

**Sunday 8th May 2005**  
**Our Church's Values - Discipleship**

Discipleship:

Our goal is to equip believers for a lifetime of effective, Christ-like service, so they in turn will disciple others in the same way.

Some Scriptures: Ephesians 4:11-12, 16; 2 Timothy 1:13, 2:1-2.

Scene 1: Personal testimony, journey of discipleship. Primary Years, lots of church school & youth group but no real discipleship, no teaching through life, example, or study. Apprenticeship years, faith didn't stand up to real world. Lost years, wondering and a journey of discovery, these people have what I have been looking for.

Youth Ministry & Bruce. The legacy of a man who disciplined many. For many of us 5 generations of ministry impact. Bruce, Me, Dan & Maria, Catherine / Heidi / their YP. For people like David Underhill many more generations. But discipling people is not something that should be left to the pastor's.

Scene 2: Discipleship is an ongoing responsibility of all Christians.

The local church is not a sanctified country club; it is the family of God meeting together for fellowship, worship, and service. In 2 Timothy 2: verses 1 and 2 we read (2 Tim 2:1-2)

In verse 2 "Entrust" means "deposit" and refers to the treasure of the Gospel truth that Paul had committed to Timothy (1 Tim. 6:20) and which God had first committed to Paul (1 Tim. 1:11). This is why Paul calls the local church "the pillar and ground of the truth" in 1 Tim. 3:15. God has deposited with His people the truth of His Word. It is our responsibility to guard this treasure and pass it on to others. The task of the local church is not to preserve the truth, as in a museum; but to live it and to teach it to the generations to come. Timothy is to deposit the truth with "faithful men" and not just any believer. And the only way we make faithful men is to take people and disciple them from the first day they enter the Christian Community. In fact I believe that discipleship should begin before a person even makes a commitment to Christ.

Scene 3: Discipleship is a process not an event

Discipleship has come to be called "the ministry of multiplication," and it is God's method for propagating the good news of Jesus Christ. A person who is searching for Spiritual truth, a person who is considering Christianity is beginning the process of a life long journey with Christ. The process begins way before they open the door and step through it into eternal life. It begins as soon as someone starts to take an interest in them and begins showing them Christ. Timothy is commanded to commit Paul's teaching to faithful men. These Faithful men then have the responsibility of teaching others. This formed the basis for an endless chain of Christian discipleship, the teaching of Christian teachers (see Matt. 28:18-20). Teachers who would teach others. And on and on it goes. But it doesn't happen overnight.

Just as a child grows one day at a time, so to a Christian grows over a period of time. There are stages of life that must be passed through before you can possibly get to the next stage. You cannot walk before you crawl, you cannot run before you can walk. You cannot write until you have learnt the alphabet. You cannot pass into old age before you go through puberty. Discipleship is a process. Discipleship may occur in large groups, small groups, or one-on-one encounters. It doesn't matter how, as long as there is a deliberate process of bringing a person from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity. It is best achieved when one or two people decide to walk the journey with someone for a number of years.

Scene 4: Discipleship is something that requires effort.

You need to put effort in to get results. We all know that. The Apostle Paul when he wrote to his young disciple Timothy was very keen to point out to him that there was a cost for his own growth and a cost for the growth of the church which he had responsibility for. Let's look at a couple of Parallel Passages in the 1 & 2 Timothy. 1 Timothy 4:6-10 If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. 8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 9 This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance 10 (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.

## 2 Timothy 2:1-7

1 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. 3 Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer. 5 Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. 7 Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. These passages each stress focusing on the task at hand.

The First Timothy passage focusing on training in godliness as godliness has many benefits.

The Second Timothy passage uses several examples to drive home the idea of training and being focused on the proper aspect(s) of the task at hand;

As a soldier must be focused on soldiering, Or as an athlete must be focused on physical training, Or as a farmer must concentrate on raising crops. As Paul encourages Timothy to put in the effort to see the results of a strong spiritual life that is able to impact others so we too must approach our relationship with Jesus Christ.

If we want success both individually and corporately as a church then we need to live, both believing and practicing the value of discipling all who come and join this community

Scene 5: You See The Key to Discipleship is You.

Your availability. Your involvement. Your setting your face towards the prize. You can start with the simple stuff. As you learn you in turn can teach others. The beauty of the method that Jesus taught us is that you only have to be one step ahead of the person you are helping.

Can I encourage you today?

Become a disciple, each and every day, look for opportunities to disciple others. You only have to be yourself and share how Jesus has worked in your life and what he has taught you to do.

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