

A-Z of Discipleship Course

WEEK 4 - EVERYDAY DISCIPLESHIP

This week we'll spend time considering some practical aspects of being a follower of Jesus in contemporary society.

Preparation

Before you meet, read chapters M, N, O, P and Q of *A-Z of Discipleship*.

Begin (10 mins)

Ensure that everyone is welcomed. Spend a few moments talking about being stretched in discipleship. In the same way that we stretch a muscle for it to get stronger, so the Lord wants to strengthen you as a disciple. However that stretching can feel like hard work - rather like when we work out a muscle and it aches afterwards! So ask one or two to share how they are being stretched in discipleship at present, and finding it good!

After this read Ephesians 3:20-21 and thank the Lord that he is the God of 'immeasurably more' and pray that each of us would grow even more as disciples through this session.

Discussion (50 mins - ie. about 10 minutes on each)

1. *M is for Mission*

Disciples of Jesus are called to show and tell of His love in word and action. In Mathew 28:18-20 Jesus invites his disciples to make more disciples. Read this passage and notice what Jesus asks us to do. Who told *you* about the love of Jesus? And who are *you* going to tell? Why do think it's important to not just talk about, but demonstrate God's love in practical, kind ways too? If time, read Matthew 25:31-46 and talk about its implications.

2. *N is for New*

While God values the old, he also loves the new. What new things is the Holy Spirit doing in you? Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and talk about the renewing work God wants to bring to people and to the world, through us. Does that excite you? As we are captured by the thought of the new 'holy city' in heaven that we will one day enjoy, so allow God to envision you for renewal here on earth, in our day. Where and how can you join in?

3. *O is for Obedience*

Obedience is highly underrated in many sectors of life today, but for followers of Jesus, obedience is basic and central to discipleship. Read the story of the calling of Simon Peter, in Luke 5:1-11 and talk about the benefits this disciple receives as a result of his obedience. What do you make of the idea, at the end of Chapter O, that maturing as a disciple is a slow work of the Holy Spirit, as we co-operate in obedience?

4. *P is for Prayer*

Prayer is communicating with God. We pray because God is real, powerful and close, and he loves to hear our prayers. Read Matthew 6:5-15, which is Jesus' basic discipleship training on prayer. In particular take note of how Jesus encourages us to pray in the Lord's Prayer. What do you notice? Do you use these themes as a springboard to further prayer? Are there some new ways to pray here?

5. *Q is for Quarrel*

This side of heaven there will be conflict. We don't go looking to create it, but there will be quarrelling. It even happens inside church sometimes. What do you make of Jesus' 4-fold process of dealing with conflict, as set out in Matthew 18:15-20? Why do you think many speak *last* with the person who's hurt them, rather than *first*? Is there someone you need to go and see to put things right?

Pray (10 mins)

End by praying. Go through the Lord's Prayer together, phrase by phrase, pausing to allow people to pray some short prayers to God. Thank God for he forgives everything, and ask him to help you forgive those who have hurt you. And don't be afraid to ask God for things: so when you get to 'give us today our daily bread' share needs and ask God to help. Also pray for loved ones who are not yet followers of Jesus. Pray for opportunities, this week, to show the love of Jesus in action, and to speak of Jesus in your words.