

Discipling in a small group setting
2009 Arrows Out Conference
Bellingham WA
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Before we begin we must acknowledge we are talking about a huge topic that has been discussed and debated by many over a long period of time. In the light of all knowledge we must also humbly believe that we don't have all or perfect knowledge so we must stick to the basics.

Objectives

- A. Participants will leave with an understanding of how small groups provide an optimal environment for discipleship.
- B. Participants will leave with a basic strategy for discipleship in small groups.

Why is it important for your church to have a mission statement?

- A. Most church mission statements will be in harmony with Matthew 28:18-20 (making disciples, baptizing, and teaching to obey all that Jesus commanded). A good question to ask is, "What were Jesus' commands?" See Matthew 22:37,38 and Mark 12:30. Obedience stems from being taught with understanding (Psalm 119:33,34).
- B. A mission statement answers the question "Why do we exist"?
- C. It provides a standard against which every ministry is evaluated.
- D. It summarizes a general vision of what reality will look like when the mission is accomplished.
- E. It is imperative that we remember why our church exists, and it is imperative that everything we do in terms of ministry activity reflects that mission.

What is the importance of the CTK Mission Statement?

"To create an authentic Christian community that effectively reaches out to unchurched people with love, acceptance, and forgiveness so that they may experience the joy of salvation and a purposeful life of discipleship."

- A. Small Groups are how CTK intends to see it's mission statement become a reality.
- B. The mission statement is one that reflects an "arrows out" mentality.
- C. The core of the mission statement is focused on becoming an authentic Christian community while the frontier portion is effectively reaching out to the unchurched community with love, acceptance, and forgiveness.
- D. A key word in the CTK mission statement is "*that*" which connects who we are with what we are to be doing; a connection between being an authentic Christian community with outreach to the unchurched with love, acceptance and forgiveness. Small Groups are how CTK intends to see it's mission statement become a reality.

What are some truths that will help churches implement a strategic discipling plan?

- A. To have a statement of mission without an accompanying plan to accomplish it is to lack integrity and to behave in a manner that is not consistent with our identity. Without a plan, the mission remains a dream in the minds of a few.

- B. Just as a mission without a plan is a dream, so a plan apart from implementation is deceptive. Plans are effective to the degree they are implemented, and they will be implemented based on the degree of conviction owned and communicated by those in leadership. Apart from implementation they remain theoretical without a solid base from which changes can be made.
- C. A discipling plan must be intentional, just as Jesus' call is intentional.
- D. Even if a plan is based on scripture, it will work only if there is concerted effort to implement it over a long period of time. Churches may have drawers full of good plans supporting biblical principles that didn't work because they were given lip service without being owned and implemented by those in leadership. Most churches have a biblical mission statement however, few have a visible and thus identifiable working strategy to accomplish that mission.
- E. Church leadership must provide the environment for believers to work together to accomplish the common objective. Example—*An authentic Christian community that effectively reaches out to the unchurched with love, acceptance, and forgiveness.*
- F. There must be competent leadership. Leaders need to readily acknowledge that they are in the process of becoming holy along with those they lead. They must model what they profess (John 15:5; 1 Cor. 2:16; 3:4-6; Phil 3:12-121; 1 Tim 4:15,16). Before doing work with our hands, we must first have a work done in our hearts.
- G. Any plan will work if it...
 - Remains submissive to Jesus Christ who said He would build His church. All authority has been given to Jesus and our plans must be held in an open hand.
 - Has leadership who support it by their committed participation.
 - Is understood by those implementing it.
 - Reflects the convictions of those implementing it.
 - Is effectively passed on from one generation of leaders to another.
- G. Unlike the principles they support, plans must be held with an open hand and must always be in submission to the head of the church, Jesus Christ. If this isn't done, plans can deceptively hold the local church in bondage, becoming ends in themselves ("Arrows in") as opposed to vehicles designed to equip believers to serve others in a variety of ways ("Arrows out").

Why is it important to become a disciple?

- A. It is a command of Christ; a non-negotiable for the local church.
 - In Matthew 28:18-20, it is implied that those who are making and teaching disciples to obey all Jesus commanded are themselves obedient to His commands.
 - John 8:31 says obeying Jesus' teachings is a prerequisite to being a disciple.
 - John 15:7-10 tells us that obeying Jesus' commands equals remaining in His love.
 - Ephesians 5:1,2, 8,9 teaches believers to reflect Christ and to live as children of light.
 - Colossians 3:12-17 says disciples must allow God's Word to come alive in our lives.

- B. Christ calls believers to be in fellowship with Himself, thus the command to follow Him. The call is intentional with the expectation of obedience.
 - Matthew 4:19 says following Jesus will lead to fulfilling the Great Commission
 - John 10:27; 12:26 says those who know Jesus will follow Him.
 - 1 Peter 2:21 says we must follow Jesus' example in suffering

What is discipling?

- A. Discipling is the process of helping a fellow believer become in behavior what they already are in position—holy or set apart for service to God and God alone (Hebrews 10:10,14). What we are in position was accomplished at the cross and subsequently experienced by those who acknowledge Christ as Savior and Lord. What we are becoming in our behavior is a life long process accomplished within the community of believers through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- B. The discipling process is like coaching; coaches assist players to become in reality what they envision in their minds and have a desire to be. In like manner, true believers have an indwelling desire to be Christ like.

What is God's role in the discipling process?

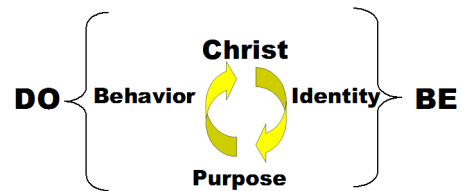
- A. God is the only One who can transform believers into His likeness (Phil 1:6; 2 Corinthians 3:18).
- B. Prayer is essential (Ephesians 1:17-21; 3:14-21).
- C. God works through people (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- D. God has given us his word for guidance—"letting the Word of Christ live in you richly as you teach/admonishing one another..."

What was Jesus' model?

- A. He knew who he was, what His mission was, and where His strength came from.
- B. He began small, slow, and solid. Jesus began with 12 and had trouble with each one. So the question to ask is how much trouble do we want to have as we launch this discipling small group strategy. We must also remember that whenever true discipleship is taking place the enemy is always there to provide obstacles.
- C. Multiplication was not an option (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2).

Why is it important to equip believers?

- A. It is a command that needs to be reflected with a strategy implemented by the leadership of each local congregation.
- B. Behavior is never the problem behind a person's difficulties. It is always what he or she believes to be true about who God is, who he or she is in Christ and what he / she believes is God's mission for them in life. Those three never change.
- C. Believers must be equipped and then released for effective ministry within their sphere of influence (believers and non-believers).



Why is a small group a good environment for discipleship to take place?

- A. Community can be experienced (one anothering). Life is obviously filled with opportunities and challenges. The small group environment allows believers to minister and be ministered to during the up's and down's of life.
- B. Believers will be encouraged to grapple with the truth of who they are in Christ. When they understand this truth, they will want to allow God to transform their lives. It is only when I truly begin to understand who God is that I will begin to understand who I am, my need of a Savior, and what God's mission is for me in this life (Isaiah 6).
- C. Potential leaders can be identified, challenged, trained, and released for ministry.
- D. Discipleship always takes place (Luke 6:40); there are good teachers and bad teachers. The end result will depend upon the focus in the process—cognitive knowledge or relationship?
- E. Believers can discover what they need to know, understand, and believe in order to grow to maturity and minister to others.

What do believers need to know, understand, and believe in order to have a firm foundation from which they can grow to maturity and minister effectively to others?

Once a list has been comprised and a transferable curriculum adopted, then a small group can be scheduled regularly as many times during the year as needed. The list below is intended to be a starter list of what each believer needs to know, understand, and apply in his/her life.

- A. Who is God; His deeds; His commands; promises?
- B. Who am I?; What are my needs?; What obstacles do I face? Why am I here?
- C. What do I need so I can be God's representative in my sphere of influence?
- D. What is my future?
- E. What is the truth?
- F. Is the Bible Reliable?
- G. What does it mean to have a biblical world view?
- H. What does the Bible say about the ongoing battle every believer is engaged in?
- I. What is the church?
- J. Who is my pastor?

We live in a time when the culture has influenced the church as well as the unchurched community. Statistics indicate that in many areas of life there is little difference between the lifestyle of believers and unbelievers. The net result is that the church has become ineffective in being the light and salt God intended for it to be.

I believe the biggest issue facing believers today is whether or not they believe the truth about three foundational building blocks of our faith.

- who God is
- who they are in Christ,
- what God's mission is during the brief time they live.

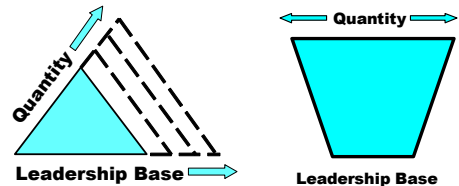
Believers behave in a manner that is consistent with what they believe about the above. If what they believe is a lie, their behavior will reveal that belief; if what they believe is the truth, their behavior will reflect that as well.

When people stumble in their faith, it isn't because they have violated some deeper truth. It is because they have violated one or more of the basic foundational building blocks. Therefore, we in leadership should not take it for granted that believers know and understand these basics.

It is imperative that church leaders intentionally stand against the tide of cultural encroachment and, like the apostle Paul, .not hesitate to teach anything that would be helpful to believers, but have taught them publicly and from house to house (Acts 20:20). Likewise, Peter was intent on reminding believers of truths that they already knew and were firmly established in to the point that they would be able to remember those basic truths even after Peter's death (2 Peter 1:12-16)

Why is it important to develop leadership?

- A. Leadership development reflects and maintains an "arrows out" mentality.
- B. Developing leadership prior to attempting to increase the number of small groups is crucial to multiplying the number of small groups and maintaining quality.
- C. When the quantity of small groups exceeds the leadership base, an inverted pyramid results which puts more leadership load on fewer people and an "arrows in" environment becomes a real danger.." See diagram.
- D. If discipleship is taking place, the leadership base will increase (Isaiah 6 "Here I am send me." 2 Timothy 2:2). If not, intellect will increase without accompanying behavior and an "arrows in" environment will encroach into the church community.



What steps can we follow to multiply leaders?

- A. Observe members in the small group who are exhibiting leadership qualities. Those qualities can only be observed where discussion and participation are encouraged and practiced. In a lecture type format, only the leader is being observed thus limiting potential leadership identification.
- B. Challenge the member based on what has been observed. Leadership training begins at the time of the challenge, not when the individual begins leading. Never stop challenging individuals based on observed strengths.
- C. Once challenged, people no longer view the small group from just a participant's perspective, but now they view it from a leader's point of view. They begin to question how they would lead or what they would do in a given situation.
- D. Once the potential leader accepts the challenge, he/she needs to be viewed as a leader in training and should be given smaller responsibilities in the present group and invited to attend leaders meetings.

- E. Next, the person should be challenged to become an assistant leader in a future group where he or she can lead one entire meeting, followed by an evaluation. When a person becomes an assistant leader, he should be treated as a leader and invited to attend leaders meetings.
- F. Once it is felt that the person is ready to lead a group, don't wait—release the person for effective ministry. Give the assignment. After you train people, you need to trust them with responsibility. Training doesn't end with giving a person a leadership responsibility—in fact, training really is an ongoing process.

Go and be the Church!