



# The Discipleship Commission

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[www.discipleshipcourse.org](http://www.discipleshipcourse.org)

## The Discipleship Commission

### **Matthew 28:16-20**

- Follow Jesus' example →
- Work in God's power.
- Go! Don't just wait for people to come.
- It's about obedience, not just knowledge.
- All things. Never compromise the message.
- Every disciple is called to share the Gospel.
- Make **disciples**, not just members.

### It's God's mission!

**John 6:44**

**John 12:32**

**John 16:7**

**John 8:31,32; 13:34,35; 15:5,8**

**Write down a definition of a disciple!**

"Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary." (The Desire of Ages, p. 195)

"The Saviour's commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the work of saving souls depends alone on the ordained minister." All to whom the heavenly inspiration has come are put in trust with the gospel. All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. For this work the church was established, and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be co-workers with Christ." (The Desire of Ages, p. 822)

## Notes/Questions

What does Jesus command us to do? How should we do that?

How do these verses describe what a disciple is?

## The Five Stages of Discipleship



Conversion: clear understanding of righteousness by faith, personal assurance of salvation

Growth: personal Bible study and prayer, family worship, being filled with the Holy Spirit, overcoming temptation, understanding God's will

Witnessing: praying for lost people, mingling, serving and finding persons of peace, sharing of personal testimony and gospel

Leading: leading caregroups and Bible study groups using the Discovery Bible approach, leadership in the local church

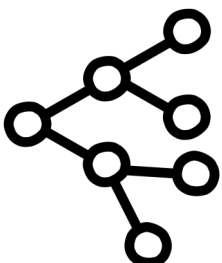
Training: leading discipleship groups, giving seminars, coaching and mentoring leaders

### **How do you measure the spiritual health of a church?**

„The real character of the church is measured, not by the high profession she makes, not by the names enrolled on her books, but by what she is actually doing for the Master, **by the number of her persevering, faithful workers.**“ (Gospel Workers, p. 200)

## God's Plan for the Church

Acts 2:47; 4:4; 6:7; 19:8-10



Multiplication of

- Disciples
- Small groups
- Churches

## Notes/Questions

What do these five stages mean?

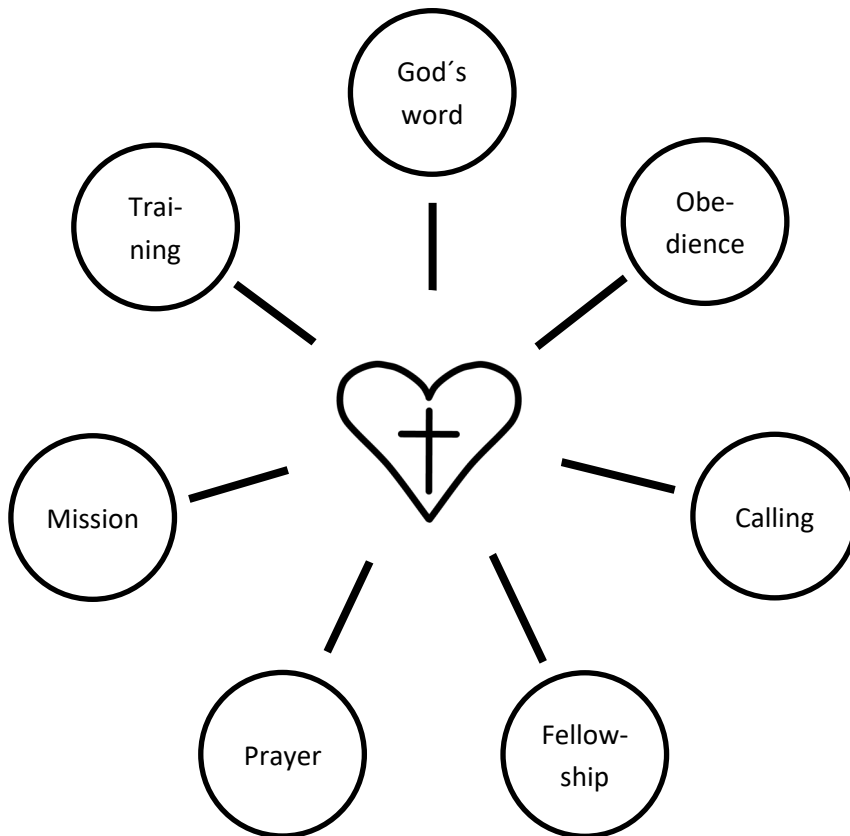
By the number of people on the list? By church attendance? No! Why not?

How do these verses describe God's plan for the church?

Imaging what local churches will look like if they experience this kind of multiplication!

## The Principles of Discipleship

- These principles describe the way Jesus made disciples.
- The early church followed the same principles.
- They are the foundational values of the NT church.



Relationship: Jesus called his disciples to have a loving relationship with him. (Matthew 22:37,38; Mark 3:14; John 15:4,5)

God's word: Jesus made the word of God central in his teaching. And he taught his disciple to follow this example. (John 8:31,32; 17:17)

Obedience: Jesus emphasised the importance of loving obedience. (Matthew 7:24-27; John 14:15)

Calling: Jesus had a clear understanding of his prophetic calling. (Luke 4:17-21)

Fellowship: Jesus started a small group of disciples and taught them to love each other. (John 13:34-35; 17:20-21)

Prayer: Jesus himself spent a lot of time in prayer and he taught his disciples to pray. (Mark 1:35; Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 6:12; 11:1-13)

Mission: Jesus helped people in their needs and used every opportunity to preach the Gospel. (Matthew 4:17,23; 9:37,38)

Training: Jesus intentionally trained his disciples to serve people, share the Gospel and make disciples. (Matthew 10:5-26; Lukas 10:1-12)

## Notes/Questions

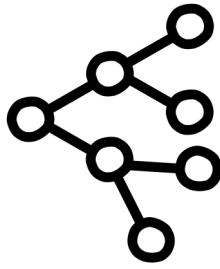
What are the principles of discipleship? Why are they important?

Why is the relationship with Jesus the centre of discipleship?

## The Disciple Making Strategy of Jesus (1)

**Matthew 9:35-38; 10:1-15**

**Luke 10:1-12**



## Notes/Questions

How do these two passages describe how Jesus trained his disciples to make disciples?

Who should the disciples look for? How should they recognize them?

**What did Jesus do?**

**What should his disciples do?**

## The Disciple Making Strategy of Jesus (2)

## Notes/Questions

What did Jesus do?	What should his disciples do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• He went about all the cities and villages.</li><li>• He felt compassion for the lost people.</li><li>• He preached the gospel of the kingdom of God.</li><li>• He healed the sick.</li><li>• He prayed for laborers. (cf. Luke 6:12)</li><li>• He called people as His disciples whom God had prepared.</li><li>• He empowered his disciples and sent them out to heal and preach.</li><li>• Jesus coached his disciples on their return.</li><li>• He reached the lost and trained the saved.</li><li>• He trained many, but he focused on a few.</li><li>• He gathered the disciples into a community of believers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They were to go to the cities and places that Jesus himself wanted to visit.</li><li>• They were to see that there was a harvest. (cf. John 4:35)</li><li>• They were to pray for laborers for the harvest.</li><li>• They were to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God.</li><li>• They were to heal the sick and cast out demons.</li><li>• They should look for people whom God had prepared (persons of peace/houses of peace) and focus on them.</li><li>• They should trust that God will provide for them along the way.</li><li>• They should move on when there were no open people in a place.</li><li>• They should establish a community of believers who would carry on the faith when they have moved on. This implies that they should train these people as disciples and disciple-makers.</li><li>• Just like Jesus they should reach the lost and train the saved.</li></ul>

### **Conclusion:**

**Jesus wanted his disciples to do exactly what he himself did. And he wanted them to repeat this process with others. His goal was to multiply laborers for the harvest.**

## The Disciple Making Strategy of Jesus (3)

## Notes/Questions

Stage 1	Come and see	John 1:35-51
Stage 2	Follow me	Matthew 4:18-20; Mark 1:16-20
Stage 3	Be with me	Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-15; Luke 6:6:12-16
Stage 4	Go and come back	Matthew 9:35-38, 10:1-42; Luke 10:1-24
Stage 5	Go into all the world	Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8

We have seen that Jesus had a clear strategy as he pursued discipleship:

- He healed the sick AND preached the Gospel. (Matthew 4:23; 8,1-4)
- He reached the lost AND trained the saved. (Matthew 9:35-38; 10:1-42)
- He trained AND sent out as soon as someone was saved. (Mark 1:16,17; 5:19,20; John 4:28-30)
- He sent out his disciples AND coached them when they came back. (Luke 10:17-20)
- He trained many AND then focused on few. (Matthew 10:1; Luke 10:1-2)

In our ministry we need the same approach.

- We should minister to the needs of as possible AND use every opportunity to share the Gospel.
- We should seek to lead people to Jesus AND disciple and train those who have made a decision to follow Jesus.
- People who have made a decision to follow Jesus, should be equipped and encouraged to reach out to the people in their relational network as soon as possible.
- We should train as many as possible in personal evangelism and discipleship and then focus on those who apply what they have learned.

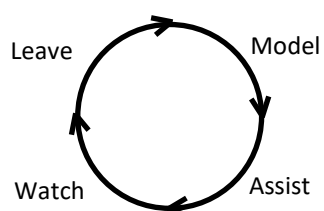
### MAWL

M-Modell: I do, you watch.

A-Assist: I do, you help.

W-Watch: You do, I watch.

L-Leave: You do, some else watches.



## The Disciple Making Strategy of Jesus (4)

“**Christ's method alone** will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior **mingled** with men as one who desired their good. He **showed His sympathy** for them, **ministered** to their needs, and **won their confidence**. Then He bade them, “Follow Me.” There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit.” (The Ministry of Healing, p. 143)

“The apostles were members of the family of Jesus, and they had accompanied Him as He traveled on foot through Galilee. They had shared with Him the toils and hardships that overtook them. They had listened to His discourses, they had walked and talked with the Son of God, and from His daily instruction they had learned how to work for the elevation of humanity. As Jesus ministered to the vast multitudes that gathered about Him, His disciples were in attendance, eager to do His bidding and to lighten His labor. They assisted in arranging the people, bringing the afflicted ones to the Savior, and promoting the comfort of all. They watched for interested hearers, explained the Scriptures to them, and in various ways worked for their spiritual benefit. They taught what they had learned of Jesus, and were every day obtaining a rich experience. But they needed also an experience in laboring alone. They were still in need of much instruction, great patience and tenderness. Now, while He was personally with them, to point out their errors, and counsel and correct them, the Savior sent them forth as His representatives.” (The Desire of Ages, p. 349)

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## Notes/Questions

Find more statements by Ellen G. White in the book *Christian Service*, chapter 5.



## Investing in the Right People

Jesus spent a lot of time in prayer before he called his disciples. (Luke 6:12). He only wanted to call as apostles the people God had given him. (John 17:6,9) Jesus invested much of his time in these twelve apostles in order to prepare them to carry on the work after his ascension. Among the twelve disciples, there was also an inner circle of three disciples in whom Jesus invested even more time, namely Peter, John and James. When Jesus sent his disciples out, he taught them to also focus on the people God had prepared. These people, called persons of peace (Luke 10:5-7), would accept the gospel and then become co-workers themselves. They are the answer to the prayer for laborers for the harvest. (cf. Matthew 9:38)

Read again the following words of Jesus about these persons of peace!

**Matthew 10:11-13**

**Luke 10:5-9**

For Paul it was important to surround himself with the right co-workers, too. These included Timothy, Titus, Aquilla and Priscilla, Luke and many others. He passed on the need to invest in the right co-workers to them.

**„And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.“ (2. Timothy 2:2)**

Paul  Timothy  faithful men  others

## Notes/Questions

What kind of people his disciples should focus on?

**John 4:35-38**

**1 Corinthians 3:6-9**

In many of his parables, Jesus compared the kingdom of God to the sowing of the seed, the growth of the plants and the bringing in of the harvest. Which parables can you think of?

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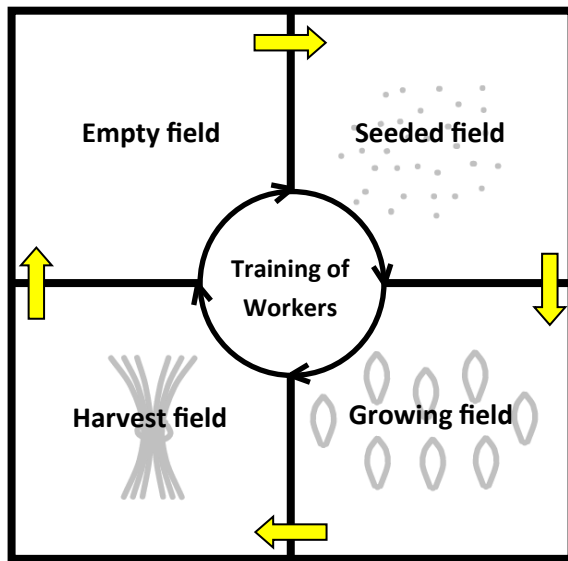
A farmer will not leave his work to chance if he wants to see a rich harvest. There are various factors that influence the success of his work:

- The farmer must believe that his work will lead to a harvest.
- The soil must be prepared for sowing.
- The seed must be sown at the right time.
- The growing plants need the right care for optimum growth.
- The harvest must be brought in at the right time.
- Part of the harvest serves as seed for the next cycle.
- The farmer can do everything right, but ultimately the growth of the seed depends on the weather.
- Growth takes time and happens at the right time.
- Well-trained laborers are needed to prepare the soil, sow, cultivate and harvest.
- Agriculture is a constantly repeating process.

**All of these factors can be applied to mission and discipleship!**

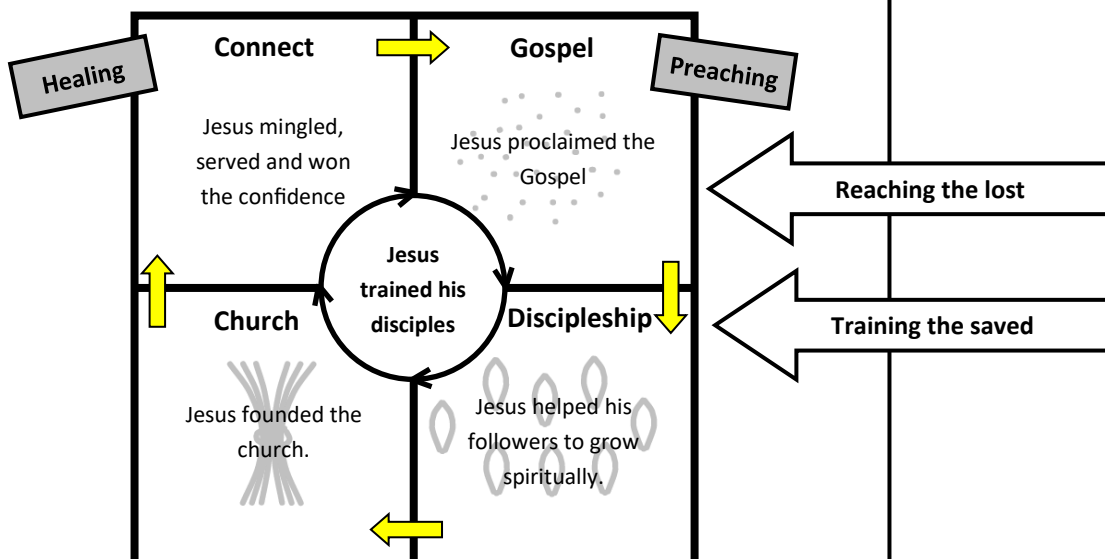
## Jesus and the Four Fields of Discipleship

This illustration of the four fields describes the different stages in the agricultural cycle.



Jesus followed this strategy in his ministry:

- He prepared the soil by mingling with people, helping them and winning their confidence.
- He used every opportunity to share the Gospel.
- He helped the believers to grow spiritually.
- He gathered his disciples in communities of believers and founded the church.
- He invested a lot of time in training and coaching his disciples so that they could follow his example and repeat this process with others and teach them to do the same.
- His goal was an ongoing multiplication of disciples and laborers for the harvest.

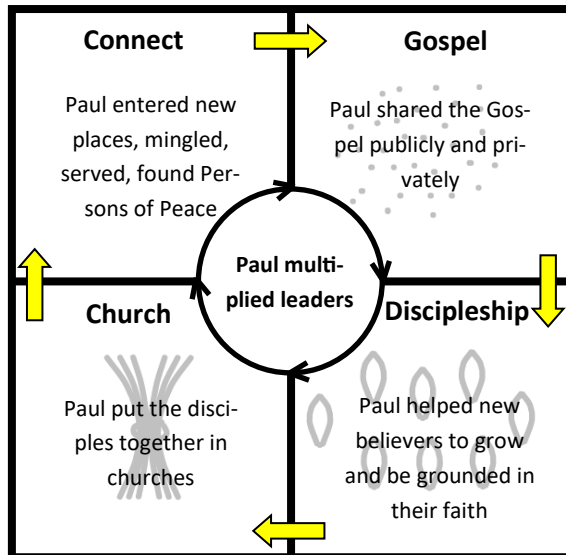


## Notes/Questions

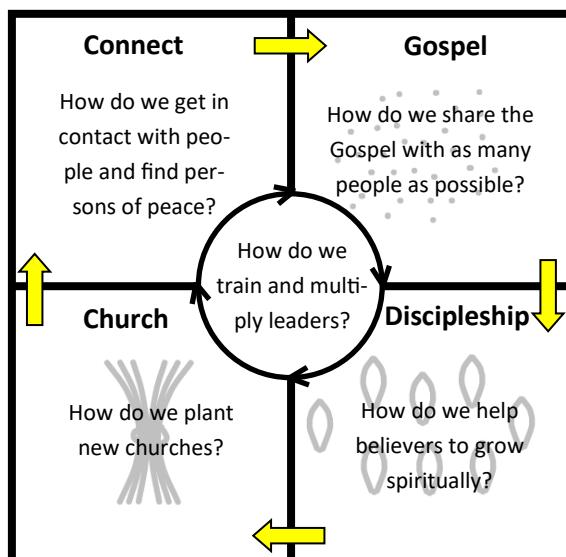
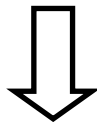
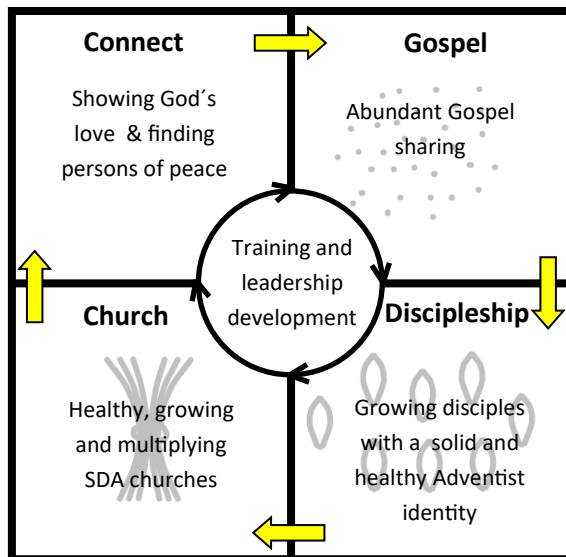
## **Bible Study Idea: The Four Fields in the Ministry of Paul**

Study the ministry of Paul in the book of Acts (Acts 9:1-31; 11:19-26; chs. 13-28) and see how he followed the example of Jesus! A great way is to also read the corresponding chapters in the “Acts of the Apostles” by Ellen White.

## **Notes/Questions**



## Goals and Strategic Questions for our Ministry



## Notes/Questions

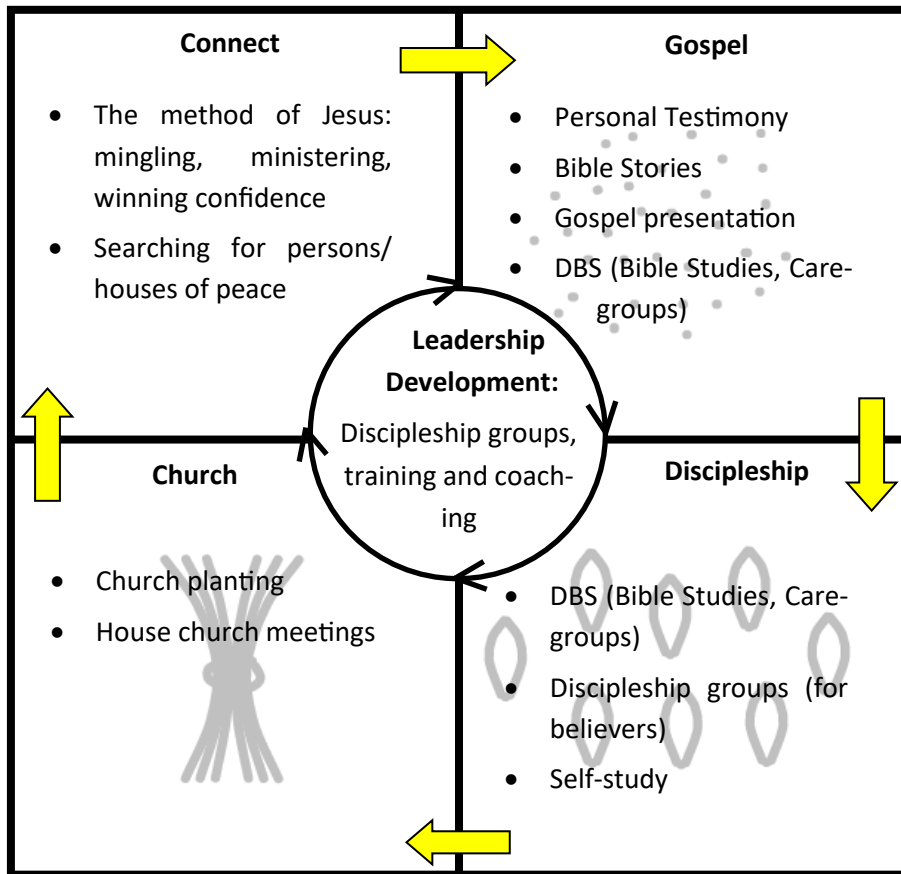
What exactly do we want to accomplish?

Which questions help us to focus on what is most important?

"As churches are established, it should be set before them that it is even from among them that men must be taken to carry the truth to others, and raise new churches." (Christian Service, p. 61)

## Discipleship Tools

## Notes/Questions



## Ellen White about Training Church Members

"The greatest help that can be given our people is to teach them to work for God, and to depend on Him, not on the ministers. Let them learn to work as Christ worked. Let them join His army of workers and do faithful service for Him." (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 19)

"In every church the members should be so trained that they will devote time to the winning of souls to Christ. ... Let those who have charge of the flock of Christ awake to their duty, and set many souls to work." (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, p. 436)

"That which is needed now for the upbuilding of our churches is the nice work of wise laborers to discern and develop talent in the church,—talent that can be educated for the Master's use. There should be a well organized plan for the employment of workers to go into all our churches, large and small, to instruct the members how to labor for the upbuilding of the church, and also for unbelievers. It is training, education, that is needed. Those who labor in visiting the churches should give the brethren and sisters instruction in practical methods of doing missionary work." (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 117)

"When souls are converted, set them to work at once. And as they labor according to their ability, they will grow stronger. It is by meeting opposing influences that we become confirmed in the faith. As the light shines into their hearts, let them diffuse its rays. Teach the newly converted that they are to enter into fellowship with Christ, to be His witnesses, and to make Him known unto the world." (Evangelism, p. 355)

"Let ministers teach church members that in order to grow in spirituality, they must carry the burden that the Lord has laid upon them,—the burden of leading souls into the truth. Those who are not fulfilling their responsibility should be visited, prayed with, labored for. Do not lead people to depend upon you as ministers; teach them rather that they are to use their talents in giving the truth to those around them. In thus working they will have the co-operation of heavenly angels, and will obtain an experience that will increase their faith, and give them a strong hold on God." (Gospel Workers. p. 200)

"Every church member should be engaged in some line of service for the Master. ... Many would be willing to work if they were taught how to begin. They need to be instructed and encouraged. ... Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings, how to conduct and teach Sabbath-school classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted. There should be schools of health, cooking schools, and classes in various lines of Christian help work. There should not only be teaching, but actual work under experienced instructors. Let the teachers lead the way in working among the people, and others, uniting with them, will learn from their example. One example is worth more than many precepts." (The Ministry of Healing, p. 149)

## Notes/Questions

Find more statements by Ellen G. White in the book *Christian Service*, chapter 5.

## Discipleship Training Track

This overview helps you to keep track of the people you disciple and the skills they have learned, practiced, applied and taught to others.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Concept/Skill	Understands the concept	Practiced the skill	Applied the skill	Taught the concept and trained the skill
Personal devotions				
Family devotions				
United prayer				
Prayer for lost people				
Personal testimony				
Gospel presentation				
Sharing Bible stories				
Discovery Bible Study				
Leading Caregroups				
Leading Discipleship groups				
Leading a church service in a house church				
Church planting				
Lead coaching group				



## **Leadership Development on 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus**

Leadership development is based on the spiritual life and the character of the leaders. Only when this foundation is solid, there can be a fruitful and healthy ministry. That's why teaching methods is not enough! Read the letters Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus and observe what he wrote about the spiritual life, the character and the ministry of leaders!

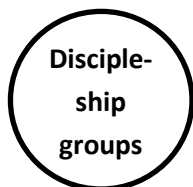
Spiritual life	→ Character	→ Ministry

## Discipleship Groups: The Idea in a Nutshell

How can growth in discipleship take place? Reading books, attending seminars and listening to sermons certainly have their place and can help to training disciples. But the most effective discipleship training takes place in the context of regular ongoing fellowship and mutual accountability. This can be experienced best in discipleship groups.



- closed small groups for church members
- that meet for a limited number of weeks or months
- in order to be spiritually nurtured and grounded
- as well as trained and equipped for personal evangelism and small group leadership.
- They are launching pads for new groups!



### The best setting for spiritual growth and training

- Intensive, life-changing Bible study and deep prayer (spiritual power)
- Loving fellowship and mutual accountability (social power)
- Practical ongoing training for personal evangelism, discipleship and leadership from someone who leads by example
- Time to grow, learn, apply, get ongoing feedback
- Simple, reproducible methods

"The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by One who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers." (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 21)

"Let there be in every church, well-organized companies of workers to labor in the vicinity of that church." (Christian Service, p. 72)

## Notes/Questions

Learn more about discipleship groups in the training module "Discipleship Groups"!

That was exactly how Jesus trained his disciples and how the early church worked.

## Appendix: Suggested Further Reading on Discipleship

## Notes/Questions

- The Desire of Ages, Ch. 14 (“We Have Found the Messiah”)
- The Desire of Ages, Ch. 37 (“The First Evangelists”)
- The Desire of Ages, Ch. 38 (“Come and Rest Awhile”)
- The Desire of Ages, Ch. 53 (“The Last Journey From Galilee”)
- The Desire of Ages, Ch. 73 (“Let Not Your Hearts Be Troubled”)
- The Desire of Ages, Ch. 86 (“Go Teach All Nations”)
- The Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 1 (“God’s Purpose for His Church”)
- The Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 2 (“The Training of the Twelve”)
- The Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 3 (“The Great Commission”)
- The Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 5 (“The Gift of the Spirit”)
- The Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 16 (“The Gospel Message in Antioch”)
- The following books by Ellen White: “Christian Service”, “Gospel Workers”, “Evangelism”, “Prayer”, “Christian Leadership”
- “Stubborn Perseverance” by J. Nymann (<https://stubbornperseverance.org>)
- “Miraculous Movements” by Jerry Trousdale
- “Ying and Grace Kai’s Training for Trainers: The Movement That Changed the World”
- Training material on [www.discipleshipcourse.org](http://www.discipleshipcourse.org)
- Search on YouTube for “Disciple Making Movements”, “Church Planting Movements”, “Discovery Bible Study”

„Church members must work; **they must educate themselves**, striving to reach the high standard set before them. This the Lord will help them to reach if they will co-operate with Him.” (Christian Service, p. 62)