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Regards,

Ken and Julie Moser

www.effectiveyouthministry.com

Training for one-to-one discipleship

By Julie Moser

This free resource is designed to train individuals to disciple another person in the Christian faith in a one-to-one setting. Please note the following considerations:

1. When meeting with a minor please make sure that you follow the child safety protocols set by the church, institution or organization you may be representing. This training needs to be provided *in addition* to the training in this document.
2. These guidelines are not designed for meeting with children (ages 12 or younger). Ongoing discipleship of youth ages 13-17 is preferable in a small group setting where possible. For training in how to lead a discussion group go to: <http://www.effectiveyouthministry.com/discussion-groups.html> or, see the product: *Building to Grow, Youth Leadership training manual* (\$19.95), Unit 4 “Small group Bible studies”, Study 3 “running your small group”.

Training for one-to-one discipleship

[Leader's guide]

Be sure to photocopy enough participant sheets for each person. See Participant's notes at the end of the document.

SHARE 1: **What are some common reasons people give for not discipling someone?**

Some common answers:

"I was never disciplined so don't know how to do it."

"I am not confident that I have something to offer."

"I don't feel that I know the Bible well enough to disciple someone else."

What solutions could you give to some of these objections?

Start learning about your faith. Read, study, attend a class, listen to sermons etc.

Ask a mature Christian in your church to help you grow in your faith and knowledge.

NOTE: some of this training may help provide confidence.

SHARE 2: **Have you been disciplined in the Christian faith (ie, can you name someone who specifically invested in your Christian growth)?**

If yes, share briefly about how it helped you grow in the Christian faith.

If no, why do you think this never happened? Did you want to be disciplined?

Answers should be brief and focussed on how it helped them grow in the faith.

The call to follow Jesus

Discipleship is about teaching someone to follow Jesus. Read the following passages from the book of Matthew about following Jesus. Then answer the questions below.

Matthew 7:21-23

Matthew 8:18-22

Matthew 16:24-27

**What is the picture of discipleship (following Jesus) given in the book of Matthew?
What kind of life are we being urged to live?**

Some suggested answers: it is not simply saying the right words it is about obedience; it is difficult and costly; we must be willing to give up everything;

What does it mean for you to pick up your cross and follow Jesus? (Matthew 16:24)

How are you able to help someone else to do this?

Discipleship in the New Testament

Below are some examples from scripture of discipleship in the New Testament. Read the Bible passages of one or more of these examples then discuss what you see to be some key principles we can take from these examples. [Make a list in the space below.]

1. Jesus with the 12 disciples: Matthew 5:1-2, Mark 3:13-19.
2. Priscilla and Aquila with Apollos: Acts 18:24-28.
3. Paul with Timothy: Acts 16:1-5; 2 Timothy 1:1-5; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2 Timothy 3:14.

List of key principles of discipleship from the New Testament example/s:

1. *Jesus: taught the disciples and then sent them out to duplicate his ministry.*
2. *Priscilla and Aquila developed the faith of Apollos who already knew the scriptures but needed some extra instruction. This equipped him to be very effective in ministry. Priscilla and Aquila ministered as a couple.*
3. *Paul discipled someone who had been raised in the faith through the family witness. He has a close relationship with Timothy like a father to a son. Paul taught Timothy.*

In what ways can we implement these same principles when we meet with someone one-to-one?

Some suggested answers:

- *Teach the scriptures.*
- *We need to do teach in the context of relationship. Get to know the people we disciple.*
- *Don't overlook people from strong Christian backgrounds or see discipleship merely as a remedy for those with difficulties. Discipleship should build on the work or families.*
- *An end result of discipleship may be that the person is equipped to teach/disciple others.*

It is important to make the distinction between being a "mentor" and being a "discipler". Mentoring is broader and is generally aimed at equipping people with specific skills (for example, a person could be mentored in a business setting to be better at their job.) Discipleship however, is focussed on equipping people to follow Jesus.

Getting started

Sometimes we begin discipling someone because we are approached. However, often we need to be the ones doing the approaching.

Please note the following considerations:

1. It is advisable that discipleship is done by a mature Christian and of the same gender of the person they meet with.
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IMPORTANT NOTE: Be careful not to only spend time with those that are troubled or needy. Sometimes we fall into the trap of overlooking the young Christian guy or girl who is thirsty for God's word and longing to have someone to walk alongside them in the Christian life just because they seem to be doing okay. If we follow the example of Paul we will also be looking out for the "Timothys" that will go on to disciple others and make a difference for God's kingdom.

Is there someone in your life that seems obvious to you that you could begin meeting with regularly?

What you will need to disciple someone

1. A Bible is a necessity.
2. A pen and planner/calendar/diary is helpful (more on this later.)

What to do when you meet to disciple someone

There are three main activities you need to do to disciple someone. Read through each activity and then discuss any questions you might have. Note: beside each activity is a suggestion for how long each one should take. The times are not a rule, just a guideline.

Activity 1: Talk [25mins]

Discipleship involves relationship so start by finding out how they are. You don't want to launch straight into a Bible study only to find out they are in pain over a tragedy or are stressed because of study or work. Start by asking:

- a. how is your day going so far?
- b. how has the last week been?

Find out how their Christian life is going (Spend most of your talk time on this):

c. ask “how are you doing in your Christian life?”

Ask them how they are doing with resisting sin, godly living, godly actions, personal Bible devotions, prayer, church participation etc. Be sure that this question is not limited to the frequency in which they read the Bible – people often interpret this question this way - they could be reading your Bible daily but not living it out by treating people poorly or living selfishly etc.

Do you have any questions about activity 1?

Activity 2. Read the Bible [25mins] there are several options for this activity.

OPTION A. Use printed Bible study booklets. There is a range of good Bible study material available. This can be a good way to get started as it keeps you focussed as you work through the material. It can also be helpful if you are not confident to simply read through a text and teach it. You may like to get started with this option before trying the next option.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Just because something is in print doesn't mean it contains sound teaching. Be sure to ask people you trust for recommendations and also to look through material thoroughly before teaching it to someone else.

OPTION B. Choose a book of the Bible and read through it section by section or one chapter at a time. Make sure you have the same version (for example, NIV), with a readable modern language. Ask them to do the reading if they are able. Once you read it together ask them: “what stood out to you in this passage?” Allow them to make observations or ask questions. Then work through the passage and teach them some helpful things from what was read. This method requires you to come with some prepared notes or an in depth understanding of the passage. Finish by asking “what challenges does the passage give you for the week ahead?” You may also want to have some prepared suggestions about how the passage applies to how we should live/respond.

OPTION C. Similar to OPTION B, you might want to set a topic and come with a set of readings each week on the topic. For example the topic might be godly relationships or a theological topic such as the sovereignty of God. When using this option you will want to set a time limit such as 4 weeks. Be careful not to restrict your discussions to topics but also to spend weeks working your way through a book of the Bible.

Do you have any questions about activity 2?

Activity 3. Pray [10mins] Ask them what they want to pray for and spend time praying. Two important things about this time:

- a. You want them to become comfortable praying if they are not already. So while you will always pray for them, insist that they also pray aloud for one or some of the prayer points. If they have never prayed aloud or feel uneasy explain to them that this is best setting to learn how to pray and that it doesn't matter if they get their words mixed up. If it is really difficult set some things for them to thank God for and have them simply pray "Thank you, Lord for....[insert praise points]"
- b. You want to equip them to be praying on their own during the week. I like to ask them to come up with a list of five things they should pray for every day. Each week I check in with how they are doing with praying through their list. I will also help them with suggestions of what to pray for if they have never done this. Some obvious ones are: Family members, faith for a non-Christian friend, their church leaders, something for themselves. NOTE: these are things to ask God for, but teach them to start by giving thanks too (for example, thanks for: who God is, the ways God has blessed them or others, for answered prayer etc.)

Do you have any questions about activity 3?

Your first meeting

Start your time together by making your expectations and commitment clear. I always do this the very first time I meet with someone. This is also a good time to get to know them a little bit and will help you decide what you want to do in regards to Bible reading.

After you read each step discuss any questions you might have.

Step 1. Your first time meeting you need to find out about them.

- a. Ask them to share their 'story' with you (family, growing up, church experience etc.)
- b. Get them to share their testimony if that does not come out clearly when they tell their story.
- c. Ask them about the times when they were strongest in their faith and times when they have struggled.
- d. I like to clarify how well they understand the gospel. A great question to ask is: *"If you were to die today and stand before God and he asked you 'why should I let you into my heaven?', what would you say to him?"* If their answer revolves around what Jesus has done for them on the cross that is great. If their answer revolves around how much they feel they try to be good or try to have faith then spend some time explaining the gospel. Some helpful verses may be: John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10; 2 Corinthians 5:21. Be sure to talk about not only the fact that Jesus takes away our sin but that, at the same time, he credited his righteousness to us (people often miss the second bit!)

Do you have any questions about Step 1?

Step 2. Tell them what you will do when you meet together (the three activities listed above: talk about their faith, read the Bible and pray.) Tell them your goal is to help them follow Jesus - to make them strong in their faith and their understanding of scripture.

Do you have any questions about Step 2?

Step 3. Ask them to make a commitment to meeting regularly. They need to make it a priority (and so will you). There may be unavoidable times when your meeting time has to move (example, illness) but try to be consistent.

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Do you have any questions about Step 4?

Step 5. Set a time and day that you will start meeting regularly (if you haven't already.)

Do you have any questions about Step 5?

Step 6. Read a short Bible passage and pray. Choose a Bible passage that will be helpful or encouraging. One suggestion is Hebrews 10:19-25.

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Step 7. Decide how long you will meet for (one week? Four weeks? A term/semester? A school year?) You can still continue regularly after the initial time you have set, but it is helpful to have a finish date in case you feel you have committed to something that is not working well for either of you. The time limit also forces you to persevere even if it is not working at first. It gives you a settling in time before either of you end it prematurely - sometimes it takes time for it to feel comfortable.

Do you have any questions about Step 7?

Mistakes people make in discipling

Mistake #1. All talk and no Bible and prayer. Discipleship is not merely friendship and you are not their therapist. Make sure that what you set out to do happens – that the person you meet with is disciplined in the faith.

Mistake #2. Random meeting times. You need to set the same time every week and stick to it. Best option: once a week, second best/acceptable: every second week, not an option: whenever the person feels they need someone to talk to. The most common thing I hear from people is that they start regularly and then everyone becomes "too busy". A set, regular time will keep you accountable. It is helpful to end each time confirming the next meeting time before you pray and write it in the planner/calendar/diary before you part ways.

Mistake #3. No time limit. This is not a huge mistake, but it is best to set an hour. This helps you stick to the important stuff and not wander off topic. You can continue to meet and catch up after the hour is done but having an official end time is helpful.

Is there anything you would like to discuss about the mistakes people make in discipling?

Are there other mistakes you would add to this list?

Go make disciples!

Read: Matthew 28:19

Pray for God's help to go and make disciples.

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