

Introduction

Welcome to the Discipleship Training Course!

The aim of this course is to seek to persuade you of the importance of one-to-one discipleship and to give you confidence to get started in meeting in formal discipleship partnerships. The idea is to start with the big picture and to encourage you in your ministry mindset rather than focussing on the nitty gritty of a particular method of one-to-one bible reading.

We have included readings from *One-to-one: A Discipleship Handbook* by Sophie De Witt, which is a very helpful book and will get into a bit more of the detail for you. This book works alongside the course to help provide a more thorough training experience for you.

We have also assigned practical tasks to be done alongside each study, which will help you put into practise what we have been thinking through. Our great desire is that by the end of the course you will have started to meet up with someone to disciple them and together you will be growing to love and serve Jesus more and more.

- Written by Charissa Forrest -

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Study 1

THE NATURE OF DISCIPLESHIP

Aim: *To come up with a definition of discipleship by starting with the Bible.*

Bringing people to know Jesus and helping them to grow in their relationship with him is at the heart of Christian ministry. A vital aspect of this endeavour is the ministry of discipleship, a ministry that most of us have heard of and many of us have been involved in. But what is this ministry all about? Who is it for? Who should be doing it? And what does it involve?

The aim of this short course is to answer these questions and more. By doing this course we hope that you will have a clear understanding of what discipleship is, what it aims to achieve, how we need to be equipped to do it and what will actually be involved.

The logical place to start then is by looking at what discipleship is at its heart.

Getting Started

In Christian circles the term “discipleship” has become a bit of a buzz word. What do you think this word means? Have you been discipled? What did it involve?

(This question aims to get an understanding of where people are coming from and the range of experience and understanding in your group. It should also expose false ideas such as the discipler as a buddy or problem solver. Let these ideas pass without judgement for the time being.)

Discipleship or discipling will obviously involve making disciples. To understand discipleship better, therefore, we need to understand what it means to be a disciple.

What do you think it means to be a disciple?

(This is looking for general answers such as: being a follower of Jesus (or someone else), being committed to Jesus etc.)

Being a Disciple

The Oxford Dictionary defines a disciple as “a person who follows the teachings of a leader”. In order to get a biblical perspective on this idea let’s start with one of the most famous passages on discipleship and see how this shapes our understanding.

Read Matthew 28:16-20.

What does this passage tell us about what it means to be a disciple?

(Being a disciple will involve being a believer (ie baptised into the name of Father, Son and Spirit) and obeying the commands of Jesus, including this command to make disciples of all nations.)

Whose responsibility is it to make disciples?

(Initially it is the responsibility of the original 11 disciples but they are to teach new disciples to obey all of Jesus' commands including this one. Therefore it is the responsibility of all Christians to make disciples.)

Read Mark 8:34-38.

What does this passage teach us about following Jesus?

(To follow Jesus will mean denying ourselves, following his example in all things even in our willingness to give up our lives. We will be different from the world, not pursuing its goals and desires.)

If being a disciple means following Jesus' example in all things what light do the following passages shed on what being a disciple will involve?

Mark 2:17 *Jesus came to call sinners. In following him we should have the same concern to save sinners*

Mark 10:41-45 *To be great in Jesus' kingdom is to be a servant, following Jesus' example who came to serve by dying for us.*

1 Cor 10:31-11:1 *Everything we do we should do to bring glory to God. In this we follow the example of Paul as he follows Christ. All that Paul tells us to do will help us be better followers of Jesus.*

Defining Discipleship

From these passages we can see that being a disciple of Jesus means following in our Master's footsteps. This will involve sacrifice, service and single-mindedness. We will follow Jesus as our number one priority even though it costs us everything, even though it costs us our very lives. And in following Jesus our priorities will be his priorities – our desires, his desires and so our greatest effort will be directed at seeing people saved and standing firm in their salvation. This is the ongoing nature of making other disciples.

What is the relationship between being a disciple, making disciples and discipling or discipleship?

(Being a disciple will mean being involved in making and growing disciples. We don't want to draw too fine a distinction between the two but it is helpful to identify whether you are evangelising or discipling for the benefit of shaping what you will do with someone. Making disciples is bringing people to initial faith in Jesus but disciples need to be taught to obey all of Jesus' commands. This is the ministry of discipleship, helping people to actually go on in following Jesus. But in a sense they are all aspects of the same thing.)

Try and come up with a definition of discipleship.

(This is to be a starting point. You want to come up with something along the lines of teaching people to follow and obey Jesus more closely.)

Broadly, discipleship is the ministry of growing and maturing disciples. Let's look at some other parts of the Bible to try and refine our definition.

Read the following passages and see what they tell us about the goals that Paul had for the Christians he knew and how he planned to achieve those goals.

Passage	Goal	Method
Ephesians 4:11-16	<i>Prepared for works of service, Unity, maturity in Christ, not swayed by false teaching</i>	<i>Those with special gifts of ministry in the church are to prepare people</i>
Colossians 1:9-12	<i>Filled with the knowledge of God's will which will lead to living a worthy life, bearing fruit in good words, enduring and being joyful and thankful</i>	<i>Prayer</i>
Colossians 1:28-29	<i>Present everyone perfect in Christ</i>	<i>Proclaiming, admonishing and teaching everyone in wisdom and Christ's power.</i>
1 Corinthians 9:19-23	<i>By all possible means people are saved</i>	<i>Become all things to all men</i>
1 Corinthians 15:58	<i>Standing firm.</i>	<i>Giving self fully to the Lord's work.</i>

Summarise the results of your research by answering the following questions:
What is the goal of the ministry of discipleship?

(To see people mature in Christ, standing firm and not swayed by false teaching, living lives pleasing to God and seeking to do his work, bearing fruit in good works.)

What means will we use to help us achieve these goals?

(Proclaiming and teaching the word of God, praying, using the gifts of God's people.)

How can we refine our definition of discipleship?

(Make the previous attempt more specific by including ideas about goals and methods.)

The Role of One-to-one Ministry in Discipleship

What are the advantages and disadvantages of one-to-one ministry in achieving the goals of discipleship?

(One-to-one discipleship can help tailor ministry to the needs of individuals by dealing with their specific issues and struggles but it can be very time consuming.)

Sophie de Witt defines one-to-one ministry as:

One Christian taking the initiative with another individual to help them know Christ better and obey him more fully, through studying the Scriptures, prayer (for and with them) and sharing one's life with them – and leaving the results to God (page 2).

Compare this with the definition of discipleship you came up with. Would you change anything?

Conclusion

We are all disciples of Jesus and should therefore all share God's concern to make and grow disciples. The goal of discipleship is for each individual to grow to maturity in Christ. The methods that we will use to see this growth will be prayer, teaching and serving each other. This can happen in many different contexts: Bible study groups, church services, our own personal quiet time. But as we seek to see individuals grow there is a need to provide a way for individual needs to be met. A discipleship ministry involving meeting individuals one-to-one is therefore an important part of seeing Christians grow. And this kind of ministry will be the focus of the rest of this course.

Assignment

1. Read the Introduction and Chapter 1 of *One-to-One: A Discipleship Handbook* by Sophie de Witt.

Study 2

THE ROLE OF THE DISCIPLER

Aim: *To see that the qualifications for being a discipler are more about character than skills and to reflect on the areas of character we need to grow in.*

Assignment Review

What did you find helpful in the reading?

What questions did you have from the reading?

Introduction

We have established the nature of discipleship as the ministry of seeing people grow to maturity in Christ. It is the responsibility of all Christians to be doing this in obedience to Jesus' command. Each of us will have different gifts and strengths to fulfil this responsibility. But a good starting point is to think about the role of the discipler; what we should be striving for in ourselves in order to undertake this kind of ministry.

Reflect on the last study and the nature of discipleship. And think of your own experience of being disciplined. What do you think makes a good discipler?

(This question is just a general discussion starter. You are looking for ideas like: a mature Christian, good bible knowledge, warm personality, experience etc.)

The Example of Paul

We are privileged to have an insight into the way one of the great disciplers went about his ministry through the letters of the apostle Paul.

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and answer the following questions:

What do we learn about Paul's motives and methods?

(v 2 He was bold in spite of opposition; v 3 there was no error, impure motives or trickery; v 4, 6 he was not trying to please men but God; v 5 there was no flattery or greed.)

What do we learn about Paul's relationship with the Thessalonians?

(v 7 He was gentle like a mother; v 8 he had great love for them and delighted in sharing his life as well as the gospel with them; v 9 he worked hard to spare them; v 11 he was like a father encouraging, comforting and urging them.)

What do we learn about Paul's character?

(From question 1 we see his pure motives; v 10 - we see he was holy, righteous and blameless and that was clear to the Thessalonians.)

What does Paul's example teach us about our role as disciplers?

(Paul shows us the importance of godly character and right motives and the vital importance of loving and caring for those we minister to.)

Paul's example highlights three areas to consider and work on as we seek to become disciplers of God's people. Let us look at each of these areas in more detail.

1. Methods and Motives

From the Thessalonians' passage and the following passages what methods did Paul use to see people grow?

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 | <i>Boldness, right motives, no trickery, shared life and gospel</i> |
| Col 1:28-29 | <i>Proclaiming Christ, teaching and admonishing everyone</i> |
| 1 Cor 2:1-5 | <i>Not eloquence or superior wisdom but weakness and fear knowing only Christ crucified</i> |
| 2 Cor 4:1-6 | <i>No secret and shameful ways no deception or distortion but setting forth the truth plainly. Not preaching ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord.</i> |
| Col 1:9-12 | <i>He prayed for them</i> |

Which of these areas do you find the most difficult?

(Think about teaching and prayer in particular. Do they feel they are not very good at one of these things? Also reflect on the temptation to soften the message to make it sound more attractive.)

What could you do to improve?

(Is there a course they could do? Do they need more practise? Do they need some accountability? Do they need advice and mentoring themselves?)

2. Loving Others

Paul had a deep love and concern for the Thessalonians. From the following passages what is the significance of loving others?

Luke 15 *God cares about the individuals and rejoices over every single sinner who repents. The father waiting and longing for his prodigal son to return and welcoming him so warmly is a picture of God's love for any sinner.*

John 13:34-35, 15:9-13 *The love we have for our fellow Christians is to mark us out as Jesus' disciples. It is Jesus' command that we love one another.*

Mark 10:45 *The model of Jesus is to serve others and be willing to lay down our lives for them.*

What does it mean to love the people we minister to?

(Think of the example of Jesus in the previous passages who laid down his life for his friends and Paul's example of being like a gentle mother and a father who urged them on. Think about what this will look like in practice. Wanting them to grow in their relationship with God. Caring for their needs. Being interested in them as people not projects and so on.)

Why do we sometimes find this difficult?

(It is time consuming and emotionally draining to put energy into people. Sometimes we find people difficult or hard to love. We can be too task focussed. We underestimate the impact of our friendship in discipleship.)

How can we love people better?

(Spend time with people. Do social things together. Really listen to people and remember what they say. Send birthday cards and notes. Try and know when they are having difficulties and give practical help as well as prayer support. Be committed to meeting with them etc.)

3. Godly Character

Paul was able to claim that he was holy, righteous and blameless among the Thessalonians. What do the following passages teach us about the importance of godliness for the discipler?

1 Timothy 4:11-16 *There is a need to set an example, people are to see your progress, it will affect your salvation and those you minister to.*

Titus 1:5-9 *Qualifications for overseers given because they are doing God's work and must therefore be blameless. Their example is what Christians are to aim for.*

1 Peter 2:12 *The good lives we lead will lead pagans to glorify God in the end.*

Are there areas of godliness that you need to work on?

(Answer this question personally and then perhaps share in pairs.)

How are we working on our difficulties?

(Relates to areas we struggle in. Again answer personally and then in pairs.)

Do we need to be perfect before we can disciple others?

(We will all struggle in certain areas, the key issue is having an attitude of repentance and seeking to change. We need to be making progress not being perfect- 1 Timothy 4:15)

Conclusion

As we seek to disciple others the first place we need to look is at ourselves. In equipping ourselves to disciple others it is interesting that some of the key areas we need to look at are our own godliness and our love for others. Even when it comes to methods of discipling the emphasis is not on skill but on motives and holding to the truth. This is not to say that having some skills is not helpful but how we use those skills is more important than how refined they are. We will look at developing some of the skills that discipleship calls for but in our next study we will turn to think more carefully about what we are aiming at as we disciple others.

Assignment

1. Read chapter 2 of *One-to-One: A Discipleship Handbook*.
2. Talk to a friend or a Christian leader about your suitability to disciple someone. Ask them to state what specific areas you might need to work on and how to go about doing that.

Study 3

THE GOALS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Aim: To think about what we are trying to achieve as we disciple others in terms both of the overall goal and the steps we will take to achieve that goal.

Assignment Review

What did you learn from the reading? What questions do you have?

What was helpful about talking to someone about your suitability as a discipler?

Introduction

We have seen that individuals matter to God from passages like the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15). In fact, in the end, all of our ministry is actually ministry to individuals whatever the context, whether teaching 1, 10 or 100 people at a time, because our goal is always that each individual be changed and grow.

How do we make sure that individuals matter in our ministries?

(A general question to get people thinking. Looking for answers like giving people attention, knowing people well, knowing when they are struggling etc.)

The End Goal

As we come to think about caring for individuals it is helpful to keep in mind the big picture of where we are heading and what our ultimate goals for people should be.

From the following passages what is the end point for all Christians that God want us to have in mind?

1 Corinthians 15:20-28 *This is the big picture of where the universe is heading. In the end everything, even Jesus himself will be subject to God the Father so that he may be all in all. That is that God will be glorified as he should be and given the position he deserves in all creation.*

Ephesians 4:11-16	<i>Become mature, having the fullness of Christ and not blown about by false teaching</i>
Colossians 1:9-12	<i>Filled with the knowledge of God's will so that live a worthy life, bear fruit and endure.</i>
Philippians 3:12-14	<i>To win the prize that waits in heaven ie knowing Christ fully</i>

Prayer, People and Purpose

In seeking to achieve these goals there are 3 significant areas that we can work on to show that we care for people individually: prayer, knowing people better and being purposeful in our relationships. Answer the following questions to think more about how developing these areas helps us to minister to people more effectively.

(i) Prayer

How does prayer show that we care for people?

(We have thought about them and care enough to take the time to talk to God about them.)

What things should we pray for?

(Growth for them as Christians, their ministries, their struggles and difficulties, thanks for good things etc, etc.)

How can we be sure we do this? What stops us?

(Pray with people straight away, pray straight after our conversation, write it down. Often we forget or are lazy or our own prayer life is off the rails, need to deal with these issues to be effective in praying for others.)

(ii) People

How can we know people better?

(Spend time with people, talk to them, listen to them, do things together.)

What stops us from doing this?

(Too busy, want to hang out with our friends, hard work talking to people we don't know.)

(iii) Purpose

What does it mean to be purposeful in our relationships?

(To think about who to spend time with and what we want to talk about.)

What makes us hesitant about this idea?

(It sounds too calculated and like the relationship isn't genuine.)

Why is it helpful to be purposeful?

(It means that you actually use your time well rather than wasting it. It means that you will spend time with people who need someone to spend time with them.)

What should our purposes be?

(To get to know people better, to welcome people, to encourage people, to cheer up people, to show people we care, to find out what we can pray for people, to invite people to an event or bible study etc.)

Areas of Growth

It may be great to be purposeful in our relationships with people but we need to be clear and concrete about our purposes. We want people to grow to reach the end goals that we thought about earlier, but what will that actually look like? The table on the next page lists four broad areas where we want people (including ourselves) to grow as Christians. Try and fill in some more examples of the kinds of issues that would fall into these categories.

(The heading of each column describes a broad goal. Fill out each column with some more concrete examples of how to achieve that broad goal.)

Knowledge of God and the Bible	Godliness and relationship with God	Training in ministry	Ministry to others
How the Bible fits together	Regular bible reading and prayer	Evangelism training course	Inviting friends to church

Progressing as a Christian

Different people will be at different stages in their Christian life, there is a progression. But we want to see people move along this progression. The progression may look something like this:

(1) Non-Christian → (2) New Christian → (3) Christian who is sure of salvation and learning to grow in godliness → (4) Christian who sees they should serve others and are learning how to do this → (5) Christian who goes out of their way to serve others out of gospel motivations.

What goals might we have for people at each stage of this progression?

Stage	Goal
1	<i>Come to know Jesus</i>
2	<i>Have a clear grasp of the gospel and be regular at church and bible study</i>
3	<i>Work on particular areas of bible knowledge eg place of the OT and particular areas of godliness eg godly speech</i>
4	<i>Work on an area of ministry eg evangelism</i>
5	<i>Train and encourage in ministry to others eg get them discipling others</i>

As we think about these various levels of goal setting what are the advantages of One-to-one ministry in achieving these goals?

(This is a summary question! You are looking for an answer that sees that one-to-one ministry enables us to tailor our ministry to the needs of individuals and so we can set goals that reflect where each individual is at.)

Conclusion

As we seek to see individuals grow, one-to-one discipleship enables us to set specific goals and help individuals grow in the areas where they need the most encouragement. Now that we have thought about the kinds of goals we might have for people and the areas we can encourage them to grow in we now turn to thinking about how we will actually do this.

Assignment

1. Read Chapter 3 of *One-to-One: A Discipleship Handbook*
2. Think of a person you could disciple. What stage are they at in their Christian life? What goals could you have for them in the different areas of growth we looked at in this study?

Study 4

INFORMAL DISCIPLESHIP

Aim: to think about caring for individuals in a less structured way by taking the opportunities we have in our everyday life. Primarily about developing a ministry mindset.

Assignment Review

What did you learn from the reading? What questions do you have?

What was helpful about the goal setting exercise?

Introduction

In the next three studies we will think about the practicalities of actually going about the ministry of discipleship. What will this ministry look like? How will I do it? What does it involve? We will look at these questions from two different perspectives. The first will be covered in this study and focuses on “informal” discipleship and the second more formal, and probably more familiar, perspective will be covered in the last two studies.

When we think about informal discipleship we are thinking about our unstructured time. When do you spend time with people? What do you talk about?

(This is just a question to get people thinking and talking. Time is spent with people at work, school, church, social outings, etc. Most of the time we talk about the weather or other inconsequential things.)

Informal Ministry Defined

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

What is Paul’s mindset? How does this effect his relationships with others?

(His desire is that everyone be saved and he does anything he can to make this happen. The impression is that a ministry mindset affects everything he does.)

Keeping in mind Paul’s example, what do you think “informal ministry” means?

(Ministry that is unstructured and happens in the course of our normal routine rather than being a set hour a week or month.)

How does this kind of ministry fit with our ideas of discipleship?

(We are still seeking to see people grow in relationship with Christ. We still have the same goals. Informal discipleship means seeking to have the mindset of seeing others grow in all our relationships and not just in a formal one-to-one meeting.)

When do we have opportunities for informal ministry?

(At church, at work, with friends, mother's group, bible study, etc.)

How can we make the most of these opportunities?

(Think back to study three: by being purposeful and planning, by praying for opportunities, by thinking about people and how we can serve them.)

List the opportunities you have to be spending unstructured time with people this week. How could you use this as an opportunity for ministry?

Unstructured Time	Ministry Opportunity
<i>Eg playgroup</i>	<i>Invite someone (be specific) to an evangelistic event</i>

Why do we often fail to take up these opportunities?

(We don't think about it, we are too busy, we are a bit scared etc)

Being Prepared

Informal ministry involves thought, preparation, planning and prayer. We make much more effective use of our time if we have thought about who to spend time with and what to talk to them about beforehand. A bit of thought also makes us much more aware of opportunities when they arise.

The following questions are for people to think about specifically on their own but it would be good if they could share some examples with the group.

Who are some of the people I would like to serve and encourage?

When do I see them?

What plans could I make to encourage them?

What could I be praying about for them and myself?

Turning conversations

One of the difficulties we sometimes face is actually getting the conversation off everyday, superficial things and on to meaningful, spiritual things.

Read Colossians 4:5-6. How does this passage help us we think about our conversations?

(Be wise and think about what we could say. Make the most of opportunities. Be gracious and not argumentative or rude in the way we speak. "Seasoned with salt" probably means spice our conversation with hints of the gospel which may raise people's curiosity.)

What are some practical ways we could change the direction of a conversation and put Colossians 4 into practise?

(Sharing something personal ourselves, talking about issues we are struggling with, talking about something we have been learning, just asking the question about how things are going with ministry, bible reading etc.)

What stops us from turning conversations like this?

(Fear that people will think we are weird or not want to talk about it, not knowing what to say, not wanting to be vulnerable, not knowing people well enough.)

How can we overcome some of these problems?

(Just do it, make the effort to get to know people, be willing to be vulnerable for the sake of others, keep our eye on the goal of wanting to see people grow.)

Getting the Balance Right

Of course there is a time for just hanging out and relaxing with our friends. We don't have to be the kind of people that no one wants to sit next to at parties because they may get interrogated. How do we get the balance right between planning and spontaneity?

(Having a mindset of being aware of opportunities is the key. It doesn't mean it will always be appropriate to take them up but we tend to err too much on the side of caution.)

Conclusion

One aspect of discipleship will be the kind of informal ministry that takes place in the course of our everyday lives. This kind of ministry requires us to be thoughtful and purposeful in the way that we spend our time. It requires us to take the opportunities that everyday life provides us with for encouraging and spurring on those we know in their relationship with God. In our next two studies we will look at the formal aspect of the ministry of discipleship.

Assignment

1. Read Chapter 6 of *One-to-One: A Discipleship Handbook*.
2. Based on the way you have answered the questions in this study set yourself two informal ministry goals for this week and act on them.

Study 5

FORMAL DISCIPLESHIP – Part I

Aim: To discuss the practicalities of starting up a formal one-to-one relationship so that people will have confidence to give it a go and will set things up in the most helpful way.

Assignment Review

What did you learn from the reading? What questions do you still have?

How easy was it to set and achieve your informal ministry goals?

Introduction

In the next two studies we will concentrate on how we go about meeting with someone we are discipling on a more formal and regular basis.

What are our hesitations about formal one-to-one ministry?

(A general starter question. Looking for answers like not knowing how to ask people, not knowing what to do, feeling inadequate or unprepared.)

Getting Started

Often it is a lack of confidence and not being sure about the practicalities of how it works that stops us meeting people one-to-one. The aim of the next 2 sessions is to go through the practicalities of how we start meeting with people and what we do when we meet to give us the confidence to give it a go.

Before we look at the practicalities, read Hebrews 10:24-25. What encouragement does this give us as we think about formal one-to-one meetings?

(God wants us to keep on meeting together. The aim of meeting is to encourage and spur one another on. One-to-one meetings are a great way to do this)

Answer the following questions and discuss the pros and cons of various options.

(a) Who should we meet with?

(Come up with names!)

(b) Where should we meet?

(Options include my home, their home, the church, a coffee shop. The decision will depend on weighing up comfort, familiarity, noise, distraction, availability and accessibility.)

(c) When could we meet?

(Evenings, after school, while kids are napping, over lunch or breakfast. Time and availability are the factors)

(d) How long should we meet for?

(Aim for an hour or a lunch break, it will often take women longer.)

(e) How often should we meet?

(I think at least fortnightly to be effective and consistent, weekly would be great. Monthly means it takes a long time to build the relationship and to get through studies, and if you miss a meeting it leaves a huge gap. But this does depend a lot on who you are meeting with and what aiming to achieve. Eg a new Christian would benefit from meeting more regularly, someone being trained in ministry may not need such regular contact.)

Asking the Question

From thinking through these questions you will see that one of the great strengths of one-to-one ministry is its flexibility. But it is good once we've thought through the options to come up with a bit of a plan before we get down to the nitty gritty of actually asking someone to meet with us.

What hesitations do we have about asking someone to meet with us?

(This is really asking people what stops them from discipling others. Answers should include things like: lack of confidence and feeling inadequate, not knowing people well enough, thinking that people won't be interested in meeting, not knowing what to say etc.)

What hesitations might people have about meeting us?

(Things like not knowing us, not knowing what we are asking them to do, not wanting to be committed regularly, not understanding the benefits etc.)

How do we go about asking people to meet with us in a way that might put some of these hesitations to rest?

(Be clear about what you are asking them to do and why it would be a good thing to do. Show enthusiasm at the idea of meeting with them. Let them know that other people are meeting up like this. Be up front and ask them straight out.)

Setting Expectations

Another strategy that helps deal with some of our hesitations is to set out our expectations about what we will do together and how our meetings will work the first time we meet together.

Think of a specific person you would like to disciple. What would be some reasonable expectations to set together in the following areas:

(a) The practicalities of your meetings:

when?

How often?

Where?

For how long?

(b) What you will do together:

(Include things like what part of the Bible you will look at, what things you might pray about, that you might do some social things together, that you will talk about how they are going as a Christian.)

(c) what a typical meeting might look like:

(Emphasise that reading the Bible and praying is the main focus of your meetings.)

Setting Goals

Another helpful way to start things heading in a positive direction in our discipleship relationships is to set some goals together as we start meeting together. These can be goals both for the person we are discipling and for our time together.

How might we go about the task of setting some goals with the person we are discipling?

(Think about the goals setting ideas we talked about in study 3 and set goals in terms of knowledge, godliness, ministry and training.)

How will you work on those goals together?

(The goals that are set could help determine what we study together. They could raise issues that we pray about together. They could be things the disciple needs to be held accountable for.)

How can we be realistic as we think about goal setting?

(Only work on a couple of things at a time, set concrete and achievable goals.)

Conclusion

In this study we have focussed on the practicalities of getting started. Asking people to meet us, setting expectations and goals are the one off activities of discipling people. Once we have got to this stage our big issue is what will we do in our regular meetings. That is the focus of the next study where we will look at praying and reading the Bible one-to-one.

Assignment

1. Read Chapters 4 and 5 of *One-to-One: A Discipleship Handbook*.
2. Get started in discipleship. Ask someone to meet with you. Set some expectations and goals together.

Study 6

FORMAL DISCIPLESHIP – Part II

Aim: to emphasise that prayer and bible reading are at the heart of discipleship and to try and give people a simple bible reading method that gives them confidence to read the bible with people rather than relying on other books and bible study material.

Assignment Review

What did you learn from your reading? What questions do you have?

How did you go at setting up formal discipleship relationships?

Introduction

This is really the heart of discipleship that we come to today, praying and reading the Bible with someone. In some ways it is a shame to only have one study on it. But the aim of this study is not to give you the one fool proof method but to give you some ideas to point you in the right direction and help you to have the confidence to have a go yourself. The best way to learn these things is by doing them.

Praying Together

A vital part of encouraging each other to grow is prayer. Often prayer gets squeezed out of our meetings together as Christians and even out of our lives. The big issue for us as disciplers is to keep prayer a priority.

What do the following passages teach us about the place of prayer?

Philippians 4:4-7 *Pray about everything, with thanksgiving, leads to peace*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Pray continually (have an attitude of always being in God's presence) and give thanks in everything.*

1 Peter 5:7 *Cast our anxieties on God because he cares for us.*

What kinds of things could you pray about with the person you are discipling?

(Anything! Church, evangelism. ministry, ministers, world issues, personal issues, those who are sick)

How could you encourage someone who is reluctant to pray?

(Start with one sentence prayers, get them to write something down, help them to understand that God doesn't mind if they stumble, let them know that you are encouraged by their prayers.)

What are some ideas for helping you both grow in your prayer life?

(Keep a prayer note book to write prayer points down, keep a prayer journal, work on having wider concerns in prayer by adopting a missionary or a minister to pray for, use Operation World etc.)

Reading the Bible Together

Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17. What does this teach us about the importance of the Bible and why it should be central to our discipling?

(It is God's word and therefore we need to pay attention to it and live by it. It makes us wise for salvation. And it thoroughly equips us for every good work.)

There are lots of different methods we could use as we come to study the Bible with someone one-to-one. But before we think about the elements of a good bible study method let's think about the following questions:

What are some unhelpful ways to study the Bible? Why are they unhelpful? How can we avoid them?

Bad habits	Bad results	Avoiding this
<i>Flip open and start reading</i>	<i>Ignores context</i>	<i>Read through a book systematically</i>
<i>Too much reliance on what others say eg commentaries</i>	<i>Don't think for yourself</i>	<i>Work things out yourself first</i>
<i>Lecturing the other person</i>	<i>They don't learn to think for themselves</i>	<i>Work together, allow them to talk</i>
<i>Answering your own questions</i>	<i>They don't learn, creates a weird dynamic</i>	<i>Work together</i>
<i>Others?</i>		

It is helpful to think of one-to-one bible reading as a distinct method of reading the bible and not to use the model of the preacher or the bible study group leader. The most helpful model to have in mind is probably a quiet time with two people and a bible.

Why do you think this would be a helpful model?

(One-to-one is much more relational, this method doesn't make one person the expert but keeps the bible the authority, it teaches us how to feed ourselves from God's word.)

Now let's get down to the nitty gritty of how to read the Bible with someone. There are three main aspects of any study of the Bible. We will look at each of these in turn and think about what they mean and how we can do them. We will use Colossians 1:15-20 as a case study to apply this method.

1. Observation

What does the term observation mean?

(Looking at what the text actually says. Comprehension of the details. Noting the facts of who, what, where and when. Looking at the structure, flow and argument of a passage.)

How do we observe what is happening in a text? What kinds of questions might we ask to do this?

(Some ideas for observing a text include things like: summarising, paraphrasing, looking for contrasts and similarities, underlining and circling significant or repeated words, looking for particular themes, listing everything said about a particular thing etc. Using the same basic questions each time or looking for what is said about the same big themes will also help us observe the text. See Leading Better Bible Studies by Rod and Karen Morris pp 68-102)

Look at Colossians 1:15-20. What kind of observation questions could you ask of this passage?

(eg List everything the passage says about Jesus. Create a table with two columns one with descriptions of Jesus and one defining what the descriptions mean. What has God done through Jesus? etc)

2. Interpretation

What does the term interpretation mean?

(Using the details gained through observation to come to an understanding of what the passage actually means. At this stage we are still thinking about the original hearers. We will need to take into account genre, biblical theology, how the passage relates to other parts of scripture and so on.)

How do we go about interpreting a text? What kinds of questions will we ask?

(Trying to draw out the significance of the facts. The kinds of questions you will concentrate on will be the how and why questions.)

What kind of interpretation questions could you ask of Colossians 1:15-20?

(eg What is the significance of the description of Jesus? What implications does this description have for the relationship between Jesus and the church and Jesus and God the Father?)

3. Application

What does the term application mean?

(This is where we look at what the passage means for us and think about the practical implications it has for our lives.)

How do we go about applying a text? What kinds of questions might we ask?

(Application will look at changing our beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. We will be looking at the “so what” questions. Given what we have worked out the passage means, what will that mean for us? We will need to take account of the difference between us and the original hearers especially when dealing with the OT.)

What kind of application questions could you ask from Colossians 1:15-20?

(eg How should we relate to Jesus? What difference should what he has done make to our lives?)

Conclusion

This brings us to the end of our course. Take a few minutes to look back at what we have covered. What have you learned or been encouraged in through this course?

(Encourage each person to share something specific)

We need to keep working hard at reading the Bible and praying ourselves because this is the bedrock of our relationship with God. As we grow in doing this and model it to those we disciple we see both them and ourselves growing as Christians. As you keep going in discipleship we hope you will grow to understand the implications of the material in this course better and better and that it will be helpful in seeing both you and those you disciple grow to maturity in Christ.

Assignment

1. Prepare a simple bible study on Colossians 1:15-23. Do the study with a friend and get their feedback on how you went.
2. Keep on going in your discipleship!