

HOW TO BEGIN A MINISTRY OF DISCIPLESHIP

Purpose: To motivate you to develop a vision for a ministry of discipleship in your target audience.

Objectives: This session will help you to:

1. Better understand what a discipleship ministry is and how to begin one in the context of reaching your target audience.
2. Appreciate the value and necessity of utilizing the gifts and experience of a team as you develop your ministry.
3. Understand the need to identify and reach natural groups and those of influence in your target audience.
4. Apply the lessons learned from this session to your ministry.

Key Verse: Acts 19:10

Note to instructor: share how you have seen a target area reached through a ministry of multiplication (multiplication being the discipling of new believers such that they also are winning people to Christ).

I. Introduction

The communists have influenced much of the world through multiplication. Coca Cola has coke everywhere in the world through a strategy of multiplication.

The Campus Crusade for Christ ministry in Nepal is a good example of how a ministry of multiplication has impacted an entire nation. Back in the early 1980's, Nepal was a nation with very few known Christians. Converting to a religion outside of what one was born into meant time in prison. One courageous man of faith "...considered the reproach of Christ greater than the treasures..." his country had to offer (Hebrews 11:25-27). Because God used him to convert many to Christ, he spent time in prison. But that didn't slow him down. He had a ministry while he was in prison! When he was released, he continued to win people to Christ. As he discipled these new believers in the basics of the Christian faith, he also challenged them and prepared them to have a ministry while they served time in prison. God honored his faith, courage, and sacrifice and today there are multiplied thousands of Christians in this tiny nation.

One characteristic of a disciple of Jesus is the imparting of what they've learned to others so as to build the Kingdom of God. This session will focus on how that is done. Let's start off by looking at how Jesus and Paul did it.

II. Biblical Examples of a Discipleship Ministry

Look up the following verses and look for ways in which Jesus and Paul: 1) developed their disciple's personal lives, 2) developed people in the group, and 3) trained the group in ministry (not all verses will pertain to each category). Fill in the table that follows.

Note to instructor: Have the students get into groups of 3 or 4 and discuss the answers they filled in the table following the section on “Jesus” and “Paul.” Give them about 15 minutes. Then have various ones share the answers they came up with. Write their answers on a similarly drawn table on the board.

Jesus

Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; Luke 11:1-13	<i>Prayed</i>
John 5:19; 12:49-50; 17:4	<i>Depended upon God</i>
Matthew 4:23; Luke 24:44-49	<i>Taught the Scripture</i>
Mark 3:14; Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5-7; Luke 10:1-9	<i>Trained others for Ministry</i>
John 13:12-16	<i>Modeled Servanthood, how to live</i>
Matthew 14:21-31	<i>Taught them to walk by faith</i>
John 13:1; John 15:9	<i>Loved them</i>
John 4:1-2; Matthew 21:1-3, 6; John 21:15-17	<i>Entrusted them with Ministry</i>
John 13:34-35	<i>Taught them to love one another</i>

Paul

Ephesians 1:15-16	<i>Prayed for them</i>
2 Corinthians 12:8; Philippians 4:13	<i>Depended upon God</i>
Colossians 1:28-29	<i>Taught them the Scriptures</i>
2 Timothy 2:2; Acts 16:1-3	<i>Trained them for ministry</i>
2 Timothy 3:10,11,14	<i>Modeled ministry for them</i>
1 Thessalonians 2:7-12; 2 Corinthians 2:12-13	<i>Loved them</i>
Philippians 3:17	<i>Modeled life for them</i>
Titus 1:5; Philippians 2:19-22; 1 Timothy 1:3	<i>Entrusted Ministry to them</i>
Galatians 3:2-5	<i>Taught them to walk by faith</i>
Galatians 5:13-14	<i>Taught them to love one another</i>

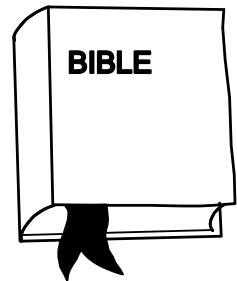
	Jesus	Paul
Personal	<i>Showed them how to pray; dependence on God; taught the Scriptures; having an attitude of serving others; living a life of faith focused on Him; their security in His love; love others;</i>	<i>Encouraged them and mentioned he prayed for them; dependence on God; taught the Scriptures; Perseverance; love; showed how to live; exhorted to walk by faith in the Spirit; exhorted to love others.</i>
Group	<i>Showed them how to pray; taught the Scriptures; the importance of serving others; the importance of loving others;</i>	<i>Exhorted and encouraged and loved them; showed how to live; exhorted to walk by faith in the Spirit; exhorted to love others.</i>

Ministry	<i>Was with them and trained them for ministry; showed them how to do it; commissioned them and gave instructions, gave them ministry responsibilities;</i>	<i>Trained them to train others for ministry; showed them how to do it; gave responsibilities;</i>
Other		<i>Modeled correct doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, patience, love, and response to adversity; was not a burden to them;</i>

As you can see there are certain common principles that both Jesus and Paul followed in developing a discipleship ministry. The next section is a summary of how Jesus and Paul built ministries of discipleship.

III. Principles of Building a Ministry of Discipleship

- A. Men of Prayer
- B. Men of the Word
- C. Absolute dependence upon God
- D. Build God’s kingdom before all else
- E. Love those who are given into your care
- F. Model how to live the Christian life for them
- G. Model how to do ministry for them
- H. Train them in ministry
- I. Entrust ministry to them



IV. Application

- A. As A Leader

Develop your walk with God: pray, master the Word, do what God has called you to do, depend upon Him fully.

- B. With the Discipleship Group

Love your disciples. Help them to love one another. Teach them the Word. Show them how to live the Christian life. Encourage them to walk by faith. Show and teach them how to do ministry. Let them do ministry.

C. In Ministry to Others

Jesus lived to fulfill the ministry the Father had given Him to do. So did Paul. Jesus went primarily to the Jews, Paul went to synagogues in major cities first. You, too, need to plan out your strategy, pick your Target Area/Audience, begin to reach out to them and **bring your trainees along as you seek to reach it for Christ**. The leader doesn't stop discipleship in order to evangelize; he/she evangelizes in the context of discipleship. Showing how to evangelize is a part of discipleship.

As you hold these three things in balance you will avoid three dangers. 1) The danger of unapplied content (knowledge puffs up, but love edifies - 1 Corinthians 8:1), 2) the danger of becoming ingrown as persons and as a group; 3) the loss of vision and isolation from what God is doing in the world.

Given the purpose and goals of the group, the leader's role is very clear. He is to lead the group in Bible study, prayer and praise, vision, sharing, training and evangelism. He is to personally minister to each group member. He is to lead the group in reaching a target audience.

V. Summary

- A. Ministry is always an outgrowth of your own walk with God
- B. The purpose of a discipleship ministry is to both build up others and reach others for Christ.
- C. A discipleship ministry must be pursued in the context of helping to saturate a target area as part of a local movement.

A discipleship ministry is a combination of two inseparable elements--a personal walk with God and a ministry of evangelizing and discipling others. We become intent on reaching others as we grow in our relationship with Christ. Remember, Jesus called His disciples to be 'with Him' and to go out and preach the Good News (Mark 3:14).

Instructor can ask the class if they understand these crucial elements of the discipleship ministry: walking with God and ministry; evangelism as a part of discipleship - not separate from it. This was the example Jesus and Paul showed us.

With the remaining time, they can discuss the "Discussion Question" in their small groups.

Discussion Questions:

1. How has this talk helped you better understand what a discipleship ministry is and how to begin one in the context of reaching your target audience?

2. How has this talk helped you appreciate the value and necessity of utilizing the gifts and experience of a team as you develop your ministry?

3. What need is there to identify and reach natural groups and those of influence in your target audience?

4. How will you apply the lessons learned from this session to your ministry?