

Discipleship needs to do what Jesus did with his disciples – be with them, love them, guide them, teach them, talk with them, spend time with them. And it must answer the needs of the church (in other words, it's not **only** inward looking).

I think there is a need for everyone to be discipled and for every one of us to disciple someone else. I know it can seem daunting but I hope with these 4 examples that I share plus a quick plan to you think through how to begin everyone can leave here with the understanding that it is possible to do... even for you.

Four quick examples of discipleship/mentoring to help us think of different patterns.

### **1. Discipleship – one to one, new believer**

- a. Who initiates the relationship?
  - i. Normally a more mature Christian but it could be by the person wanting to learn more.
- b. Goals:
  - i. Learning fundamentals of the faith
  - ii. Growing in understanding of Jesus
  - iii. Learning and using their gifts
- c. Method: Book of Ephesians is a great book to look at for the development of the body of Christ and an interesting pattern for discipleship.
  - i. Chapter 1 - Identity and purpose
  - ii. Chapter 2 – Salvation and grace
  - iii. Chapter 3 – The mystery of the Church
  - iv. Chapter 4 – How not to live and how to live (gifts and building up the church)
  - v. Chapter 5 – How to live together in everyday relationships
  - vi. Chapter 6 – Why it's so difficult to do any of this and how to deal with that

- d. Time: to be determined by both parties... until the book is finished or the mentoree feels more confident in their understanding of what it means to be a disciple.
- e. Necessary permission and evaluation – no permission needed... evaluation is over time as seen by the fruit of the disciple
- f. Results – more mature and thoughtful disciples who have a deeper understanding of the decision they made and a foundation for their faith.

## **2. Timothy Group**

- a. Who initiated the group?
  - i. Me... Coordinator of training and development
- b. Goals
  - i. Focused more on personal development and a clear understanding of the gospel and its consequences for our lives.
  - ii. To be more Christ-like
  - iii. To understand community and community living
  - iv. Accountability
  - v. Leadership development (through Bible studies and reading)
- c. Method
  - i. Always done in a group – max. 8 people (2 leaders)
  - ii. Bible reading and studying plan
    - 1. One person would lead a Bible study the next time we were together
  - iii. Reading plan
    - 1. Books covering several areas of the Christian life
  - iv. Sharing and prayer
  - v. Cooking and cleaning (these were students)
  - vi. 1 retreat/year
- d. Time
  - i. Meetings every two weeks – mandatory
  - ii. Duration of group – 2 years maximum and then start another group

- e. Necessary permission and evaluation
  - i. Permission from church
  - ii. Evaluation was done internally and also by staff of GBU
- f. Results
  - i. The relationships that formed kept the group together for years but more informally
  - ii. Most of us are still together in some way or another even today although most are from different churches
  - iii. All are leaders in their churches

### **3. Barnabas Group**

- a. Who initiated the group?
  - i. General Secretary and Board Chair (recognized need for more mature staff and volunteer base)
- b. Goals
  - i. Focused on spiritual growth and leadership development
  - ii. To develop healthy patterns of Christian living
    - 1. Bible Study
    - 2. Prayer
    - 3. Journaling
    - 4. Spiritual disciplines
  - iii. To develop both volunteer and paid workers for the GBU
    - 1. Practical work required with students in their given areas
- c. Method
  - i. One-to-one mentoring once/month (minimum)
  - ii. Bible reading (Gen; Ex; selected Psalms; Christological passages in Isaiah; Mark; Acts; Ephesians)
  - iii. A list of 6 books (3 pre-selected; 3 chosen by mentoree and mentor)
  - iv. Volunteer work with the GBU (1 hour/week minimum)
  - v. 2 full retreats/year
  - vi. 1 mini retreat (north and south)
- d. Time

- i. Mentoring 90 minutes/month
  - ii. Duration 1 year
- e. Permissions and evaluation
  - i. Church
  - ii. Evaluated internally by mentors
- f. Results
  - i. Most of the Barnabas graduates are still active volunteers or staff workers

#### **4. Baska and I**

- a. Who initiated the group?
  - i. My boss – you need someone to talk to and help you
  - ii. Me – I contacted Baska and asked if she would be willing
- b. Goal
  - i. Personal growth
  - ii. Accountability
  - iii. Grow in wisdom
  - iv. Learn how to be a Mom
- c. Method
  - i. Weekly meetings where we talked about our Bible study
  - ii. Read books together
  - iii. Walked and had lots of laughs
- d. Time
  - i. We set for a year and then waited to see what we would decide after
- e. Necessary permission and evaluation
  - i. Acceptance by our families
  - ii. Self-evaluated each year
- f. Results
  - i. She became my best friend
  - ii. We met weekly for years
  - iii. Mutual learning and growth

There are many other types of mentoring/coaching/counselling/Giving Spiritual guidance or direction. But most follow the same basic pattern and have the same needs. This is your turn to work. I want you to think about starting a mentoring group, or partnership, or asking for a mentor. Here's what you need to think through:

1. Know what you want to develop or what you want developed. Be specific
  - a. Is it a leader?
  - b. A teacher?
  - c. More mature?
  - d. Finding, developing and using their gifts?
  - e. More holistic... a bit of everything?
2. How will you know when you've gotten there?
  - a. Are you working alone?
  - b. Will you ask someone to do an appraisal?
  - c. Do both of you know what the goal is?
3. How will you decide whether to continue or end?
  - a. Will you set out a time-line/limit from the start?
  - b. Will you keep this on-going?
  - c. Will you evaluate each year?
4. Will you consider a group approach?
  - a. What is the value of simple one-to-one approach?
  - b. What are the advantages of working in a group?
  - c. How many people should each "mentor" take on?
  - d. How will you choose mentors and those wanting a mentor?