

A-Z of Discipleship Course

WEEK 5 - TRANSFORMATIVE DISCIPLESHIP

This week we'll be looking at further aspects of discipleship, especially focussing on how following Jesus brings transformation to us and others.

Preparation

Before you meet, read chapters R, S, T, U and V of *A-Z of Discipleship*.

Begin (10 mins)

Ensure that everyone is welcomed. Also, does anyone have any answers to prayer to share? Listen and give thanks. Ask how people found last week's session, especially the section on mission. Theologian Mike Riddell says, 'Apart from involvement in mission, the church becomes a tawdry relic; a dusty museum of religion, suitable for tourists and historians, but little else.' Do you agree?

After this read Romans 12:1-2 and ask the Lord to help everyone continue to 'be transformed' as God renews our minds, and then our hearts and wills.

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

1. *R is for Repentance*

Repent means change. We start following Jesus by repenting, and then continue to change and repent as we grow more Christ-like. Read Mark 1:14-15 and reflect on Jesus' call for people to repent. He does this because he loves us and wants good things for us. Talk about this, and how you have been changing, since starting to follow Jesus. Be open and honest.

2. *S is for Sacraments*

A sacrament is an outward sign of a visible reality. When we start following Jesus we mark it with the sacrament of baptism. Read Romans 6:3-4 and talk about what baptism stands for. Have you been baptised? If not, why not? Once we're baptised, we don't keep getting baptised as a sign of following Jesus; instead we regularly take bread and wine in Holy Communion. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Are you taking Communion? These very ordinary physical things are powerful means of us showing our love for Christ, and of him drawing close and filling us with his presence and power.

3. *T is for Trinity*

God is Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Read the 'Action' section at the end of Matthew's Chapter T, and do what it says: 'Read the story of Jesus' baptism, beginning at Matthew 3:13. Take some time, reading it slowly and a few times. Write down what you notice about the three persons of God and how they work together in this amazing story.' The Trinity work closely together, supporting and loving each other. What do you make of this, and what does this teach us about how we might thrive in our human relationships?

4. *U is for Underprivileged*

Caring for disadvantaged and underprivileged people is important to followers of Jesus, because it's important to God. Read Luke 4:16-21 and the corresponding Old Testament passage, in Isaiah 61:1-3. What does this show of God's love for those who struggle? What should disciples do?

5. *V is for Vision*

God gives vision, so we have clarity about what he's asking of us. Read Habakkuk 2:3, Proverbs 29:18 and Ephesians 1:18. Do you sense God has given you vision for your life, your family, and your work? Talk about this, and make sure later, in prayer, you ask the Lord to turn this vision into reality.

Pray (10 mins)

Now turn to prayer. Spend a few moments in stillness, asking the Lord to speak, renew and transform. Welcome the presence of the Trinity. Then give thanks to our God: for the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, making us more like Jesus, for the Father's glory. Ask for his help to change and grow, and that he will give fresh vision. In particular pray that each one will show practical care this week to people who are underprivileged.