

***“Organizational Plans,
Procedures, and
Methods for Discipling”***

.....
Organizational Plans for Discipling In the Local Church!

**General Procedures, methods, ideas, and helps
toward carrying out discipling with
the individual.**

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Organizational Plans for the Discipling Ministry

I am sharing some potential methods of organizing for discipling. These are merely suggestive and most all pastors will want to work on that which works best for them.

It is wise to organize the discipling ministry. If it is important to do, then it is important to do well. Organization means to the average member that this ministry is too important to allow to happen whatever happens. Too often ministries are poorly organized and not planned for and then we wonder why things don't last or people don't take the ministry seriously.

I think it is good to require reporting to take place, regularly, on the part of every person who is involved in discipling. We have used a card method and this not only keep leadership abreast with what was taking place, but it also gave a sense of responsibility because of accountability.

So the following should be considered and then plan out what is workable for you. If you desire a copy of our cards used for discipleship record keeping, then do write us, e-mail us, or phone us. And may the Lord bless richly.

I. What Is Involved?

A. Begin a discipleship study with young Christians saved during the past couple of years, and those who are younger Christians and those who have not grown.

B. Continue an ongoing discipleship study with new converts presently and for all who accept Christ as Savior in the future.

C. Use a discipling study which is carried out by ALL those who are willing to be disciplers ---who are willing to adopt someone! (Some they did not win to Christ.)

II. Who Is Involved?

A. Disciplers:

1. Who are willing to be trained to disciple others!
(Ongoing training should be provided.)
2. Some, by virtue of being saved many years, or have grown and matured in Christ, may be presently ready to begin discipling. (These receive a minimal amount of training. They should read over all this material and other things given to them.)
3. Those who are willing to follow all instructions and organizational aspects of the discipling process.

B. Coordinator (s) -- Pastor _____, _____

1. This person, or persons, (if the number of disciplers warrant a number of assistant coordinators), will give oversight to the ongoing discipling ministry.
2. This person may be the Senior pastor or another person who makes the decisions of assigning *discipler to the new convert (s)*. These decisions will be made carefully as to WHO will disciple WHOM.
3. The coordinator, (or Pastor or whoever is leader) along with volunteer secretary help, will oversee and keep the records turned in by all disciplers.
- 4.
4. He will assist in recruiting people to be trained and will also be consistently discipling someone (s) on a regular basis.
5. He will give assistance concerning difficulties people are having and will help in the needs of both discipler and discipled, along with others of the pastoral staff, or the deacons.
6. Should the ministry grow sufficiently assistant coordinators will be chosen out of the ranks of disciplers to help where needed.

C. Director -- _____

1. It is his responsibility to give training to all who desire to disciple others. (A minimal amount of training will be shared with those who are ready to begin right away because of their maturity in Christ and preparation to serve.)
2. Ongoing training will be given to prepare those interested who desire to build others.
3. He will work closely with the pastor (or the pastor may fill this position) and with disciples in assistance needed -- suggestions, organizations needs, etc.
4. Plans in the future could also include preparing *especially trained people* to help meet family needs, marriage enrichment, child training, etc. (*counseling others*)
5. He will also oversee the total plans -- organizationally, etc., that things are done consistently and in the best manner possible.
6. He will see that materials are available and training is given to those who would desire to assist people in personal problems they might face.

(There is probably a need for a number of people who have some training to assist in counseling needs.)

Procedures for the Disciplers In the Discipling Ministry

General Plans

1. We will be doing our best to call on each new convert during the very first week after their conversion.
 - If possible the Senior Pastor, Coordinator or Director, will make the first contact to endeavor to "*sell the person*" on the blessings and need of being disciplined.
 - Also through this we will try to ascertain who might best work with the person (s).
2. The study for the first four weeks could be the series on the Gospel of John.
 - This will focus on their salvation decision, what Christ has done for them, and to bring understanding concerning their blessings in Christ.
 - Using these first also gives the disciplee an opportunity to being his study in the Gospel of John, which makes it an easier beginning.
 - Since these are loose-leaf, the discipler can ascertain the extent of the interest of the disciplee prior to beginning a study in an extensive course.
3. This should be followed with other extensive discipling study materials.
 - Either *Basic Bible Truths* for adults, or *Bible Guidebook for Young Christians* could be used for discipling. The *Bible Guidebook* is used particularly for teens, older children and possibly for some adults who have a very poor educational background.
 - A second course of study for those who desire it could be a study of Ephesians which was written for the discipling ministry.
4. Some who have many years of background spiritually and feel ready to begin discipling should meet for a briefing on procedures, etc. They will need to read and study the materials provided for their preparation to begin and then meet as a group with the person who leads this ministry.
5. All others who desire to begin discipling will be asked to take some discipling training for some weeks as provided.
6. Reading and studying the materials is very important as it covers some very important aspects in discipling. You are asked to thoroughly study all materials.
7. You will be expected to hand in a card weekly. (This allows the office to know what is taking place in the discipling ministry.)
 - Note directions given in this material about this.
 - Also you will receive a card for keeping your own records.
8. You will want to put all this material together for ready access and study for continued ministry.

9. Other things will be given to you from time to time as meetings take place.

Suggestions for the Discipler

1. Seek to know what you can about the person (s) even before holding the first study time or session with them.
2. Above all else meet with them prayerfully, praying daily for the person (s) with whom you will be working. Keep a prayerful attitude as you work with them. (Matt. 7:7-8; Lk. 11:5-10; John 15:7; Gal. 4:19)
3. Try to be alone with the person if it is a "one-on-one" type ministry.
 - If it is with the whole family, then work with them to make it an effective teaching situation.
 - You will need to be flexible and diplomatic.
3. Get acquainted with the person (s).
 - Be observant of the home if that is where you are meeting.
 - Note the things he or she is interested in such as hobbies, books, etc.
3. A broad base of common interests will make follow-up easier and more personal.
 - You must be interested in the total person, not just their spiritual welfare.
 - You may be meeting in a restaurant, etc., still take the time to get to know the person as much as possible.
4. Ask questions about the spiritual background if this is helpful.
 - Explain your burden for him, and the importance of his spiritual growth.
 - Share about the church's and Pastor's desire for their growth also.
5. Explain how growth is gained through personal Bible study, fellowship in the church, daily prayer, witnessing, etc.
 - You must, to a degree, "*sell them*" on the importance of this time together.
 - This will help them to be more consistent.
 - Compare this time of discipling with the way parents care for a newly born baby in the family.
6. Use the Bible to answer questions and address problems that may be in the life.
 - Use the time you spend with him to create a relationship based on what God says in the Word.
 - The church you represent preaches and teaches the Bible and that must be the **one standard** by which he evaluates life.
 - He must see that Scripture has the **answers** for all of life's problems and needs.
7. Be sympathetic and encouraging as you talk with him.
 - Be open to share your personal answers to prayer and to mention difficulties in which God fulfilled His Word for you.
 - Share personal testimonies along the way as you think they would apply to his life.

8. In taking him from one study to another,
 - tell him **why**,
 - show him **how**,
 - get him **started** and keep him **going**.
 - Teach him to **share** the Word with others, because he will learn to do it by doing.

9. As you introduce new Bible studies, new doctrines, etc., show him how they **relate** to his own life and the importance of the **application** of truth.

Remember:

- We can only teach that which is real and precious to our own lives.
 - We teach to help others experience that which blesses our own lives.
 - Only a soulwinner can lead someone else to be a soulwinner.
 - Only a person who is consistent in personal devotions will have success when trying to encourage someone else in their "quiet time" with the Lord.
10. At each visit review the former lesson(s) briefly, check to see if there are ways in which he has seen how these things applied to his life during the past week.
 - Discuss aspects of personal importance to him,
 - and attempt to answer any questions.
 11. Adjust the assignments to his individual pace.
 - When he doesn't fulfill his assignments, find out why, but don't drive him -- lead him.
 - Don't accept his canceling an appointment as disinterest, or wait for him to phone before you meet again. You take the initiative, phone and set the next meeting time.
 - Perhaps a phone call during the week with an encouraging word will help him to get the study done for the next visit.
 12. Spend an hour (or whatever time it takes within reason) on each visit, as the situation warrants.
 - At each visit move quickly into the lesson; don't get sidetracked.
 - Save the light-hearted visiting to the end so you don't cut the study short.
 - Encourage him to talk about what he studied, ask questions to stimulate his interest.
 - Sometimes a "preview" of the next week's lesson will cause him to be excited and want to move on in the study.
 13. Be specific in your assignments and get his promise to have them done when you come for the next visit, for which you make a definite appointment.
 14. Make each lesson interesting, practical, life related, and beneficial for his everyday life.
 15. Work at enlisting him in the church,
 - Building faithfulness in attendance,
 - a desire to see the work go forward,

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- and a realization that God has something or things He wants him to do.
16. If there are problems you don't know what to do about, questions you can't answer, or needs the person has that must be met, then:
 - Do not hesitate to refer the person immediately pastor or someone he would designate.
 - Maybe there is a crisis problem that must be addressed, don't neglect getting the information to someone who can begin to help them in that specific need.
 17. Keep a notebook of his progress, his problems, and assignments, etc., would be helpful in your ministry to this person. It will help you to become more reflective about needs and how you can meet them.
 18. The method of record keeping will be explain to each discipler for his own records and for the office.
 - It is imperative that these directions are followed fully and carefully.
 - We don't want someone to *fall through the cracks*, so to speak due to poor follow through.
 - The discipler is accountable to his work in a proper way as directed.

ESTABLISHING THE NEW CONVERT THROUGH A DISCIPLING MINISTRY

Establishing a discipling ministry is one of the most important ministries any church could ever engage in. It is the life blood of the church!

The **goal** of establishing is to see a new or immature Christian become firmly grounded in various aspects of living the Christian life successfully.

I. The areas which need to be dealt with in working with this person would include the following.

- A. **DOCTRINAL** -- to help new believers become doctrinally grounded and Scripturally oriented.
- B. **DEVOTIONAL** --to help new believers become familiar with basic skills which aid spiritual growth. We must help them build an atmosphere for growth, and know how to feed themselves in the Word of God.
- C. **MINISTRY** -- to expose new converts or young Christians to ministry evaluations in which they can learn by observation. We must help them understand the importance of the gifts God has given them, and to build the desire to use these gifts for the Lord and the work of the church. (The discipler must also develop his own ministry philosophy.)
- D. **CHARACTER** -- to help the new believers to build character traits in their lives that will aid them in their walk with Christ. We must spend time with the young disciple observing his character strengths and weaknesses. We must help him develop his strengths and correct the weaknesses.

God wants every believer to grow toward maturity. The Scriptures speak of being "*rooted and grounded*" in the faith (Col. 1: 28; 2: 6,7)

Identifiable marks of maturity are-- holiness - Heb. 5:14; **love** - I Tim. 1:5; **endurance** - I Cor 3. 1-13; **unity** with other Christians - I Cor. 3:1-3. The discipler should labor to help the new convert grow into a mature believer.

II. Some reason why people FALL AWAY prior to discipling or even after discipling.

- A. **Because of the KIND OF SOIL of their hearts.** (Matthew 13: 3-9; Mark 4:3-9; Luke 8: 5-15).
The parable of the sower teaches us that some fall away because of a lack of nourishment due to an environment which is not conducive for growth.

The condition of the soil is the main topic in these portions. Then trials or temptations expose the weakness that is there. In other words, the person has no internal resources to bear up under the pressure of the situation.

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- B. Because of an EVIL AND UNBELIEVING HEART.** (Heb. 3: 7, 8 ; 12, 13 15; 4: 7) Unbelief in the passage is synonymous with disobedience. To walk in unbelief is to doubt God. Such doubt limits, if not fully negates, growth in any Christian's life.
- C. Because of HABITS OF SIN, OR SINFUL LIFE PATTERNS** which constantly cause a the person to walk in sin and sinful life cycles. (See Eph. 4:17-32; Col. 3: 8-14.)
- D. Because of the NEGATIVE WITNESS** of another person's life. (See Rom. 14: 21; I Cor. 8: 13; II Cor. 11:29.)
- E. Because of FALSE DOCTRINE and deceitful spirits** (I Tim. 4:1).

III. All growth takes place in the context of Christian relationships.

This should include one-to-one friendships, small-group fellowship, and corporate worship. (See Acts 20: 32; I Pet. 2: 5; Jude 20.)

A church has a vital role in establishing a new Christian. There are both **internal** (knowledge of the Word, prayer, meditation, character, etc.,) and **external** (ministry, skills, good works, relational ability) aspects of the growth process.

Spiritual growth is a lifetime process. No one has fully arrived. We must become life-long learners, and teach the new convert the importance of this goal for their own lives as well.

IV. There are practical guidelines for discipling the newer Christian.

- A. The first week of a new Christian's life is very vital** to his growth and ongoing spiritual development.
- B. Establishing them is the very essence of a relational dynamic** with the Lord.
It is not just passing on material, but a shared life experience. It is a shared experience which "is going somewhere" for the Lord. It involves goals and objectives and it is intentional.
- C. Establishing must be person-centered, rather than materials-centered or program centered.**
 - 1. People grow at different rates and come with various situations in life and have different needs.
 - 2. There should be both structured and unstructured time with the person you are discipling.
 - 3. Get excited with the disciple when they see and are thrilled with something new. Use 90% encouragement and 10% correction.
 - 4. In every follow-up situation certain problems will arise--expect them. If the problem is great or you are not ready to help them in it, refer the

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person to someone else with more training than you have.

5. Remember the details he shares with you. It is good to keep a file (supplemental) on each person and write down insights, observations, _____ and answers to prayer, etc.
6. Work with a person of the same sex.
7. Learn to be a good motivator and encourager.
8. Don't strongly advise unless Biblical principles are being violated. Don't be a junior Holy Spirit.
9. Not everyone will grow. Understand that and don't be discouraged.
10. Prayer by the discipler for the disciple must precede and pervade the entire disciple making process.
11. We must get with the convert immediately after conversion, preferably within 24 hours.

V. There are some general principles that are vital.

1. The process is as important as the product.
2. Balance gentle affection with firmness.
3. Balance armchair discipling with lifestyle discipling. (Take time with the person.)
4. Combine the structured with the unstructured.
5. Seek to build depth into the person.
6. When training the person, take into account the total person.
7. Never demand respect or emphasize your authority. (Make much of Christ.)
8. You never disciple from a position, but only from a relationship.
9. Truth is best communicated when it is presented simultaneously by example and precept.

May the Lord wonderfully bless and use you in the discipling ministry.