

How I'm Involved In Discipling Men

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Introduction.

- A. Women need to disciple women and men disciple men.
- B. This teaching comes out of my experience.
- C. I know exactly what not to do in making disciples.
- D. Ministry is not methodology but theology.
 - 1. Discipleship is not a program but a process.
 - 2. Change thinking and behavior will follow.
 - 3. Change of behavior without change of thinking is shallow.

I. Two experiences that marked me for life.

- A. I got a sabbatical after 18 years of teaching.
 - 1. I went away for a fascinating year, asking God to change me.
 - 2. I had been involved in discipleship making from the beginning but it was not well informed.
 - 3. When I returned six professional and business men asked me to disciple them.
 - 4. I declined but they persisted and I finally challenged them to go for broke.
 - a. We began meeting Wednesdays at 5:30 am.
 - b. My wife asked me what I planned to do with the group, and I didn't know.
 - c. I am a totally fulfilled man today because of what these six men did to me.
 - d. We now have five sets of multiplication groups.
- B. Six students heard of what I was doing with these men and approached me to disciple them.
 - 1. We began meeting in the early morning.
 - 2. I expected the same commitment from them as I had from the business men.
 - 3. I saw more permanent changes in four months than I saw in four years.
 - 4. This group continues each year and it's been my most significant ministry.

II. There are three components to the group discussion time.

A. Scriptural, involving three things.

1. Direct, personal Bible study.
2. Everyone comes prepared.
3. A scripture memory system.
 1. We use the Navigators Topical Memory System.
 2. One of my mentors was Barnhouse who told me 90% of the will of God is found from the neck up.
 3. Many people in our churches have forgotten to avoid letting the world to squeeze us into its mold.
 4. We need to be brainwashed with the word of God.
 5. My one regret is not memorizing more of the Bible over the years.
 6. Nothing changes us like scripture memory.

B. Personal involvement with each other.

1. We pray daily for each other.
 - a. We pray for unsaved people and saw 38 people come to faith.
 - b. I prayed for him for 42 years yet he came to faith in that semester.
3. We have a time for sharing real life issues.
 - a. I remember the time a student asked for prayer because he struggled with lust.
 - b. Of 405 pastors and Christian workers 80% indicated that sexual problems plagues them.
 - c. We like positive testimonies but reality is sometimes too much for us.
3. We emphasize lifestyle areas.
 - a. Objectives that will bring fulfillment at the end of life.
 - b. Priorities that answer the question how badly I want something.
 - c. I met a concert pianist who told me he practices 8 hours a day, 2 hours doing finger exercises. I am not willing to pay that price for playing the piano.

- d. Scheduling involves saying yes to the important things and no to the unimportant things.
- e. Self-control that helps you maintain a schedule that allows you to keep at your objectives.
- d. I have a two page evaluation sheet in these personal areas.

C. Ministerial component.

- 1. Every Christian is in ministry.
- 2. We are all witnesses for Christ.
- 3. It is a tragedy that professional people don't realize their ministries.
- 4. We need to think in terms of individual ministries and also group ministries.
- 5. The formerly married ministry in our church is now reaching many people and it was started by two formerly married people.
- 6. We often put new converts to work in a church program.
 - a. This can burn out many.
 - b. A wealthy man in our community came to Christ in our church and everyone wanted to experience his generosity and hear his testimony. In the process it destroyed his marriage and family.
 - c. People need to be ministered to before ministering.
 - d. Our objective is to find out what God is telling you to do and equipping you to do God's will.

III. I'd like to share with you the process of using these components.

A. Determine what you want to develop before developing what you have determined,

- 1. 95% of discipleship programs miss the mark because they don't know what they want to develop.
- 2. I want to develop four things.
 - a. A group of committed individuals exhibiting three things.
 - 1. Unreservedly committed to Christ.
 - 2. Unreservedly committed to the body of Christ.
 - i. We are not called to build churches.

ii. We are called to reach communities for Christ.

3. Unreservedly committed to the ministry of Christ.

b. We need competent people.

1. People need to know something.

2. People need to feel something.

3. People who are doing something consistently

c. We need people who can communicate.

1. Communicate in their sphere of influence.

2. Communicate in their network of friends.

d. We need people that are creative.

1. Flexible; not locked in concrete. Preparing people for change is essential.

2. We need dreamers who don't think negatively.

3. I am not looking for people like this; I'm trying to develop people like this.

a. Plato said that what is honored in a country is cultivated.

b. What is honored in your church?

1. Teaching?

2. Discipleship is more than teaching.

4. If you don't want to develop the same kind of people as I do, then make up your own list to determine who you want to develop.

B. Remember there are different levels of discipleship.

1. There may be only two people ready to get involved in serious discipleship.

2. There are at least three levels you need to think about.

a. The curious, who meet outside the church.

1. These people may know nothing about the Bible.

2. They need to be free to ask anything.

3. How you relate to them determines how they respond.

b. The convinced.

c. The committed.

3. Start with the curious and work toward the committed.

4. Some will take challenges and ask for greater challenges.

a. One athlete told me he was making progress because he was down to two curse words.

b. Baby Christians make a mess but that is part of the process.

5. The Spirit wants to get us to start groups outside of the church.

C. Recruit people as individuals but train them as a team.

1. We need a moratorium on independence.

2. We are all interdependent.

3. The school you attended probably never prepared you for team building.

4. School tells us to do our own work yet in the world we need team work.

5. You can impress people at a distance but you can only impact them up close.

D. Allow enough developmental rope for people to fail.

1. Jesus often told people to go home.

2. When was the last time you told people to go home?

3. I wish we would develop the spiritual guts to tell the seminary students to get committed or go home.

4. I am not impressed with numbers; we need quality.

5. Eagles train their young by modeling flight first then booting the little ones out of the nest. When they fall she swoops underneath them to save them so she can do it again.

6. We line the next with down instead of training for battle.

7. Soldiers that complain about warm beer are not ready to fight. When they complain about lack of ammunition they're ready.

8. A friend wanted a challenging experience so I sent him to the juvenile delinquency home to meet a teenager with 26 major counts against him. My friend lost it.

E. Expose people to a variety of gifted individuals.

1. We limit our disciples if we only expose them to ourselves.
2. Jesus had all the gifts but we don't so we need multiple exposure.
3. A pastor told me to plant ideas into the heads of others and allow them to bring up the idea as their own. They will embrace it with ownership. This works if you are not hung up on getting credit.

F. Build strong interpersonal relationships.

1. Some of you are significant but too far removed from the people you want to impact.
2. Pastors that have given up counseling have lose something.
3. Students in class are interested when the class ends; at my home they stay till midnight.
4. Seminary has cautioned not to get too close to your people, and this is a bad idea.
 - a. If your motivation is love you will want to get close.
 - b. A pastor invited people to have lunch with him just because he wanted to get to know them and it blew them away.
 - c. I've had students ask me what my purpose was for a meeting and were surprised to hear I just wanted to get to know them.

G. Cultivate a person's faith.

1. What was upper most in the life of Jesus in training the twelve?
 - a. The cultivation of their faith.
 - b. This was the only thing he ever rebuked them for.
 - c. Some have told me they can't remember the last time they believed God for something impossible.
2. What are we trusting God for that only he can do?

H. Develop an unshakable confidence in God's ability to change people.

1. The most significant thing I have learned is to trust God to do in my students what I can't do.
2. My greatest contribution is to believe in my students, especially believing in God to work in my students.

- a. My mother is an unbeliever that I have only recently been able to build a relationship with.
 - b. Sometimes I drive the streets of my childhood to remember from what God saved me. This encourages me to believe God to save others.
 - c. Chuck Swindoll is maybe the leading communicator in the evangelical community today yet you should have known him as a student.
 - d. I rejoice when students write me saying, “Thanks for believing in me.”
 - e. The three most practiced words in English are “Feed the dog.”
 - f. Jesus told Peter to feed his sheep and lambs.
 - g. Living to change the life of another is the greatest challenge in life.
3. *Leadership and the One Minute Manager* is a great book on leadership that I suggest highly, dealing with four styles of leadership.