him.

Those who have trusted in Christ are to be taught His commands (Matt 28:20). The goal however is not simply to teach people what Jesus commanded, it is to teach them *to do* what He said. The saints are to be equipped to do the work of the ministry. They are to be trained so they themselves can go make more disciples.

### **3. The supremacy of Christ in this command.**

**a. The extent of this command exalts Christ (Matt 28:19).** Jesus commands us to go make disciples of *all the nations*. The person and work of Christ is so significant that it cannot be kept in a corner. It must go to the furthest corners of the globe.

The Father says the following about His servant: “And now says the Lord, who formed Me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him (for I am honored in the sight of the Lord, and My God is My strength), He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth’” (Isa 49:5-6). What Christ has accomplished in His atoning work is too small to be kept in a corner. It must go to the nations. Christ will be exalted to the ends of the earth.

The only hope of being saved is to be in Christ. Jesus is not some tribal deity. He is not the Savior of one small group of people. He is God’s answer to the universal problem of death. “There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The atoning work of Jesus is the one and only way for anyone to get right with God. This is why we must make disciples of all the nations, of all people groups.

The extent of this command emphasizes Christ’s glory.

**b. The equality of the Son with the Father and the Spirit (Matt 28:19).** Jesus commands His followers to baptize the disciples in the singular name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. There is only one God, not many. He is one in His nature. Yet this singular name is differentiated among three persons, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus is placing Himself on an equal level with God the Father and with God the Holy Spirit. His equality with the Father and the Spirit emphasizes His supremacy.

**c. The equipping of the saints (Matt 28:20).** Jesus commands His followers to teach the disciples all that *He* has commanded. His word is our supreme authority.

**C. The promise of Christ (Matt 28:20).** He will be with us! Jesus is not sending some angel to help us or someone else. He Himself promises to be with us as we carry out His commands.

This promise was not only given to the original disciples, it is a promise for us today.

Only a person who is as majestic as God can make such a promise. There is only one way a person can make such a bold promise and carry it out. It is only if He truly has all authority!

We are the proof that Christ is still building His church. This should give us great confidence to go and make more disciples. He will be with us. He will bless our efforts. He will make it fruitful.

Jesus does not say, “I *will* be with you.” He says, “I *am* with you!” His very presence, His power, His authority are with us as we go make disciples.

## CONCLUSION

We are commanded to go to the nations and make disciples. The task set before us is impossible. But we have the assurance of Christ’s presence, which is backed by His all sufficient power, which means we have the guarantee of success.

Making disciples begins by having a right vision of Christ. When you see Christ in His glory, when you understand a little of the magnitude of His power, when you grasp hold of the promise of His presence, you will go out and proclaim Him. You will make disciples. What is going to stop you?

# Chapter 2

## WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

If we are commanded to make disciples, we need to know what that means, for if we get this wrong, our ministry could be a failure or it will not be as fruitful as it could be.

**A. Different views of what a disciple is.** There has been great diversity as to the meaning of what a disciple really is. This has led to much confusion in the church of what it means to make disciples. Some of the more popular views are:

**1. Disciples are learners.** A disciple is one who puts himself under the teaching authority of a great teacher, but this has no reference to whether the person is a Christian or not. The terms “disciple” and “Christian” then, are not synonymous. There were many people who followed Jesus and who learned from Him, but who were unsaved, yet they were called His disciples (John 6:60, 66).

**2. Disciples are committed Christians.** They obey the radical demands of Christ. These are people who have counted the cost of following Christ. Disciples are those who have submitted to the Lordship of Christ. This view states that a person can truly be a Christian but not necessarily a disciple.

Dwight Pentecost asserts, “There is a vast difference between being saved and being a disciple. Not all men who are saved are disciples although all who are disciples are saved. In discussing the question of discipleship, we are not dealing with a man’s salvation. We are dealing with a man’s relationship to Jesus Christ as his teacher, his Master, and his Lord.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Dwight Pentecost, *Design for Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1971), 14, quoted in Michael Wilkins, *Following the Master* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 27-28.

Those who hold this view will cite passages where Jesus calls people to radical commitment. “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple ... So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions” (Luke 14:26-27, 33). It seems only a handful of people in the gospels made this radical commitment to Christ. According to this view a disciple is more committed than the average Christian.<sup>4</sup>

**3. A disciple is one called to full time ministry.** Proponents of this view will point to the twelve disciples as an example of this definition. Jesus chose the twelve out from the larger group of His followers (Mark 3:13-15). They left everything behind to follow Jesus and be trained by Him.

**4. A disciple is one who has converted to Christ but who has not entered into discipleship.** A disciple is one who has been evangelized. The later process of growth is called discipleship. This view separates what it means to be a disciple from discipleship.

**5. A disciple is a true believer in Christ who is in the process of becoming more like Christ.** A disciple is synonymous with a Christian. It is a person who is in the process of becoming more like Christ. Discipleship is not a second step in the Christian life; it is the Christian life.

**B. Defining what a disciple of Christ is.** In the Scriptures there is a development of the meaning of the word *disciple* so that by the time we get to the book of Acts we have a clear definition of what a disciple of Christ is.

**1. A disciple is a follower.** It is a person who puts himself under the teaching of another. A disciple followed his master. From this general definition a disciple of Christ is one who follows Him. They hear His voice and they follow Him (cf. John 10:27). It involves making a life commitment to Christ and His ways.

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<sup>4</sup> Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 28.

**a. Jesus was constantly calling men to follow Him.** Jesus said to Peter and Andrew, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt 4:19). Jesus “purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, ‘Follow Me’” (John 1:43). Jesus “saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector’s booth; and He said to him, ‘Follow Me!’” (Matt 9:9). “Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me’” (Matt 16:24). Jesus told the rich young ruler, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me” (Matt 19:21).

A disciple of Christ is one that follows Him. This means they follow His teaching, His way of life, and His example. They put themselves under His authority.

**b. Disciples of Christ are with Christ** (John 14:23; 14:16-18). As they are with Him they learn to be like Him.

**c. Disciples of Christ follow His teaching.** They keep His commandments (John 13:34-35; 14:15, 21).

**d. Disciples of Christ follow His example.** We learn to follow Christ’s example from believers who model imitating Christ. “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). Paul reminded the Thessalonians, “You also became imitators of us and of the Lord” (1 The 1:6).

From this general definition we see that a disciple of Christ is a follower of Christ. Unfortunately, many will follow Christ for the wrong reasons, so it must go deeper than this (John 6:2, 26; Matt 13:20-21). Our goal is not merely to make followers of Christ. Our goal is for people to be converted, to be born again, for it is only then will they see the glory of Christ.

**2. A disciple is one who recognizes that Jesus is Lord (Luke 5:1-11).** Jesus is not simply some great teacher to emulate. He is Lord of all.

**a. Peter had a respectful view of Jesus (Luke 5:5).** He calls Jesus *master*. He recognized that Jesus was someone to be highly regarded.

**b. Peter is revealed Christ’s true identity (Luke 5:6-8).** Jesus reveals Himself through a miraculous act. Peter sees Jesus for who He truly is: Lord. This is what happens at conversion: a veil is lifted and a person sees the glory of Christ.

**c. Peter responds to seeing Christ's glory (Luke 5:8-10).** He sees his sinfulness and he is overcome with amazement and fear. This is the response of all who have truly encountered the risen Christ.

A true disciple of Christ is one who recognizes who He is. He is Savior *and* Lord.

**3. A disciple is one who makes a radical commitment to Christ.** This is what Jesus demands as Lord.

**a. Jesus calls sinners to a new life (Luke 5:10).** He calls us to be fishers of men; to make disciples.

- Jesus initiates the call.
- Jesus chooses who He wants to be His disciples (John 15:16).

**b. Jesus expects a response to leave all and follow Him (Luke 5:11).** A disciple of Christ is one who follows Him. It is one who commits his life to Christ and His ways. It involves a radical commitment to Christ. Christ must be supreme. He must be Lord. You must forsake all else for Christ. If you are not willing to do this, then you have not seen Christ for who He is.

This call is a call to salvation. Making disciples begins by calling men to Christ. Men must see their sin. They must see who Christ is: Savior and Lord. Then they must respond to Him.

Jesus demands this of everyone who wants to be His follower, who wants to be His disciple (Luke 9:23-25).

**1) Deny yourself (Luke 9:23).** You must sacrifice your self-interests. You must turn away from the idolatry of self-centeredness because it will destroy you in the end. You must lose your life for Christ's sake, then you will save it (Luke 9:24).

**2) Take up your cross (Luke 9:23).** Jesus uses this imagery to emphasize that there is no going back to the old lifestyle. It means abandoning all to follow Christ. You lose your life for Christ's sake because you have found Him to be worth it all.

A cross pictures suffering and affliction. Following Christ is not going to be easy (2 Tim 3:12; John 15:18). Jesus wants men to consider the cost of following Him. There is no place for half-hearted commitment. He demands all of you.

Jesus is not giving the picture here of a committed Christian versus one who is not committed. He is not saying that there are some committed followers who deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Him, and there are some followers do not do this. He is not talking about those who will have a reward and those who will lose their reward. Jesus is talking about someone who loses their soul (Luke 9:25). They lose their life (Luke 9:24). Jesus is talking about salvation. This is a call to conversion. It is a radical call. Jesus demands your life. If you are not willing to give up your life for Christ, then you are not worthy of Him. You cannot be His disciple.

Following Christ will cost you everything, but in the process you will find life. Jesus wants men to consider if He is worth the cost.

**3) Forsake your family (Luke 14:25-26).** Here Jesus mentions the closest of family ties: your father, your mother, your precious wife, your dear children, your brothers, and sisters. Jesus says, that if we do not hate them we cannot be His disciple.

What the Lord Jesus is stressing is that He must have preeminence. He must be first in your life even over your most cherished relationships.

If you are not ready or willing to forsake your family, your closest family ties, then you are not ready to be His disciple.

**4) Count the cost (Luke 14:27-32).** Jesus gives two illustrations to emphasize the need to consider the cost of being His disciple (Luke 14:28-32).

- The first is of a person who wants to build a building. Before he ever begins, the person will sit down and calculate the cost (Luke 14:28). If he begins to build and runs out of money half way through the project, he will look like a fool (Luke 14:29-30). Before you ever decide to follow Christ you must sit down and seriously consider the cost.

- The second illustration is of a king about to meet another king in battle (Luke 14:31). But before the king ever goes to battle, he sits down and takes long, serious consideration as to whether he is strong enough with his ten thousand men to beat the other king with twenty thousand. If he does not think he is able he will send a delegation and asks for terms of peace. He considers the cost.

Jesus uses the same word in both illustrations, to sit down and take long consideration. Weigh it out. Consider the cost of following Christ, of being His disciple. There is no place for half hearted commitment. He demands all of you and is worthy of all of you.

**5) Give up all of your possessions (Luke 14:33; 18:22-23).** Love Christ more than things. Things are temporary. Christ is eternal.

The thrust of all these passages is a call to conversion. It is a call for men to decide if Jesus is really worth following or not. If you see Him as majestic and all glorious, then you will have no trouble bowing to Him. But if Jesus is simply someone who forgives you of your sins, gives you a free ticket to heaven, and makes your life better, then when troubles come or when something better comes along, you will sell out Jesus. You must lose your life for Christ's sake, then you will find it.

**4. A disciple is one who continues to grow in Christ likeness (Matt 10:24-25; 28:20; Luke 6:40; Rom 8:29).**

A true disciple of Christ becomes like Christ because he is being conformed to His image (Rom 8:29). He will become like his master. He will continue to grow in Christ-likeness. He will persevere in the faith.

Disciples need to be continually taught to do what Christ says (Matt 28:20). We are in a constant state of needing teaching so that we can grow in likeness to Christ. We are in a process of discipleship, a process of becoming conformed to Christ. This is the state of all true disciples.

A true disciple will continue in Christ's word (John 8:31).

**a. The response of the false disciple (John 6:60, 66).** They could not stomach Christ's word.

**b. The response of the true disciple (John 6:67-70).**

- Jesus has the words of eternal life
  
- Jesus is the holy one of God

**CONCLUSION: So what is a disciple (Acts 11:26)?**

A disciple is a follower of Christ. He is one who puts himself under the authority and teaching of Christ. The reason he follows Christ is because he has come to believe some things about Christ. He believes Jesus is Lord. He believes and knows Jesus is the holy one of God. He is the one with the words of eternal life; He is the one who takes away our sins, which means He is also our Savior. Because you believe Christ is Lord, the one with all authority, you give your life to Him. This is what Jesus demands of all His disciples. You must lose your life for His sake. This is how you become a disciple. So making disciples begins with conversion. You come to Him on His terms because He is Lord. But a disciple of Christ is not one who simply believes some things about Christ. He is one who continues in His word. He grows in Christ-likeness. He becomes like his teacher. He is in a process of becoming more and more like Christ.

When you examine this definition of a disciple it sounds just like how one would define a Christian. And that is exactly what a disciple is. A disciple is a Christian and a Christian is a disciple. In the early church “the disciples were first called *Christians* in Antioch” (Acts 11:26). Notice before they were ever called Christians, they were simply called disciples because that is what a Christian is. A disciple is not some super zealous saint. A disciple is not someone in full time ministry. A disciple is just another word for a Christian. All Christians are disciples. All Christians continue in Christ’s word. All Christians are growing in Christ-likeness. And all Christians are commanded to make disciples.



# Chapter 3

## GO!

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the cure to man's most fatal disease. It is the only cure over death and eternal damnation. We cannot keep this treasure to ourselves. The Lord Jesus commands us to get out this message of good news. "*Go*, therefore and make disciples" (Matt 28:19).

How do we make disciples? It involves going, baptizing and teaching. The beginning point of making disciples is to *go*. We go with the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Evangelism must be part of your ministry; it must be part of what your church does.

### A. Why we should go or The priority of going.

#### 1. The command of Christ makes it a priority to go (Matt 28:18-19).

**a. Christ is the one with all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt 28:18).** There is no one more majestic, more glorious than Jesus Christ. "He is the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). "He is the radiance of His [God's] glory and the exact representation of His nature" (Heb 1:3). The Father has bestowed on Jesus the name which is above every name (Phil 2:9-11). He is King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16). Because of who Jesus is His servants obey what He commands. He commands us to go.

**b. Christ is our lover, savior, and friend.** Jesus, ruler and Lord, came to earth, not to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). He came to die in the place of sinners. To magnify His love, to forever exhibit the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us, Jesus provided the perfect sacrifice for sin. We should respond to His love by keeping His commandments.

#### 2. The exclusiveness of the message makes it a priority to go (Acts 4:12, 19-20).

There is salvation in no one else. There is no other way to be saved. Salvation comes through one man—Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; *no one* comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6). Jesus also said, "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:9). True Christianity insists that there is only one way to be saved.

**3. The weightiness of the task makes it a priority to go.** “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21). We are sent on the same mission as Jesus. What an awesome privilege and what a sobering task we have that God would entrust this to us.

**4. The hope of success makes it a priority to go.** God has a people He is calling and saving. Jesus said, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out” (John 6:37). The Father will draw them to Christ (John 6:44). He is calling these people through us as we witness to them, and as we preach the gospel. This gives us great confidence for we know that God has determined to save people.

**B. What do we do or The process of going (Luke 24:44-49).** This is Luke’s version of the great commission.

**1. We go with the gospel.**

**a. Your sins can be forgiven in Jesus Christ (Luke 24:47).** This presupposes that people see their sin. The good news starts with bad news. People need to understand they are sinners. They have offended a holy God. Because God is infinitely holy our sin against Him is of an infinite magnitude and deserves infinite punishment. Even one sin against an infinitely holy God is worthy to send the sinner to eternal damnation.

The example of Adam: his one sin was of such magnitude against God that it plunged him into eternal ruin. Adam, by doing what God commanded him not to do, was putting himself in the place of God. It was an infinite sin worthy of infinite punishment and it far outweighed any good he could ever do. All of us are like Adam. All of us have sinned. Because of this all of us deserve eternal punishment in hell for our sins. There is nothing we can do to make ourselves right with God.

What we could not do, God out of His infinite love did. God sent His Son into the world to die in the place of sinners (Luke 24:46). The person who repents and trusts in Christ will receive forgiveness.

**b. The message is based in the word of God (Luke 24:44-46).** The things written about Christ in the Old Testament had to be fulfilled. This is what God had said would happen. God would send a redeemer, a man, who would suffer and die in the place of

sinners and then He would raise Him up on the third day. This was all written down beforehand. God simply fulfilled what He said He would do.

**2. We go with proclamation (Luke 24:47).** Jesus is very specific about how we are to get out the gospel message. The nature of the message requires proclamation. God, the sovereign King, is announcing that He has made terms of peace with His enemies. You can be reconciled to God. Your sins can be forgiven. But only on God's terms. The only thing He requires is that you repent and trust in Christ alone for the forgiveness of your sins. This is His terms.

**a. The example of Jesus and the apostles.** At the beginning of Jesus' public ministry Matthew tells us, "From that time Jesus began to *preach* and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matt 4:17). Later Matthew records, "Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and *proclaiming* the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt 9:35).

In Acts, the apostles kept with the same pattern of preaching. "Every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and *preaching* Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42). When the church was dispersed because of persecution, "those who had been scattered went about *preaching* the word" (Acts 8:4). Peter told Cornelius that Jesus "ordered us to *preach* to the people" (Acts 10:42). Paul told the people at Pisidian Antioch, "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him [Christ] forgiveness of sins is *proclaimed* to you" (Acts 13:38). Jesus even prophesied saying, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be *preached* in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt 24:14). Preaching and proclamation is the method God has chosen to get out the gospel.

**b. The means God uses to save people is through preaching.** "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent?" (Rom 10:13-15). Evangelism is accomplished primarily through preaching the gospel.

**3. We go with kindness.** We are to demonstrate the love of Christ through acts of kindness, which leads to opportunities to share the gospel.

**a. The exhortation to be different.**

**1) The condition of our world:** “Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold” (Matt 24:12). As Christians we must be different.

**2) The calling of Christians (Matt 5:13-16).** Christians are salt and light in this world. The world has no way of knowing Christ except through our testimony, so we must reflect the light of Christ.

Our light is not supposed to be hidden (Matt 5:15). Our light is to shine before men in such a way that they see our good works, and glorify our Father in heaven (Matt 5:16). We display the light of Christ when we do good works.

**b. The example of Christ.**

**1) Jesus did good deeds.** “You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about *doing good* and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). Jesus did physical deeds of kindness and He did spiritual deeds of kindness.

By loving people and having compassion on them, we can have a more effective witness for the gospel. Deeds of kindness must accompany our words of kindness expressed in the gospel.

**2) Jesus had compassion on a widow (Luke 7:11-15).**

**3) Jesus had compassion on a leper (Mark 1:40-41).** Our Lord’s compassion was expressed in a kind deed. We must learn to express the love of the gospel not only in kind words (the gospel message itself), but also in kind deeds.

**4) Jesus had compassion on people (Matt 9:35-38).** He ministered to the physical needs of people while He ministered to their spiritual needs. Their spiritual need, however, was far greater than their physical need. We need to remember that as we show people compassion and love, that our objective would be they see Christ and glorify our Father in heaven.

**c. The entreatment to be kind.** “Those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved” are to “put on a heart of compassion [and] kindness” (Col 3:12).

Paul tells the Galatians not to lose heart or grow weary in doing good (Gal 6:9-10). In due time they will reap. Paul then encourages them that while they have opportunity they are to do good to all people and especially to Christians (Gal 6:10).

Loving concern will do more to win a person to Christ than the most carefully articulated argument. The heart of every Christian testimony should be kindness.<sup>5</sup>

**d. An example of kindness: the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).**

**1) The religious men.** True religion is always God *and* people centered. We are to love God and our neighbor.

**2) The Samaritan.** He felt compassion (Luke 10:33). We are to have the same compassion on sinners that come across our path because this is how God treated us. The Samaritan's compassion was expressed in what he did (Luke 10:34-35).

**3) What can we learn from this example?** This is the kind of love we are to give to others, even if they are our enemies.

The purpose of light is defeated unless it penetrates the darkness.<sup>6</sup> We must be willing to step out of our comfort zone by faith and help people who are in need around us.

**4. We go as witnesses (Luke 24:48).** A witness is someone who has seen and heard things and therefore who can testify about that. The emphasis is that it is personal. You can testify what Christ has done for you.

**a. An example of a witness (John 4).** "So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, 'Come, and see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?'" (John 4:28-29).

Notice what happens as a result of her testimony, "From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified" (John 4:39).

Another example of a witness is the demoniac (Mark 5:1-20). Jesus sent him on a mission (Mark 5:19). Jesus tells him to go *home* to *his people* and report to them what great things the Lord had done for him and how He had mercy on him. The response of the people to his testimony was that they were amazed. They were filled with wonder at the power and compassion of Christ.

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<sup>5</sup>*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Galatians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1987), 191.

<sup>6</sup>Steve Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 2003), 49.

**b. Be ready to give your testimony.** “Always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet 3:15).

**1) The need of making a defense.**

**2) How to make our defense:** with gentleness and reverence.

**3) The subject of our defense is the hope that is in us.**

**5. We go with power (Luke 24:49).** “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses” (Acts 1:8).

The power of Peter is seen when he testified of Christ (Acts 4:9-12). He *proclaims* the truth. Peter uses Scripture to prove this was God’s plan all along (Acts 4:11). This is not something he made up. He emphasizes their *sin* throughout (Acts 4:10, 11). And then he clearly gives the *gospel* (Acts 4:12). The implication is that these men need to repent and turn to the one they rejected. Peter is being a model of how we are to go and witness to people.

Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:8). He had power from on high. This power is available to every Christian.

**C. Where do we go or The place we are to go (Luke 24:47).**

**1. We are to go to the nations.** “Go therefore and make disciples of *all the nations*” (Matt 28:19). “Go into *all the world* and preach the gospel to *all creation*” (Mark 16:15). “You shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to *the remotest part of the earth*” (Acts 1:8).

**2. We begin in “Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).** Our going begins where we are at. It begins by reaching those around us, to those God puts in our lives: children, family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. The people who visit our church.

**3. Expand to reach out to your city and region (Judea).**

- Convalescent ministry
- Kindness evangelism ministry
- Street evangelism
- Prison ministry
- Evangelizing the youth
- Evangelizing through sports
- Friendship evangelism
- Reaching people through Home Fellowship Groups
- Invite people to church

**4. Expand to new areas (Samaria)**

**D. How do we go or the procedure of going.**

**1. The primary means is to *preach* the gospel**

**2. Sharing our *testimony***



# Chapter 4

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

Making disciples begins with evangelism. A person cannot become a disciple of Christ unless they hear the gospel message and respond to it. This is why we must *go*. However, we have not finished the task of disciple making when someone repents of their sin and turns to Christ. Disciple making does not end at evangelism. It has only begun.

Jesus commands us, “*teaching* them to observe all that I commanded you” (Matt 28:20). Disciples need to be taught so they can grow and mature so they can become effective disciple makers themselves. This means there is no such thing as a disciple who is not on the road of discipleship.

Interestingly, sandwiched between the going and the teaching is *baptizing*. Clearly, baptizing is a critical step in making disciples.

What is the significance of baptism? Why is this so important to making disciples?

- It is important because our Lord commands it; this gives a person the opportunity to show their submission to the one they claim is their Lord.
- It is critical because it gives people opportunity to respond to the gospel.
- It is significant because it gives people the opportunity to publicly show their allegiance to Christ.

### A. Jesus demands public confession of Him (Matt 10:32-39).

- Jesus insists that we confess Him before men (Matt 10:32).
- Jesus demands that we love Him more than our closest family ties (Matt 10:37).
- Jesus requires that we suffer for Him (Matt 10:38).
- Jesus says we must be willing to lose our life for Him (Matt 10:39).

**1. These radical demands imply the worthiness of Christ.** The one who comes to see who Jesus is, will gladly do what He commands.

**2. We must be willing to confess Jesus before men (Matt 10:32-33).** Followers of Christ will experience persecution. A disciple becomes like his teacher (Matt 10:24-25). If Jesus was persecuted, His followers will be persecuted (cf. John 15:18; 2 Tim 3:12).

Persecution leads to fear (Matt 10:26, 28, 31). People become fearful of what others may think, say or do. However, the fear of man brings a snare (Pro 29:25).

Jesus explains why we should not fear men:

- What people may do to us in secret will be revealed. God will vindicate His people (Matt 10:26-27).
- The worst men can do is kill us. Instead we are to fear God because He has the ability to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt 10:28).
- We are not to fear because our heavenly Father loves us (Matt 10:29-31).

Though we maybe tempted to fear men, Jesus demands us to confess Him before men (Matt 10:32). By demanding that we publically confess Him, Jesus is excluding half-hearted people who want the benefits of His kingdom but not its commitments.<sup>7</sup> Jesus wants to get rid of the admirers, the secret Christians.

The reason Jesus is so demanding is that eternity is at stake. There are many people who have great regard for Jesus, who even believe He is God, who will end up in hell. Jesus requires wholehearted devotion.

This begins by making a public confession of Him before men (Matt 10:32). Jesus wants *everyone* to do this. A person's willingness to confess Jesus before men, determines Jesus' willingness to confess him before His Father in heaven. However, if a person denies Christ before men, then He will deny him before His Father in heaven (Matt 10:33).

Jesus is not talking about those who sometimes waver. Jesus is talking about people who consistently will not own Him. Because they fear men and love the approval of men and love the world, they will not confess Christ. Because they will not do this, they actually deny Him.

**3. The danger of faith without confession (John 12:42-43).** These people were not confessing Christ because they were fearful of men. There is always cause to question the

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<sup>7</sup> *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 8-15* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1987), 214.

sincerity of a faith which is either afraid or ashamed to show itself; for those who believe from the heart ought to confess with the mouth.<sup>8</sup>

**4. Faith must be tied to confession (Rom 10:8-10).** You (each one of you) must confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord (Rom 10:9). A person must believe in his heart that God raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:9). Because the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart, when your heart is changed, it will come out of your mouth (Rom 10:10). The two are inseparable. Faith (belief) must be tied to confession or there is no true faith.

This is why Jesus has such radical demands. He wants to weed out those who are mere professors. He wants to expose those who want Him on their terms, not His. So He begins by demanding that we confess Him before men. This shows our loyalty. This shows if we really fear Him. This shows if we really love Him. This shows if we have really bowed to Him. If He is truly Lord of your life you will confess Him.

## **B. A true disciple cannot remain secret one.**

**1. Joseph of Arimathea** (John 19:38-42; cf. Matt 27:57-60; Mark 15:42-46; Luke 23:50-53). Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but he was a secret one for fear of the Jews. Yet, at the point when Joseph had nothing to gain and everything to lose, he publically owned Christ (John 19:39).

**2. Nicodemus.** He also was a secret admirer of Christ (cf. John 3). It was apparently the death of Christ that led to a breakthrough to a more decisive faith. When he had everything to lose by affirming his connection to Christ—his reputation, job, position of power, possibly his family, and even his own life, he came out in the open. He had true faith. A true disciple of Christ cannot remain a secret one. He will publically own Christ.

## **C. The importance of baptism.**

**1. Baptism forces men to make a decision.** It forces them to evaluate if Christ is worth following openly or not.

**2. Baptism was the consistent practice of the early church.**

- Acts 2:38, 41

By submitting to the waters of baptism in the name of Christ, these Jews were putting everything on the line.

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<sup>8</sup> *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 5 (United States: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 876.

Baptism is for believers. It is not for infants. It is for those who understand the gospel and who receive it. It is a response to the gospel. This is the consistent pattern all the way through the book of Acts.

- Acts 8:12
- Acts 8:36-37
- Acts 22:12-16
- Acts 10:44-48
- Acts 16:14-15
- Acts 16:30-33
- Acts 18:8
- Acts 19:4-5

**D. Practical application: the importance of interviewing people who want to be baptized.**

**CONCLUSION**

- Baptism is important because it is commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 28:19).
- Baptism brings closure to the preaching of the gospel; it gives people an opportunity to respond to the gospel.
- Baptism gives men the opportunity to confess Christ publically before men.

# Chapter 5

## CHRIST'S PLAN TO BUILD HIS CHURCH Ephesians 4:7-16

We are living in the age in which the Lord Jesus Christ is building His church. He is using His authority and power to plunder the realm of darkness. The goal of our Lord is to reach the nations. There will be people from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation worshiping Him. The Lord's plan to accomplish this is for His followers to make disciples. Disciple making is not some small obscure ministry in the church. Disciple making is the church. Everything we do as a church should be centered and focused on making disciples.

Jesus our Lord tells us exactly how to do this. We *go* with the gospel message, proclaiming the good news. We *baptize* those who believe, and we *teach* them to observe all that Christ commanded. The objective of our teaching is to get disciples to the point where they can become effective disciple makers themselves. We teach disciples to do all that Christ has commanded so they themselves can be equipped and reach others also. When this happens there is an ever expanding ministry.

In Ephesians 4, Paul captures the essence of the great commission, especially the importance of being taught the word. Paul reveals how Christ is building His church.

**A. The accomplishments of Christ for building His church (Eph 4:7-8).** Every Christian, has been given a gift. The significance of the gift is seen in the person giving the gift. Paul presents Christ as the triumphant victor who has conquered all His enemies; thus He is exalted far above them. This is the person distributing the gifts. He has overrun His enemies, He is exalted above all, and He has gifted us to continue the process.

**1. Christ has given each one of us a gift (Eph 4:7).** To each one of us *grace* was given.

Paul has already described his ministry in these very terms (Eph 3:2, 7-8). Paul's ministry was a stewardship of God's grace. Like Paul, we do not deserve the gifts Christ gives us. It is all rooted in His unmerited favor that He freely bestows upon us.

Every single Christian has a spiritual gift. The design of Christ in building up His body is to use every single person in the body. Our gifts may differ, but every single one of them is important for the exaltation of Christ.

Our gifts are given to us according to the measure of Christ's gift (Eph 4:7). Christ Himself portions off the gift we receive. God prepared beforehand good works for us to walk in (Eph 2:10) and He has gifted us accordingly so we can do them.

**2. Christ triumphantly conquered all His enemies so He could give gifts to men (Eph 4:8).** Paul is speaking about Christ's ascension back into heaven. When He did this He led captive a host of captives. The image Paul is giving here is of Christ's absolute triumph over all His enemies. His was a complete victory over the devil and his demons, over sin, and even over death itself. He triumphed over all. "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him" (Col 2:15).

God "raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church" (Eph 1:20-22). All of Christ's enemies are in subjection to Him; they are under His feet. The portrait is of a conquering king putting his foot on the neck of his enemies. They are under his feet; defeated foes.

Because Christ has defeated all His enemies and stripped them of their power, He is able to give gifts to men. The spoils of His victory have been distributed to His people. The gifts Christ gives enable us to continue His triumph and victory on earth.

**3. Christ's infinite humility and infinite exaltation (Eph 4:9-10).** If Christ ascended this means He also descended. What is being emphasized is that Christ descended from heaven to earth. When Paul says He "descended into the lower parts of the earth," he means that Christ descended to the earth below. Paul is contrasting where Christ came from, heaven, to where He went, earth. His point is: the earth was way beneath Him. He descended to the *lower part*, the earth. Here is seen the infinite humility of Christ. He came from highest glory, from the utmost exaltation, and He humbled Himself to come to the lower parts, to the earth. He humbled Himself further by becoming a man so He could die in our place. His humility was infinite. Therefore His exaltation was infinite.

Once He accomplished the Father's will, He was raised from the dead and He "ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things" (Eph 4:10). Christ ascended to the place of highest supremacy, far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion, and every name that is named. His was the highest exaltation.

Christ fills the universe through the exercise of His lordship over everything. There is nothing that is not subject to Him; there is no place where His presence may not be known. He rules over all His enemies and He gives grace and strength to His people. This is the Christ we serve. This is the one who is building His church. This is the one who has given us gifts so He may be exalted through us.

**B. The design of Christ for building His church (Eph 4:11-13).** These verses describe our Lord's plan for building His church. This is how He is filling up all things. It starts by the Lord giving specific support gifts to His church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers) for equipping of the saints so they, God's people, can do the work of ministry. When each of us does our part the whole body of Christ is built up, people mature, and begin to display a measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

**1. Christ gives gifted men to His church who equip His people (Eph 4:11-12).** The Lord Jesus is the one who sovereignly decides who the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers will be.

Christ as the head of the body determines how best to build up His body.

**a. What Christ gives His church to build it up is gifted men (Eph 4:11).** All of these gifts are related to word ministry.

The *apostles and prophets* had a unique ministry. These gifts were given for the foundation period of the church before the completion of the New Testament (Eph 2:20). The apostles and prophets received direct revelation from God, and because of their unique authority imposed that revelation as part of the New Covenant on the entire church.

Paul, along with the other apostles, received direct revelation from God (Eph 3:3). They were revealed specific truth which they wrote down and which became the New Testament (Eph 3:5).

God confirmed the apostles by signs, wonders, and miracles. "After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will" (Heb 2:3-4).

With the completion of the New Testament, the foundation has been laid, so these gifts are no longer given to the church. But we can still be equipped through the ministry of the apostles and prophets because we have what they said. It has been written down.

The Lord Jesus still gives *evangelists and pastor-teachers* for the equipping of the saints. Evangelists are those who go about proclaiming the good news of the gospel. Pastors equip the saints mainly through their teaching ministry.

The two primary support gifts for equipping the saints are evangelists and pastors who teach. Two of the main elements of the great commission are to go—evangelize, and to teach.

**b. Christ assigns these gifted men to equip the saints (Eph 4:11-12).**

The saints are all true believers.

*Equip* means to get someone ready for action or outfitting someone to handle a task.

What the Lord Jesus uses to equip His people to make disciples is evangelists and pastor/teachers.

The method of equipping the saints centers on the preaching and teaching of the word of God. This is emphasis of these gifts. This is the emphasis of the Great Commission (Matt 28:20).

When Christ's word is faithfully preached, the voice people hear is Christ (Eph 2:17).

Preaching and teaching is so important to equip the saints to prepare them to make disciples that it is emphasized throughout the New Testament. It was the chief work of our Lord and His apostles (Luke 4:18; Mark 3:14; Acts 10:42; 1 Cor 1:17; 2 Tim 4:2).

God uses His word to build us up and equip us for service.

This is how the Lord has determined to outfit us for the work He wants us to do. A Christian will not mature as he should, nor will he be as useful as he should if he neglects sitting under the preaching and teaching ministry of the word.

A pastor-teacher's primary responsibility is to equip the saints with the word of God. This is Christ's plan for maturing His people. If it is important that all the saints get equipped to prepare them for ministry, then it is doubly important that those who desire to teach sit under the ministry of God's word as well. To feed others, we must be well fed.

**2. Christ's purpose for His people is that they do the work of service (Eph 4:12).** ¶  
aim of equipping is to deploy people in ministry. The goal of learning is to put it to practice.

Christ has a work that He wants each of us to do. Ministry is for everyone. It is not simply the pastors or evangelists who do the work of service. The pastors and evangelists are the support gifts that equip the saints so *they* can do the work of service. Ministry belongs to the people of God.

When a Christian uses his gift to serve others, he builds them up, he strengthens them, and he encourages them. This is reciprocated back to him when others use their gift to serve him. This results in the church being built up and Christ being glorified.

**3. Christ's goal is our maturity and His glory (Eph 4:13).** Maturity is having a unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and displaying a measure of Christ's infinite fullness. As we are equipped through the word of God *and* as we serve one another, we become more like Christ.

**a. The unity of the faith.** The faith is what we believe which is centered in the person and work of Christ. When believers are faithfully taught the word of Christ, and when they faithfully do the work of service, the church body is built up and unity of faith is the inevitable result.

**b. The knowledge of the Son of God (Eph 4:13):** knowing Him in a more intimate, personal and deeper way.

**c. A measure of His infinite fullness (Eph 4:13).** Our Lord's desire is that we mature, that we display a measure of the stature which belongs to His infinite fullness.

Our destination is maturity, but one cannot reach this goal unless two things are happening. They must be equipped *and* they must be serving in the body.

The purpose of Christ building His church is to display Himself.

### **C. The results of Christ building His church (Eph 4:14-16).**

**1. We are no longer immature (Eph 4:14).** Children by nature are immature, easily misled, and naive. Some Christians are easily misled by false teaching. To combat this they must be anchored in the truth. The mark of maturity is that you are no longer tossed and carried about by false teaching, because you recognize it.

**2. We grow up in every way into Christ (Eph 4:15).** This is especially seen in our speech. Maturity is knowing the truth and being able to communicate it in a spirit of love.

**3. Christ is glorified and honored (Eph 4:16).** Jesus is building His church so that He will be exalted in the world. It is from Christ, the head, that the whole body is fitted and held together. The point of Christ fitting us and holding us together is so that everyone does their part (Eph 4:16b). There are not some people more important than others. All must be supplying to the body.

As each one does his part, the Lord Jesus works through him to minister to those around him. Life flows from Christ through us to those around us. This causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. And when the body is built up in love, Jesus is glorified because what people see is Him.

This is our Lord's plan for building His church. Each of us has the privilege of being used by Him to bring Him glory as we are being equipped and then as we serve His church.

Throughout this passage Paul is simply describing the disciple making process. We need to be equipped for the service Christ has called us to do. This equipping occurs through the teaching of gifted men Christ has given the church. This is why Christ commanded His followers to teach the disciples. This is how believers will mature, grow and be fruitful. There is no other way.

#### **D. Practical application: developing equipping ministries in the church.**

- 1. Preaching**
  
- 2. Discipleship mentoring ministry**
  
- 3. Home Fellowship groups**
  
- 4. Adult Sunday school (Adult Training Seminars)**
  
- 5. Leadership Training and Development**
  
- 6. College level training**
  
- 7. Seminary level training**

# Chapter 6

## THE METHOD OF MAKING DISCIPLES

Making disciples is our Lord's strategy for building His church. Disciple making, then, is not some small obscure ministry in the church. Disciple making is the church. Everything we do as a church and every ministry in the church should be focused on making disciples.

To understand how to make disciples we need to look at the example of our Lord Jesus. Jesus had a plan for making disciples. Everything He did was centered on this goal. When Jesus commissioned His followers in Matthew 28 to make disciples, they knew exactly how to do this because He had modeled it for them. He had lived out and showed them what to do.

**A. The plan for making disciples.** One thing that characterized Jesus' ministry is that He preached the gospel and ministered to the needs of the multitudes. Another thing that was prominent in His ministry was His training of the twelve. He was constantly teaching them as they were with Him. Jesus concentrated most of His efforts on training them. Thus there was a two pronged emphasis in Christ's ministry. There was a ministry to the multitudes and there was the training of the twelve. Often the training of the few was in the context of ministering to the masses, so they overlapped.

**1. Jesus had a ministry to the multitudes.** Reaching the multitudes was primarily through preaching (Mark 1:14-15, 38-39). He also healed the sick, raised the dead and cast out demons (Mark 1:21-39). Jesus went out evangelizing; He was going. When Jesus commanded His disciples to *go*, they knew exactly what to do for He had model it.

Jesus required those who made profession of faith in Him to be baptized (John 4:1). So when Jesus commanded His followers to baptize those who believe (Matt 28:19), they knew what to do because He had modeled this as well.

Jesus also taught the multitudes (Matt 5:1-2). Sometimes He taught smaller groups, including the twelve or even only three of them. Thus when Jesus commanded His followers to teach the disciples all of His commands, they knew what to do for He had modeled this too.

Like Christ, part of our strategy for making disciples is to reach the multitudes. We are to go and evangelize, preaching the gospel. We are to be His witnesses. Those who profess faith in Christ, we are to baptize. Then we are to teach them all of Christ's commands, both publically and from house to house. This is what Jesus did. This is what He commands us to do.

**2. Jesus concentrated on a few.** Jesus focused most of His efforts on training twelve men to be like Him. Twelve men who would live like He lived and do what He did. Twelve men who would preach to the multitudes, baptize and teach them, but who would also reproduce themselves in other men. Then instead of one person doing what He did, there would be twelve men doing what He did. And if these twelve men could *each* reach twelve more men then there would be an every expanding ministry and then Christ's objective of making disciples of all the nations would be accomplished. The key to reaching the multitudes with the gospel centered on His training of the twelve. We must not miss this because it is crucial to making disciples and critical to expanding the ministry.

Jesus looked for men out of the multitude He could train and invest His life in (Luke 6:12-13). These were the men who would be with Him while He served, ministered, and lived. They saw how Jesus responded to life's situations. They saw what His priorities were. He was training men how to make disciples. These were the men Jesus would turn over the kingdom to. Men were His method. Having men with you is the key to making disciples.

This was Christ's plan to reach the world with the gospel. His strategy was to train men.

This two-fold strategy of serving the multitudes and concentrating on a few is the blueprint for ministry—every ministry.

Christ's plan is that whatever ministry you are in, you concentrate your efforts on training others to know what you know and do what you do so there is an ever expanding ministry. You should be able to walk away from your ministry someday knowing that you trained one or more people to replace you.

All of us are going to be pulled out of ministry someday. Do you serve with that in view? Do you see how you can do twice as much work and reach twice as many people by simply training one person?

If you are in ministry serving someplace, your goal should be to learn as much as you can from the person over you so you can do what they do. This is discipleship (Matt 10:25).

## **B. The people to focus on.**

**1. They were teachable or humble.** Teachability is maybe most clearly seen in how one responds to rebuke.

The example of Peter responding to rebuke (Matt 14:28-3; 15:15-16; 26:40; 16:23).

**2. They were faithful (2 Tim 2:2).**

**a. Faithfulness is someone who is trustworthy (Matt 24:45-46).** They can be counted on to do what you request even when you are not around.

**b. Faithfulness is measured by little things (Luke 16:10).** If a person has not learned to be faithful in the small things, there is no question he will not be faithful in the bigger things.

According to Jesus, money is a little thing (Luke 16:11). How you spend God's resources determines who you are really serving (Luke 16:13).

**c. Faithfulness is critical.** If a person is not faithful, then he will fail to take what he has learned and teach other men and the chain will be broken and the goal will not be reached.

Jesus looked for men who were faithful in the small things (Mark 3:9; 6:41, 43; John 4). Once the disciples had proven themselves faithful in little things, Jesus began giving them larger assignments (Mark 6:7, 12-13). Eventually, the keys of the kingdom were given to them! The advancement of the gospel depends on faithful men.

**C. The pattern of making disciples.** There were at least three main things that Jesus emphasized in His training of the twelve. He modeled for them how to live and do ministry; He was an *example*. He also instructed and corrected them; He was an *exhorter*. And He gave them work to do; He *employed* them in ministry.

These three things presuppose that you are spending time together.

**1. Jesus employed the disciples in ministry (John 4:5-6, 8).** He gave them a small task: get some food. When making disciples we need to give them small jobs to do.

**2. Jesus was an example (John 4:27).** Jesus modeled to His disciples how to do ministry.

Later when Jesus commanded them to go to the nations, to every ethnic group, they knew what to do. Jesus had modeled it. This is why it was so important that they were with Him. To train disciples they need to be with you in ministry. They need to see how you love people. They need to see your compassion for souls. They need to see how you do ministry.

**3. Jesus is an exhorter (John 4:31-38).**

**Summary:** What we see in this passage is Jesus making disciples. He is ministering to the multitudes—the Samaritans. He is also focused on the few. He is training His faithful disciples. He is giving them small tasks to do. He is modeling to them how to live and how to do ministry. He is teaching them from real life situations. When Jesus is done there will be twelve men like Him who can then train others.

The gospel has now been handed down to us. Faithful men have imparted what they learned to us. Will we be faithful to our generation and will we train the next generation of disciples?

## **Developing Discipleship Ministries in the Local Church**

As we have seen making disciples is very comprehensive. It includes evangelism ministries and teaching ministries. Therefore, when developing “discipleship” in the local church it must be broad enough to cover these areas. There also must be a focus on ministering to the group as well as training the few.

## **Evangelism:**

Part of the equipping ministry should be to train people how to evangelize. There needs to be a vision of reaching people for Christ. This must come from the pulpit and other teaching venues. Also a strategy needs to be developed about how to best evangelize, and then practical opportunities need to be given to people so they can go out and do this as they see it modeled for them.

Some suggestions:

- Evangelism should be part of our preaching. Invite people to come to Christ.
- Parents need to be encouraged to teach and evangelize their children. Train them how to do this.
- Teach an evangelism Sunday school class to teach people how to evangelize.
- Friendship evangelism needs to be taught, encouraged, and modeled.
- Reach those God brings to your church or ministry.
- Reach your community:
  - ▶ Start a Kindness Evangelism program. This is a great way for those with the gift of evangelism to model to others how to evangelize. This is also a very non-threatening way to evangelize since everyone can show kindness to others.
  - ▶ Organize street evangelism (at fruit stands, movie places, wherever people are gathered).
  - ▶ Reach the elderly by starting a convalescent ministry.
  - ▶ Start a prison ministry.
  - ▶ Reach the youth through outreaches.
  - ▶ Reach adults through sports activities.

## **Teaching:**

Teaching needs to be structured so it reaches people who are new believers, young believers and mature believers. Different avenues need to be established to meet the needs of people at their maturity level. Remember also that part of teaching is modeling or living what you are teaching others. Thus people need to be around you so they can learn from your example.

- **Preaching/corporate worship:** The emphasis on this in the New Testament cannot be ignored. It is the primary means God uses to mature us and help us grow in Christ. Men need to be developed and given opportunity to preach.
- **One on one mentoring ministry:** Develop a ministry for new and young believers to help them grow in Christ and learn basic Bible doctrine. Training must be provided for mentors so they know how to disciple others. The main way to train them is by them simply watching someone else do this.

- **Home Fellowship Groups:** Small groups are essential to the growth of believers in the church. Teaching the word, fellowship, ministering to one another, prayer, worship, outreach should all be essential components to these groups. They are the place that “body life” takes place. The importance of ministering to one another in groups like these should be emphasized from the pulpit through sermons.

The leader should also focus on training and developing an intern who will eventually have his own group.

- **Sunday School classes:** These should address the various needs in the church. It should be geared to help the youngest Christian grow, yet be challenging to the most mature believer. Topics should address specific needs in the body. There are certain topics that we have decided should be taught regularly: parenting, marriage, finances, missions.

As men have developed their teaching gifts in other areas like Home Fellowship Groups, some of these men should be given opportunity to start teaching Sunday school under the direction of a mentor. This is an essential way to develop the preaching gifts of men.

- **Men’s Ministry, Women’s Ministry, College & Career Ministries:** These groups meet to encourage specific needs related to gender or singleness.
- **Children’s and Youth Ministry:** There must be a vision to reach the next generation for Christ (Ps 78).
- **Leadership Training and Development:** This is geared for those who have shown themselves faithful in the little things. There is a great focus on a man’s character, how he leads his wife and children, learning basic hermeneutic skills, learning disciplines to help his walk, and learning in more depth some of the great doctrines of the faith.
- **Leadership Training for Women:** This is much like LTD except with an emphasis on women’s roles in the church and home.

### **Serving:**

All of the equipping stated above will be fruitless unless it is accompanied with serving. As people are equipped by evangelists and pastors, they need to take what they have learned and apply it to ministry. Thus believers need to be taught the importance of serving and exhorted to serve. Leaders need to provide avenues for people to use their spiritual gifts. Leaders also must model serving. They must have a vision of having faithful men with them whom they can train for the ministry.

# Chapter 7

## **THE METHOD OF MAKING DISCIPLES: Another Look**

The **plan** of Jesus for making disciples: minister to the multitudes while concentrating on training leaders. From the multitude, look for **people** who are faithful. The **pattern** for discipling them includes being an *exhorter*. Jesus taught them how to live and do ministry. It involves being an *example*. Jesus showed them how to live and do ministry. And it consists of being an *employer*. Jesus gave them work to do so they could learn from experience.

Paul's method of making disciples is exactly the same as Christ's. Paul ministered to the multitudes while he trained the faithful few. He taught his disciples; he was a model to his disciples; and he gave them opportunities to learn by experience.

The example of Timothy (1 Cor 4:17)

- He was a man worth investing in.
- He was trained by Paul's example.
- He learned from Paul's teaching.
- He learned from experience.

**A. Paul's ministry to the multitudes—the Corinthians (1 Cor 4:14-16).**

**1. Paul was an exhorter (1 Cor 4:14-15).**

**a. Exhortation often involves admonishing.**

**b. How to admonish (1 Cor 4:14).**

**1) Admonish in love.**

“Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears” (Acts 20:31).

**2) Admonish as family.** Paul admonished the Corinthians in the context of a loving family relationship. This is how we are to admonish one another.

Paul was not simply a tutor. He was their spiritual father, which meant he had a responsibility to help them grow in Christ.

Every believer should be growing so as to become a spiritual father. “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food” (Heb 5:12).

“We proclaim Him, *admonishing* every man and *teaching* every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ” (Col 1:28). To present every man complete in Christ, we must admonish and teach every man.

**3) Admonish with the word (2 Tim 3:16-17).**

**4) Admonishing incorrectly.**

- Speak with carefully measured words (Jas 1:19-20)
- Speak with the right tone of voice (Pro 15:1)
- Speak with praise and commendation (Pro 15:23)

**2. Paul was an example (1 Cor 4:16; cf. 1 Cor 11:1).** Disciples become like their teacher. Be an example worth imitating.

**a. Be an example in character (1 Tim 4:12).** The way we live is our most powerful message for the gospel.

**1) We are to be an example in speech (Jam 3:1-12; 1 Pet 2:23).**

**2) We are to be an example in conduct.** Our behavior must match our words.

**3) We are to be an example in love.** Love has the greatest impact on others. Love lifts burdens; it does not add to them.

**4) We are to be an example in faith.**

**5) We are to be an example in purity.** Flee immorality (1 Cor 6:18). Be holy (1 Pet 1:15). “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts” (Rom 13:14).

**b. Be an example in service (Mark 10:45; John 13:12-15).**

- Proud people who are preoccupied with self do not serve.
- Love does whatever needs to be done.

**B. Paul trained the few—Timothy (1 Cor 4:17).** Paul had disciplined Timothy so well that Timothy was just like Paul. The goal of discipleship is to be able to send others to work in our place. The goal is reproduction. Paul multiplied his ministry by training other men to be like him.

**1. Paul employed Timothy (1 Cor 4:17).**

**a. Timothy was Paul’s beloved child in the Lord (1 Tim 1:2, 18).** Paul’s training of Timothy was done in the context of a loving relationship.

**b. Timothy was with Paul.** Paul gave Timothy small tasks to do. “When we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone, and we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith” (1 The 3:1-2). Paul trained him to be a fellow worker, which was his objective.

Paul had Timothy take part in the preaching ministry. “Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy” (2 Cor 1:19).

**c. Timothy was faithful (1 Cor 4:17).** Timothy had proven his faithfulness in the little things, so Paul could entrust bigger and bigger things to him. By the time he writes 1 Corinthians, Paul could send Timothy as his representative.

**2. Paul trained Timothy by example (1 Cor 4:17).** Timothy had become like his teacher. He could remind the Corinthians of Paul’s ways which are in Christ because he practiced Paul’s ways.

**3. Paul exhorted Timothy (1 Cor 4:17).** Timothy learned Paul’s teaching.

## **Developing a Discipleship Mentoring Ministry**

One of the most important things to help new, young, and mature believers grow in Christ is to develop a Discipleship Mentoring Ministry. As you develop this ministry it will also begin to build your leadership base. Remember your objective as a pastor/teacher or evangelist is to equip the saints so they do the work of the ministry, to build up the body of Christ. The work of the ministry is to make disciples.

### **The Benefits and Priority of This Ministry**

A Discipleship Mentoring Ministry is a ministry where older believers mentor younger or new believers in their walk with Christ. They teach, lead by example, and employ younger believers in ministry. This keeps older believers focused on what is important (making disciples); it keeps them in the word and on their knees knowing they have the awesome task of caring for another's soul, for which they will be held accountable for (Heb 13:17). This ministry is also very valuable for new and young believers for it gives them a model to follow, not only in their walk, but it also prepares them to mentor others.

### **How to Implement This Ministry**

#### ***Preach on the Importance of This***

Give the biblical basis of why this ministry is important. God's people need to see the commands of Christ about this. Preach and teach on the key texts (e.g. Matt 28:18-20; 2 Tim 2:2; Eph 4:11-16). Look to the example of Jesus and Paul from various passages, for they modeled discipling others.

#### ***Train Leaders How to Disciple Others***

The goal is to develop a team of people who will be able to disciple others. This is the beginning of your leadership training. Show them how to disciple others by discipling them. Take them through *Basic Discipleship*, *Basic Bible Doctrine*, and *Basic Disciple Making* or similar books. Teach them how to develop a lesson plan and ask good questions. Have them read *Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert Coleman and *The Trellis and the Vine* by Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, and then review these books with them.

***Once These Leaders Are Trained Send Them Out to Disciple Others***

Show the biblical model of Jesus and Paul doing this.

***Keep Training Your Leaders***

- Teach them the sufficiency of Scripture and the power of the Spirit to cope with any problem or trial that we face.
- Teach them how to counsel using the word of God.
- Train them doctrinally. They must be sound in the word (1 Tim 4:15-16).
- Teach them to build relationships by modeling it yourself (1 The 2:1 ff).
- Hold them accountable. Make sure they are growing as a Christian in their home, at work, and in ministry.
- Have quarterly meetings and have disciplers give updates.

***As the Ministry Grows, Develop Key Leaders***

# Chapter 8

## THE PRIORITY OF HOME FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Christ's method of making disciples involved at least three things: teaching, modeling, and employing His disciples in ministry. His goal was to reproduce Himself in the lives of the men He was training. As we disciple men and women our objective is to get them to become more like Christ. We must teach them, equip them, help them develop their spiritual gifts, and get them involved in people's lives. A key way of doing this is through small group ministry or Home Fellowship Groups.

Home Fellowship Groups are indispensable in helping believers grow as disciples. The New Testament prioritizes meeting in homes. The New Testament models and mandates small groups as the norm and pattern for fellowship, the ministry of spiritual gifts, and as contact points for reaching the world. For a person to be a healthy, growing, fruitful Christian, he cannot live in isolation. He needs to be around other believers and they need to be around him. God has so composed the body of Christ that the members need one another.

The New Testament envisions the people of God as a *body* where each member of the body works to build up the rest of the body to the glory of Christ. Each member of the body has been given a spiritual gift which they are to use to edify the body. For this to happen believers need to be in contact with other believers so they can help them grow.

The New Testament also speaks of believers as being God's *household*. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, with spiritual fathers and mothers. Both of these images of the church—a body and a family—emphasize closeness, familiarity, oneness, and unity. The New Testament portrays the people of God as those who truly care for one another, who love one another and who are encouraging one another to grow in Christ. This kind of familiarity and love can only take place in a context where people truly know each other. Here again we see the importance of spending time with people and building relationships with them. These kind of relationships are best fostered in homes.

**A. Home Fellowship Groups are a priority to achieve a balanced New Testament ministry.** The New Testament church emphasized two main things: preaching and corporate worship, and fellowship and relationships.

**1. The church met corporately.**

**a. This emphasizes a larger corporate unity (1 Pet 2:9-10).**

- We are a chosen race
  
- We are a royal priesthood
  
- We are a holy nation
  
- We are a people of God's own possession

**b. This gives corporate purpose, vision and unity.**

**1) Unity in purpose and in meeting needs (Acts 4:32-35).** They were united in their purpose of proclaiming Christ and getting out the gospel (Acts 4:31). They were also united in meeting needs (Acts 4:34-35).

**2) Unity of purpose and vision in missions (Acts 14:26-28).**

**3) Unity in doctrine (Acts 15).**

**c. This gives opportunity for edification (1 Cor 14:23, 26).** They met corporately to build up one another. This was done through the reading of psalms, through teaching, through prophecy, and speaking in tongues with an interpretation. This is also done through music and prayer (Eph 5:19-20).

**d. This gives a context for preaching.** The main reason the church gathers corporately is to hear the preaching of God's word.

**2. The church met in homes.** “Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house” (Acts 2:46).

“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship” (Acts 2:42). These were things that were non-negotiable. They were continuous expressions of church life that God’s people took seriously. The church was just as devoted to the apostle’s teaching as they were to fellowship. If we want to have a balanced New Testament ministry, then we must be devoted to preaching and corporate worship, and we must be devoted to fellowship and building relationships.

**B. Home Fellowship Groups are a priority to experience New Testament church life.**

**1. The church continually devoted themselves to fellowship (Acts 2:42).** When Christians fellowship with other Christians, fellowship by definition is what we share in common. The root of what we have in common is Christ (1 Cor 1:9; 1 John 1:3). “Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a *sharing* (koinwnia) in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a *sharing* (koinwnia) in the body of Christ?” (1 Cor 10:16). We share in what the death of Christ has accomplished for us: forgiveness, redemption, justification, salvation, sanctification, and so forth. We fellowship in the gospel and the benefits of the gospel (Phil 1:5). We also have fellowship with Christ’s sufferings (Phil 3:10). These are the things we have in common.

**a. They were devoted to fellowship (Acts 2:42).** These believers persisted and gave constant attention to fellowship. They met together to encourage one another to grow in Christ.

Fellowship is probably most specifically expressed through the one another’s of the New Testament.<sup>9</sup>

**b. They were intent on building relationships.**

- We are members of one another (Rom 12:5; Eph 4:25). For the body to function properly each individual must do his part. God has designed the church so that we need each other. Each of us is to build up the other. Each of us is to use our gift in the body. If a member does not use their gift the whole body suffers. We must be in a place where we are in such proximity to others that we can use our gift to minister to their needs.

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<sup>9</sup> *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Acts 1-12* (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 84.

- We are to be devoted to one another in brotherly love (Rom 12:10).
- We are to give preference to one another (Rom 12:10).
- We are to be of the same mind toward one another (Rom 12:16; 15:5).
- We are to love one another (Rom 13:8; 1 The 4:9; 2 The 1:3; 1 Pet 1:22; 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12; 2 John 5).
- We are not to judge one another (Rom 14:13).
- We are to build up one another (Rom 14:19; 1 The 5:11).
- We are to accept one another (Rom 15:7).
- We are to admonish one another (Rom 15:14).
- We are to greet one another (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Pet 5:14).
- We are to wait for one another (1 Cor 11:33); care for one another (1 Cor 12:25); serve one another (Ga. 5:13; 1 Pet 4:10); not devour one another (Gal 5:15); not challenge one another (Gal 5:26); not envy one another (Gal 5:26); show tolerance to one another (Eph 4:2); be kind to one another (Eph 4:32); speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph 5:19); be subject to one another (Eph 5:21); regard one another more important than yourself (Phil 2:3); not lie to one another (Col 3:9); bear with one another (Col 3:13); forgive one another (Col 3:13); teach and admonish one another (Col 3:16); comfort one another (1 The 4:18); encourage one another (1 The 5:11; Heb 3:13; 10:25); live in peace with one another (1 The 5:13); always seek the good for one another (1 The 5:15); stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24); do not speak against one another (Jam 4:11); do not complain against one another (Jam 5:9); confess your sins to one another (Jam 5:16); pray for one another (Jam 5:16); be hospitable to one another (1 Pe 4:9); be humble toward one another (1 Pe 5:5); and fellowship with one another (1 John 1:7).

The emphasis of the one another's is to build relationships. These types of relationships cannot be built unless people are spending time with each other in a context that will promote this.

**2. New Testament church life also involves edification.** The body is built up as each individual member is equipped and uses his gift in the church (Eph 4:16).

Paul describes how the Lord Jesus is building His church (Eph 4:7-16). He does this by giving gifted men to His church—evangelists and pastors—so that they can equip the saints so the saints can do the work of ministry. Every Christian has been given a spiritual gift (Eph 4:7), but believers need to develop their gifts. They are equipped to use their gift through the ministry of the evangelists and pastors.

When believers use their gift it builds up the body of Christ (Eph 4:12), and the result is maturity, which Paul describes as the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:13). So the means God uses to mature every believer is through the equipping of the saints under the teaching and preaching of the word of God, *and* through the service of the saints to one another.

A question we need to ask ourselves is: Are people in our church (or in our ministry) using their gifts so that others are being built up? If they are not, we need to think of ways we can promote this because this is how Christ has designed His body so it will grow to maturity.

The product of this edification is a mature people who can recognize false teaching and not be swayed by it (Eph 4:14); who are able to speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15); and who serve one another in the body (Eph 4:16). When everyone is doing their part this causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love (Eph 4:16).

**3. The context where fellowship and edification take place.** From the above discussion we have seen the importance of the saints being equipped under the preaching of the word of God so they can serve others, and we have seen the priority of building relationships through the “one another’s.” Since these things are so essential to the growth of the church and the exaltation of Christ, we must promote these things in our ministry. One way the early church did this was to meet in homes. It is primarily in a small group context that these essentials for growth take place.

**a. The pattern of meeting in homes.** From its inception the church met in homes.

The people met corporately in the temple, and they broke bread together from house to house (Acts 2:46). They met in homes to teach (Acts 5:42; 20:20). They met in homes to pray (Acts 12:12). They encouraged the brethren in a home (Acts 16:40). The church met in a home (Acts 18:7; 1 Cor 16:19). The pattern of the early Jewish church and the later Gentile church was to meet corporately and in small groups in homes (Acts 20:20; cf. 2:46).

The word for house in all of these verses is *oikos*. Its basic meaning is a physical house (Acts 2:2). It came to mean a place where people live and dwell together: a home (Acts

7:20; 16:15). It then came to mean the people living in the house: the household (1 Tim 3:4; Acts 10:2; 16:15, 31; 18:8; 1 Cor 1:16).

**b. We are the household (oikos) of God (1 Tim 3:15).** We “are of God’s household” (Eph 2:19). God is our Father (Matt 6:9). We relate to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ (1 Cor 7:15; Jas 2:15). We are to treat one another as family because we are a family (1 Tim 5:1-2).

A family develops relationships by spending time together.

The dynamics of being in a home are different than when in public.

### **C. Home Fellowship Groups are a priority to encourage every member ministry.**

All believers have been given a spiritual gift which they are to use to serve one another (1 Cor 12:7). To focus ministry on Sundays alone would greatly restrict what God wants to do through the body. Not everyone gets to use their gifts. For every member ministry through the operation of spiritual gifts and the building of relationships, small groups are required. According to Paul, there must be a “proper working of each individual part” for the body to be built up in love (Eph 4:16).

**1. Every member ministry (1 Cor 12:20-22).** Every single member of the body of Christ is important to the body. Our goal is to help people see this, equip them, and get them involved in using their gift so the body is built up.

**2. Members will care for one another (1 Cor 12:25-26).**

### **D. Home Fellowship Groups are a priority to expand the church in the world: evangelism (Matt 28:18-20).**

## Home Fellowship Group Ministry Opportunities

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the appropriate box of areas you would like to serve.

<u>Area of Service</u>	<u>Description &amp; Responsibilities</u>	✓
<b>Communications</b>	<p>Keep accurate list of e-mails, phone numbers, birthdays, and anniversaries.</p> <p>Train and develop backup person.</p>	
<b>Refreshments</b>	<p>Coordinate refreshments for weekly meetings.</p> <p>Call to remind those who are providing refreshments for that week.</p> <p>Call and inform host of who is bringing refreshments.</p> <p>Once a month celebrate everyone's birthday and/or anniversary for that month.</p> <p>Serve as backup when need arises.</p> <p>Train and develop backup person.</p>	
<b>Hospitality</b>	<p>Open your home to host the study (for a month or longer).</p> <p>Provide drinks.</p> <p>Coordinate whose home the group will be in.</p>	
<b>Worship</b>	<p>Prepare and lead worship for weekly meetings and special events (three to five songs).</p> <p>Incorporate new songs we sing at church.</p> <p>Play a musical instrument.</p> <p>Pray that God would receive our worship, that He would indwell our praises, and that the worship would help us focus on God and Christ.</p> <p>Train and develop backup person.</p>	
<b>Prayer</b>	<p>Coordinate and lead group prayer and seek ways to promote bearing one another's burdens in prayer.</p> <p>Keep a prayer list and remind group of answered prayer.</p> <p>Develop leaders to lead small prayer groups.</p> <p>Break up into groups regularly; also break up into men and women.</p> <p>Exhort us from the Scripture about prayer.</p>	
<b>Teaching/ Devotionals</b>	<p>Teach on a regular basis.</p> <p>Share a devotional from Scripture about something God has been teaching you.</p>	

<b>Men's Discipleship</b>	<p>Coordinate discipleship pairs within our group.  Encourage older men to disciple younger men.  Interested in being disciplined or discipling someone else.</p>	
<b>Women's Discipleship</b>	<p>Coordinate discipleship pairs within our group.  Encourage older women to disciple younger women.  Interested in being disciplined or discipling someone else.</p>	
<b>Missions</b>	<p>Serve as the point person for corresponding with our group's missionary and communicate their needs to the rest of the group (monthly).  Coordinate any gifts or care packages they might need.</p>	
<b>Outreach</b>	<p>Plan and prepare outreach events to reach new people in our church and/or the community (at least one a quarter).  Occasionally challenge and remind the group to pair up with another couple and/or single(s) in the group and invite someone new over.  Organize kindness evangelism.  Train/develop backup person.</p>	
<b>Socials</b>	<p>Coordinate planning socials for the group. (This includes a Thanksgiving social, summer social(s), as well as a couple throughout the year.) Train/develop backup person.</p>	
<b>Showers &amp; Special Needs</b>	<p>Serve as point person for coordinating and planning showers, meals and other needs for the group.  Train/develop backup person.</p>	
<b>Group Service</b>	<p>Let the group know of opportunities to serve together: nursery, Generations To Come, Kindness Evangelism, and other opportunities.</p>	
<b>Exhortation</b>	<p>Come prepared to share a psalm, hymn, spiritual song, or a teaching, so as to encourage one another and stimulate one another to love and good deeds.</p>	

# Chapter 9

## THE MINISTRY OF HOME FELLOWSHIP GROUPS Part One

The early church had a pattern of meeting corporately and meeting in homes. “Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart” (Acts 2:46). “And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:42). This became the pattern of the Gentile churches as well. “I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publically and from house to house” (Acts 20:20). The leaders clearly saw the importance of meeting in homes to help believers grow in Christ.

In this chapter we will look at the ministry of a home fellowship group. What is involved in a home fellowship group? What are our goals and objectives? What are we trying to accomplish?

**A. The components of a Home Fellowship Group.** Ideally, in a Home Fellowship Group there is Bible study, fellowship, worship, prayer, service, bearing one another’s burdens, and outreach.

There are two broad components to a Home Fellowship Group: equipping and outreach. These correspond to what Christ commands us in the Great Commission. He commands us to *go* make disciples. This is outreach. And He commands us to *teach* the disciples to *observe* His commandments. This is equipping. Both are essential for a healthy group. Both must be emphasized and practiced or the group will suffer in some way.

### 1. Equip the saints for ministry (Eph 4:11-12).

**a. We equip them through the word.** Teaching must be central (Ps 1:1-2; 19:10; Ps 119:11; Jer 15:16; Matt 4:4; John 17:17; Eph 6:17; 2 Tim 3:16-17).

**b. We equip them through shepherding (Col 1:28).**

“Know well the condition of your flocks” (Pro 27:23).

**1) The vision of a shepherd: Christ (1 Pet 5:1).** Our responsibility as shepherds is to get the sheep focused on Christ. But they will not get this from you, if you are not focused on Christ.

**2) The responsibility of a shepherd (1 Pet 5:2-3).**

**a) Shepherd the flock (1 Pet 5:2).** Shepherding includes a number of different tasks: feeding, guarding, disciplining, confronting, holding accountable, exhorting, encouraging, admonishing, and pursuing. The main job of a shepherd is to feed the sheep.

Feeding involves more than simply teaching. We are to show them how to apply the word to specific life situations. Teach them to *observe* all of Christ’s commandments (Matt 28:20).

Make sure they are in the word so they are growing.

Connect younger believers to maturer believers who can mentor them and help them grow in Christ.

We are shepherding the flock of God (1 Pet 5:2). It is *His* sheep that we are shepherding.

We are to be faithful to shepherd the sheep God has allotted us (1 Pet 5:2). We are to keep watch over their souls as those who will give an account (Heb 13:17). It is essential that as a group grows, we multiply leaders to shepherd them, for it is impossible for one man to shepherd them well if there are too many people.

**b) Exercise oversight (1 Pet 5:2).** We are to give personal care for the flock. Take note of influences on each individual sheep that could prove detrimental to his spiritual well being. Give personal instruction and admonition, lovingly confronting individuals to bring about needed correction and restoration. Your concern should be to help them grow in Christ.

Know your sheep. “I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me” (John 10:14). Have them in your home (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8).

**c) Sacrifice: not under compulsion but voluntarily (1 Pet 5:2).** When you invest your life in other people, it means you will lose your life. Invest the time needed to help others grow up in Christ.

**d) Do it with eagerness, not for personal evil gain (1 Pet 5:2).**

**e) Be an example, not lording it over them (1 Pet 5:3).** Model to others what you want them to be. If you are passionate about Christ and His glory, the sheep will be too.

**c. We equip through fellowship.** To promote fellowship learn to ask good questions that are designed to turn the conversation in a more spiritual direction.

- How is your ministry going? What do you enjoy most about it?
- Where have you seen the Lord at work lately?
- What is the Lord been teaching you recently?
- Have you had any opportunities recently to share your faith?
- Have you had any answers to prayer lately?
- What have you been reading? How has it impressed you?
- Where in the Bible have you been reading lately? What impact has it had on you?
- How can I pray for you?
- How are you growing spiritually?
- What are you passionate about right now?<sup>10</sup>

**d. We equip through spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:20-26).** Challenge believers to serve somewhere in the body and provide opportunities for them to serve.

Every member is important (1 Cor 12:22). Each member has a spiritual gift that they are to use to build up the body. As a leader you need to be thinking of ways to get them to employ their gifts, because if they are not using their gift, the body suffers.

Encourage the members to care for one another (1 Cor 12:25-26).

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<sup>10</sup> Donald Whitney, *Simplify Your Spiritual Life* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 2003), 193.

**2. Outreach.** From the beginning the group must become aware of its concern to grow. Prayer for and an effort to reach out to both believers in need of fellowship and unbelievers must be a priority (Matt 28:19; Acts 1:8).

The wonderful life and fellowship that we have in Christ must be shared (2 Kings 7:3ff). It is evil not to share the good news. This need to reach out has to be emphasized. Plan outreach events.

Eventually your goal should be to multiply.

If multiplication is not your focus then your group will become ingrown and eventually die.

**B. The phases of a home fellowship group.** A group does not become a loving, caring group where people are using their gifts immediately. This only happens as personal relationships are developed. This takes time, commitment, planning and prayer.

**1. The initial phase: the emphasis is on bonding.** Use ice breakers to get to know one another better.

During these first few weeks, share the basic philosophy and purpose of the group. Why are you meeting? What are you hoping to accomplish? What are your objectives? "The primary purpose is to build up one another in the faith. We will do this by caring for one another and bearing one another's burdens. We will spend time in praise and worship to God, serving one another through the use of our spiritual gifts, and studying and applying God's word. We will seek to build relationships even outside our meetings through dinners and recreation. Our objective and expectation is to see God begin to grow this group inwardly and outwardly so that within the next year or two a new group will be birthed." These objectives should be stressed from time to time because people need to be reminded of what our goals are.

At each meeting the agenda should be dynamic not static. Be flexible and sensitive to the needs of the group.

**2. The intermediate phase: building up.** In this phase the ideal is an environment where healthy sharing and encouragement become the characteristic of the meetings. Caring and serving one another and true fellowship occur. Bible study should become a time of questions, clarification and discovery. Seek to make the application of the word of God the central focus.

**3. The final phase: birthing.** The intern's involvement should be ever increasing. There should be a celebration meeting, focusing solely upon those being sent out.

Some important things that need to be done before beginning a new group.

**a. Clarify your purpose.** The purpose is to provide a new place where the Lord Jesus builds up His people as they experience fellowship and the needs of the body are lovingly met. This can only happen if groups are small enough where people are comfortable to share their burdens.

**b. Contact and promote.** Begin to think and pray over people to invite to the new group.

**C. Prepare your apprentice.** To reach our biblical objective of multiplication, begin to pray for and develop an intern or interns. Remember your goal is multiplication—to take the things you have learned and teach it to other faithful men. Your goal is to make disciples of Christ who can in turn make more disciples.

**1. The priority of reproduction (2 Tim 2:2).** Paul had trained Timothy. Timothy was expected to take the things he had learned and teach them to others, who would then pass it on to others. Paul envisioned a chain reaction to ministry. Timothy was learning things so that he could pass it on to others. The ones he taught were then to take what they learned and teach others. The priority of ministry is to reproduce what you have learned in others.

Jesus modeled this. Jesus picked twelve men to be with him. He wanted a small enough group to be effective with. The best training is done in small groups. The best strategy to reach the world with the gospel is to invest your life in a small group of faithful men.

This is the model we are to follow. We are to be investing our lives in a small group of people. This is the most effective means of being fruitful for the kingdom of God. This is one reason why we try to limit the size of our Home Fellowship Groups. One person cannot effectively minister to much more than twelve people.

Paul modeled reproduction as well. He trained men by having them around him. They were involved with Paul in ministry. This is key: get men involved with you in ministry.

Men were his method.

**2. The process of reproduction (2 Tim 2:2).**

**a. The character of a disciple (2 Tim 2:2).** What are the marks to look for in a disciple?

**1) Faithfulness (Matt 25:14-21).**

**2) Teachable or humility.**

**3) A learner (2 Tim 2:2).**

**b. Cultivate your disciple.**

**1) Give them an example (Luke 6:40).** The reason Paul and Jesus had men around them was so that they could model to these men how to live and how to minister to people. These things are not taught, they are caught. One of the greatest ways to influence your disciple is to have them with you.

**2) Get them involved in ministry.** Get them serving with you in your ministry. Assign them small tasks to do.

**3) Give them a vision (Pro 29:18).**

**3. The product of reproduction (2 Tim 2:2).**

**CONCLUSION**

Our desire should be to see people grow and mature in Christ, bearing one another's burdens, and using their gift in serving one another. Our burden must also be to get to the point where we multiply. This is what Christ has commanded us. Pray for faithful men to invest your life in, train them, and send them out.

# Chapter 10

## THE MINISTRY OF HOME FELLOWSHIP GROUPS Part Two

### A. The importance of Home Fellowship Groups.

**1. The theology for Home Fellowship Groups.** A central theme that runs throughout Scripture is that God is creating a people who belong to Him. He is forming a new race. The development of community or fellowship lies at the heart of God's covenant promise. "I will be their God and they will be My people" (Heb 8:10).

**a. God Himself exists in community.** The three persons of the Godhead have always existed in community and fellowship. Community and friendship, then, are not created but are foundational to the universe.

**b. God created man to exist in community.** God said that it was not good for the man to be alone (Gen 2:18). God purposely created us to need one another. Thus, when someone lives outside of community and independent from others, their very humanity is compromised.

**c. God expects His people to live in community (1 Tim 3:16; Eph 2:9).** We are part of His family and thus we are to relate to one another as brothers, sisters, fathers, and mothers (1 Tim 5:1).

Paul likens the church to a body to emphasize we belong to one another and need each other (1 Cor 12:12-13).

**d. The church from its very beginning met in homes** (Acts 2:46; 5:42; 12:12; 16:40; 20:20). Homes are the primary place where relationships, fellowship, and edification take place.

## 2. The definition of a Home Fellowship Group.

A Home Fellowship Group is a group of Christians from 4 to not more than 15-18 people who meet regularly to fellowship around their common life and purpose in Christ. The focus is to build each other up as the needs of the body are lovingly met. Holy Spirit-given gifts are exercised as members mutually care, support and serve one another, and learn God's Word. The goal is that needy believers and non believers alike will be attracted and come to Christ and a new group will be birthed in 12-18 months.<sup>11</sup>

Home Fellowship Groups are basic Christian communities. In these groups people come to know God and experience His presence; fellowship is developed and fostered; and people are nurtured, equipped and released for God's work in the world. They provide an opportunity for intimacy, mutual support, practical love and service, learning about the Christian faith, prayer, and sharing of what we see God doing in our midst.

**3. The primary purpose of Home Fellowship Groups is to experience Christ Jesus in our midst .** "A Home Fellowship Group is the primary place where the Lord Jesus Christ builds up His people as they experience fellowship and the needs of the body are lovingly met."<sup>12</sup>

**a. Christ is met as we fellowship with one another.** Fellowship occurs when we fulfill all the one another's of the New Testament.

**b. Christ is met when we use our gifts to serve one another (Eph 4:16).**

**c. Christ is met through pastoral care.** People are cared for, challenged, built up, sought after, and counseled. Christ works through us as we shepherd others.

## Summary

A Home Fellowship Group provides a center and context to:

- Openly discuss and learn the Scriptures.
- Develop meaningful personal relationships, with accountability.
- Experience true fellowship.
- Demonstrate love in concrete ways as we pray, bear burdens and care for one another.
- Shepherd and care for personal needs of members of the body.

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<sup>11</sup> Steve Fernandez, *Home Fellowship Group Ministry Manual* (Vallejo, California: Exalting Christ Publishing, 2011), 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

- Exercise of gifts and practical ministry.<sup>13</sup>

## **B. The meeting of a Home Fellowship Group.**

**1. The importance of how the meeting is structured.** The way we structure a meeting will depend on what we believe the purpose of it is.

If Home Fellowship Groups are the primary place where fellowship, edification, and the exercise of spiritual gifts takes place, then our groups must be structured in such a way that it allows these things to happen.

The goal of our Home Fellowship Group meetings is to provide a place that fosters fellowship: where people are involved in one another's lives, and it is to be a place where people are edified through the use of *many* spiritual gifts (not simply teaching gifts). The way then that we structure the meeting should reflect this.

**2. The structure of the meeting.** God has so composed the body that every member is important and everyone should be encouraged to use their gift.

**a. The format and agenda: the extremes to avoid.** "There are two extremes to watch out for. One is the tight agenda where every item and time frame is dictated and rigidly maintained. The other is the 'go with flow' agenda, where there is no basic schedule, a loose starting and ending time, and no control over sharing, problem people, etc."<sup>14</sup>

**b. The flexible agenda.** A basic time frame is set for each of the four components of greeting and visiting, worship and Bible Study, caring and prayer, and mission and ministry. In a normal meeting all four will be part of the agenda.

The leader and the legitimate needs of the group will determine how much time is devoted to each. For example, new believers with urgent needs, or someone who has a special praise for answered prayer, may take more time. In special cases the Bible study portion may have to be foregone. This type of meeting should not be the pattern, but there must be sensitivity to the Holy Spirit to allow this to occur when necessary.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

**3. The segments of the meeting.** The four broad segments mentioned above are structured into the meetings to promote fellowship, edification, and the ministry of spiritual gifts.

**a. The greeting and visiting time.** At the beginning have food and refreshments ready so people can visit and fellowship around the food. “People standing and visiting creates a more natural environment than sitting facing each other. This is especially true if people do not know each other well.”<sup>16</sup>

As people get settled in, introduce guests. Welcome back regulars who have been gone for whatever reason.

The whole goal of the greeting/visiting time is to make people feel at home and welcome. We are not simply a group here to do the business of studying the Bible. We are a family. We are to truly care for one another. So this is a time to catch up on how people are doing. This is a time to get to know new people and let them feel welcome.

**b. Worship and Bible study.**

**1) Worship and praise.** Have a person who is faithful be assigned the task of bringing in song sheets weekly. Ideally, this person can also lead with a guitar or some other musical instrument. Model true worship for the group.<sup>17</sup>

Note carefully that you should have another person who is faithful do this. The goal is to get other people involved, using their gifts to equip and build up others.

**2) Bible study and discussion.**

Bible study is still the hub of the meeting. Over a number of weeks and months, if the bulk of discussions and sharing is not out of the Bible study discussion, the fellowship may become superficial. Our fellowship is our common partnership in Christ. The basis for our holding things in common is the common values, beliefs, actions and attitudes found in the Word of God. Meaningful fellowship is rooted in Scripture.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Teach and guide the group. “Leading a Bible study is a fine balance between teaching and guiding. There are times when the teacher should clarify and instruct, especially when misunderstanding could lead to false views of Christ, sin, Scripture, etc. However, it is best to see if you can ask questions or elicit comments that clarify, using Scripture passages that pertain.”<sup>19</sup> (See: Teaching Tips: How to Teach a Bible Study, appendix two in *Home Fellowship Group Ministry Manual*.)

**c. Caring and group prayer.** This segment can be varied and done before or after Bible study. Settle in to what works best.

This is one of the most important parts of the time together. The goal is to build relationships and trust where people feel comfortable in sharing their needs and burdens. This will encourage people to genuinely love one another. As the leader, model caring for others by praying for them and following up on their prayer requests.

The time of prayer, the time before the meeting “officially” starts, and the time at the end of the meeting are the crucial times to promote fellowship: conversations centered in Christ and our spiritual walk. To do this, learn to ask good questions that are designed to turn the conversation in a more spiritual direction.

**d. Mission and ministry.** “This is for planning of social and outreach events, discussion of service projects in and out of the church, or planning for the birthing of a new group. This should be a regular part of the group’s life.”<sup>20</sup>

#### **4. The setting and surroundings of the meeting.**

**a. Expand the ministry: the home.** “Ideally, it is best if the meeting is not in the home of the leader or apprentice. Expand the ministry by having it in someone else’s home.”<sup>21</sup>

**b. The effective use of surroundings.** Be careful, for things such as the following can impede the group:

- Too much distance between the fellowship group members when seated.
- People sitting like ducks in a row, unable to see each other.
- People sitting behind other people, rather than in one circle.
- A telephone ringing every 10 minutes.
- A dog or cat that makes the rounds of the fellowship group.
- A child that does the same, or who whines for attention.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 21.

- A huge vase of flowers on a table in the center of the room.
- A super-noisy air conditioning system or a radio blaring.<sup>22</sup>

**c. Guidelines for leaders.**<sup>23</sup>

**1) Before the meeting.** Pray for every member of the group by name; be specific; be personal.

Prepare for the meeting.

- Arrangement: seating, temperature, Bible study, child care, music, refreshments. Who will do it? Are you sure?
- Relationships: How will you help people feel cared for? What will you do to break the ice? How will you help people relax, feel comfortable, open up?
- Study/task: What questions are you going to use in the Bible study?
- Time management: How are you going to use the time, specifically? What is the real “starting time” and closing time?

**2) During the meeting.** Use time wisely. There are situations where the time use will change according to the need of the moment, but there needs to be an agreed upon beginning and end to the meeting, as well as approximate time limits for each segment.

One of the tasks of the small group leader is to keep the teaching and the flow of the discussion moving. This is an art picked up by practice, but here are some ground rules for leading good discussions.

- When you ask a question, give time for people to think.
- Assist people to participate, but avoid forcing anyone to answer.
- Look for ways to affirm people for their participation/contribution.
- Refrain from monopolizing.

**3) After the meeting.** Care for the members. There are four types of people that especially need to be followed-up on: 1) Those who were absent. 2) Those who were ignored, or “were silent” during the meeting. 3) Anyone who was “attacked” during the meeting. 4) Anyone who is hurting in a special way.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> The following section is taken from: Ibid., 21-23.

Obviously, this model for group meetings is best if you have highly trained small group leaders. This is why you must train leaders. You must model for them how to do this by having men be your intern and giving them opportunity to lead a group under your supervision. When they are ready, you can send them out to begin their own group.

**Summary:** The meeting should be structured so that it accomplishes its designed purpose: to provide fellowship, edification, and the exercise of spiritual gifts for all the members.

### **C. The minister: who can lead a Home Fellowship Group?**

**1. The leader's description.** A leader should strive to be the man God wants them to be. Paul command Timothy, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15). God expects us to work at studying the Scriptures so we understand it and can teach it accurately to others. We must see the importance of it for our own lives. There is nothing worse than for someone to teach the word of God accurately, who does not believe what it says. Study it; practice it; then teach it to others.

"A Home Fellowship Group leader can be described as: A person with a heart for ministry, and a commitment to seeing that the biblical goals of edification, fellowship and multiplication take place in the life of the people in the group."<sup>24</sup>

This paragraph describes four things about a Home Fellowship Group leader:

#### **a. A heart to minister.**

**1) The love of Christ constrains him (2 Cor 5:14-15).**

**2) A leader is aware of his own inadequacies and limitations (2 Cor 2:15-16; 3:5-6).** Even though we are inadequate in ourselves, we have the word of God and the Spirit to help us minister to others. In humility we must depend upon the Spirit to make our teaching effective.

**3) A leader is willing to grow and be stretched and developed (1 Tim 4:12-16).** A leader has a single-minded all consuming devotion to what God wants him to do.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

**4) A leader is dependent on Christ to teach him and enable him (2 Cor 12:7-11).**

**5) A leader is teachable and a learner.**

**b. Godly character.** They have an exemplary life before the church and community (1 Tim 6:9-16). A godly leader runs after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness (1 Tim 6:11).

A leader has a solid family life (1 Tim 3:2, 4-5, 12).

**c. A commitment to ministry.** The leader recognizes that a group does not simply happen. It is the result of someone who is intentional about leading the group.

**1) A leader is ready to overcome obstacles and fears to see God work (2 Tim 1:6-7).** We cannot be intimidated by others. We must be committed to minister to those in our group and ask God to give us boldness, power, and a loving heart to minister to them and tell them what they need to hear.

**2) A leader is committed to help people grow (2 Tim 2:1-3).** We must be intentional in developing faithful men in our groups.

**3) A leader is willing and ready to work at the ministry (1 Tim 4:16).** We need to guard ourselves. How are you doing spiritually? Are you in the word? Are you praying? Are you leading your family? Are you leading your wife in love? Are you taking the lead in training your children?

**d. A leader sees the biblical goals.** A leader, by definition, leads.

The fellowship group leader knows where he is headed and how he intends to get there. He can keep the group on course. The most important question is not, "Am I doing the leading, caring, or ministry," but, is someone doing the leading, caring and ministry? The leader is an enabler, a facilitator. In other words, he prays for and directs the group so that edification and fellowship are occurring (Eph 4:11-12, 16). A good leader delegates to others, and leads by

calling on the gifts of others. The leader also keeps before him the biblical objectives of multiplication and birthing of another group.<sup>25</sup>

**1) A leader can keep the group on course.** Remind your group why you are meeting and what we are attempting to accomplish. We are here to glorify Christ by making disciples. I need to be growing to the point where I can make disciples and help others grow in Christ.

Helping others grow involves caring for them. Paul was not simply about training people (1 The 2:7-8). Paul invested his life in people like a mother invests in her baby that she is nursing. We need to care for people.

**2) Make sure people are using their gifts in encouraging one another.** As leaders we do not do everything. We enable others so they can do the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11-12).

Think of ways to help those in our group develop their spiritual gifts.

Help people learn how to speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15).

All of us should be seeking the salvation of others (1 Cor 9:19-23). The Christian is to have a missionary heart for that is the heart of God. Our prayers, our behavior, our conversation should all reflect this: we want to win people for Christ. "A Christian with no passion for the lost is in serious need of self-examination and repentance."<sup>26</sup>

**3) We must keep before us the biblical objective of multiplication.** Our desire should be to train up men that we can send out. This means we must be willing to export people and not hoard them. This means we need to be willing to send out our best people—the people that we have probably spent the most time with.

**2. The leader cares for the group.** The word *caring* has been described as: love with work clothes on.<sup>27</sup> As leaders, we are to excel in caring for God's people.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>26</sup> Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2009), 52-53.

<sup>27</sup> Fernandez, 28.

**a. The priority of care.** People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care (1 Cor 13:1-3). Thus, when you see a need, act on it. Do not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth (1 John 3:18).

**b. The perspective: we are shepherds.** Shepherding includes counseling, encouragement, visiting, making phone calls, writing notes, e-mailing, helping when there are special needs, providing meals, watching children, and so forth.

**c. The pattern in Scripture (John 21:15-17).** If we love Jesus then we will tend His lambs and shepherd His sheep. We prove our love for Christ by loving His people. “There is a chain of caring that comes from Christ, the Chief Shepherd, and extends through the leader and into and among the flock.”<sup>28</sup>

**1) The shepherd guides and directs.** He leads personally (**John 10:3-4**).  
The shepherd leads gently (Isa 40:11).

The shepherd directs them as best for their safety (Num 27:15-17). As a shepherd we are to protect God’s people and help them in their walk. This means you must know your sheep.

**2) The shepherd cares and supports.**

He renews and restores (Ps 23:2). We are to feed God’s sheep with His word so they are refreshed, restored and renewed.

The shepherd comforts (Ps 23:4). As shepherds, we need to be like the chief shepherd and comfort God’s people in their trouble and trials.

The shepherd has genuine concern (Ps 78:70-72).

The shepherd seeks and searches out (Eze 34:11).

The shepherd strengthens and binds up (Eze 34:16).

**3) The shepherd protects (John 10:12-13; Acts 20:28).**

The shepherd sacrifices (John 10:15).

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 27.

**3. The leader prays for and models prayer for the group (John 15:5).** All of our studying, teaching, counseling, shepherding will be of no value apart from Christ making it fruitful. Therefore there must be continual dependence on Christ to work in the lives of His people.

**a. An example of effective prayer: Elijah.**

**1) The condition of effective prayer (Jas 5:16b).** We must be whole-heartedly committed to God and sincerely seeking to do His will.<sup>29</sup> The effective prayer of this kind of man can accomplish much!

**2) The case of effective prayer (Jas 5:17-18).**

**a) The commonness of Elijah (Jas 5:17).**

**b) The extraordinariness of Elijah (Jas 5:17).** He prayed earnestly. \

**c) The effectiveness of Elijah (Jas 5:17-18).**

Elijah knew what God's word said and he earnestly prayed accordingly (cf. Deut 11:13-17).

Elijah persisted in prayer until he got his answer (cf. 1 Kings 18).

**b. A leader must have personal prayer for his Home Fellowship Group.** Samuel said, "Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you" (1 Sam 12:23).

**c. The practice of prayer in a Home Fellowship Group.**

**1) Guided prayer.** The goal of anything you do and especially the time of prayer is that it should be edifying. "Let all things be done for edification" (1 Cor 14:26). Set guidelines.

If the goal is to bear one another's burdens and build one another up, then we must know what their burdens are. "How can we pray for you specifically? What trials are you in? What temptations are you battling? Who are the souls you are concerned for?"

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<sup>29</sup> Douglas Moo, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1985), 187.

Prayers do not need to be long to be effective. The Pharisees, for appearance sake, offered long prayers (Mark 12:40). We can be short and to the point.

As a leader, guide those who tend to ramble and tell stories when making requests. Also, pull aside the person who dominates the prayer time, reminding them that we want everyone to be able to pray.

**2) Ideas for prayer.** Ask the group if they have any critical prayer requests that you can pray as a group for. At other times, break up into smaller groups or groups of men and women. This allows those who are more timid in a larger group to share openly in a smaller group. It also allows time for everyone to pray for each other.

Have someone keep track of prayer requests and answers to prayer. It is always encouraging to be reminded how God specifically answered our prayers.

