

Walking Together

Making 21st century disciples

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Chapter 1

A vision for discipleship

Let's begin with a question. What would you say is your highest calling while you are here on earth, living your everyday life? You might express this question differently. What would be the thing you would like to be remembered for? Or perhaps even, what would you like God to know you as?

And here is another question. Was it Jesus' intention that having made the choice to believe that he is the Son of God, and having secured our place in heaven, we should go on our way to live a life of our own making? What did he want us to do with the rest of the years of our life?

In wanting to find answers to these questions, there is a clue for us in the word 'disciple'. It is not a word that we use in today's world, but those first followers of Jesus were called his disciples and he commands us to make more of them (Matt 28:19). We need to go on a journey to discover the many layers of meaning that there are around the concept of being a disciple.

On this journey we can gather an understanding of what Jesus thought his disciples would be. We can learn from Jewish culture in the first century. We can study the life of 'The Disciples' as they lived with Jesus and what they did after he had left them. We can look at the way the early church went about discipleship. What we probably can't do is gain too much understanding from looking at what currently happens in many churches today. In many places we have forgotten what it means to be a disciple and how to go about making disciples in our churches.

Trying to explain why this has happened would lead us down a complicated pathway of change in our culture and in our thinking. We will address some of the issues later. At this point it is sufficient to say that in the

western world we have been on two journeys over the last 50 years. Broadly speaking we have moved from Christendom to post Christendom and from modernism to postmodernism. In other words there was a time when our understanding, values and ways of going about our lives together as a nation were governed by Christian thinking, standards and morality. This is no longer the case. There was also a time when we looked to science to answer our questions. We believed that there was a relentless move towards making a better life for ourselves and that there were concrete answers to life's difficulties which everyone should sign up to. We are now not so sure. If something feels good to you, then it must be good. There is no one way, we can each create our own set of rights and wrongs. We are independent and the individual is paramount. The effects of these changes have affected our understanding of what it means to be a disciple.

Maybe you would like to stop reading at this point and write down what you think it means to be a disciple. How have you been living this out?



It is our understanding that discipleship is about personal transformation. It is about becoming completely who we were made to be and yet carrying the image of Jesus. Having about us his very smell! (2 Cor 2:14 -16) It is about being fully human as Jesus was human in such a way that when others come across us they bump into someone who gives them life, hope, and most of all love.

This is not a transformation that we can achieve by deciding to be like this.

Nor can we get there by self discipline and hard work. This transformation is not an outward show, but a change in the core of who we are. It affects our attitudes and expectations. Our values, those things that we count as important to us, begin to line up with those of Jesus.

Journey of change

If we are to change we have a journey to follow for which we must take responsibility. It begins with a vision; perhaps the vision is that 'I want to become more like Jesus'. Or perhaps it's about wanting to achieve some goal. Then we realize that we will need to change if we are going to get to the destination of our journey. 'I need to change, yes, I want to change. I can see what I might be like when I have made these changes'. We might be motivated by something like 'I can't bear to live another minute more like this, I must change'.

The next step is to look at what we will lose if we change. There is always some loss involved. It can feel very unsafe to move out of the place we have grown used to and are comfortable in, even if there is pain involved in staying there.

Having counted the cost of change maybe then we need to take the step of exploring how we could bring about this change and the realisation will soon dawn that we cannot do this on our own. But who can help? We will focus on the process of change later on.

Disciples are different from converts. A convert is someone who has understood that Jesus is who he said he is and has accepted their need of him. In making that change in belief they have taken the momentous first step into the kingdom of God. But that is not where it ends. 'If I am going to be a disciple of Jesus I need to take responsibility for my own growth. I have to welcome this journey of change. I need to discover what I need to do and then to take all courage and move forward'.

The journey has been likened to riding the wave, not knowing where it is going. We will learn about the nature of God's unconditional love and respond to him with a commitment to the process of my journey of change, with no strings attached. And with no promise of a wonderful outcome, but with the hope that change will happen and that ultimately it will be good.

What would inspire you to want to change? Take a look at the list below and work out what would motivate you.

Obedience to Jesus commands

God chooses to use me in partnership with him. I need to be ready.

Accessing peace and comfort by close relationship with Jesus and a desire to draw others into that.

Living God's way develops fruitfulness and is the root to abundant life and purposefulness

The closer I am to God, the more I can experience God's generosity and the more I have to give

I want to be a good advertisement for Jesus so that I can encourage others on their way towards him too

I feel responsible for the input I have to others which motivates me to be close to God.

I want to understand the truth more clearly and live it out so that I can impart the truth to others

The healthier I am the more able I would be to lead others

I hate the way I keep failing. I want to change

What else might inspire you to change?

So what would we answer to the questions at the opening of this booklet? What is our highest calling and who would we want to be known as? We would want to be known as someone who is a disciple of Jesus; someone who is learning to value the things that Jesus valued; someone who is working to see his kingdom come here on earth; someone who lives on a daily basis in an intimate relationship with Jesus, confident in his unconditional love and faithfulness. It is worth the pain of change.

The complexity of being a follower of Jesus is becoming clear. Let us take a step towards understanding more by looking at how Jesus understood discipleship.

Chapter 2

What does it mean to be a disciple?

Understanding the breadth and depth of what it means to be a disciple is quite a task. There are many things which affect our thinking. We will look at three different areas which we need to consider as we grapple with the concept of being a disciple.

- Back in the first century Jesus would have understood the word 'disciple' from his Jewish context. What did he mean when he used the word?
- We will look at how he interpreted that understanding with the group of men he gathered around him.
- He told them, as he tells us, to make disciples. How did they go about doing this when they began the early church?

Discipleship as Jesus would have known it

If the meaning of the word 'discipleship' has been lost in our culture, we at least need to look briefly at what Jesus would have understood and experienced of this concept from his Jewish context. We have found very useful information from 'That the world may know' Ministries and suggest you check their website www.followtherabbi.com.

(The following five paragraphs include material from this website.)

Jesus grew up and spent the three years of his ministry amongst people who learnt scripture by memory and debated its application with enthusiasm. This strong religious community was set in Galilee and produced devout families and vibrant synagogues that stood against the invading Hellenistic culture. Like most of his contemporaries, Jesus would have learnt the scriptures by heart and worked his way through the stages of Jewish education. Many would never have achieved the final stage of this development, but there was an intentional and organised approach to discipleship in the Jewish culture of the first century. The process highlights the central place of scripture and the interaction between knowledge and practice. There was an expectation that the student would fulfill the commandments, pursue a vocation, make their own interpretations and finally be active in teaching others. There was a very 'hands on' approach to the learning process.

Some exceptional students gained permission to study with a famous Rabbi, often living away from home. These few were called *talmidim* in Hebrew, which is translated 'disciple'. There is much more to a *talmid* than we understand from the word 'student'. A student wants to **know** what the teacher knows in order to make the grade, or to complete the class or degree or even out of respect for the teacher. A *talmid* wants to **be like** the

teacher, to become what the teacher is. Students were passionately devoted to their rabbi and noted everything he did or said. This meant the *rabbi/talmid* relationship was a very intense and personal system of education. As the rabbi lived and taught his understanding of the Scripture, his students (*talmidim*) listened and watched and imitated him so as to become like him. Eventually they would become teachers themselves, passing on a lifestyle to their own *talmidim*.

Jesus became a Rabbi in this tradition, although the term Rabbi was used more as one of respect and reverence for their teaching and life style rather than describing any position or role carried by the term. Jesus used a teaching style called *remez* meaning 'hint'. He would use part of a passage or story allowing the audience to deduce the meaning and draw their own conclusions. The use of parables was very common and sits in this teaching style. There are some 3500 parables of Rabbi's teaching still existing from the first century and Jesus' are among the best.

We will now move on to see how this background shaped the way Jesus worked with his disciples and highlight some areas that were quite different for him.

Jesus' life with the disciples

Our tendency is to look at the Gospels and superimpose our cultural ideas and values onto them. We go looking for confirmation of the way we currently do things from the text of the stories. Whilst it is impossible to look at the text in a completely objective way, we need to pull out some key areas of the way Jesus worked with the disciples and see what we can learn from these encounters.

Jesus looked for disciples

It was common practice for potential disciples to approach a Rabbi or teacher to become their student and be influenced by them in both teaching and life style. With Jesus we see this reversed. He is the one who goes looking for disciples and calls them to follow him (John 1:43) (Mark 3:13). This is true for the first twelve and then the number expands as others join in. Jesus still continues to focus a large amount of his time on his initial group of twelve. It is around the life of this inner group that the gospel writers focus much of their attention and we can draw some fascinating insights from the way they learnt together.

Jesus shared his life with the disciples

There is a very definite idea that the disciples spent a great deal of time with Jesus (Mark 3:14). This enabled them to see him in all sorts of different situations and with a whole variety of different people. They would laugh, cry, struggle, travel, and rest together. The disciples would see Jesus angry, withdrawn, homeless, tired, hungry, elated and triumphant. Over the three years they spent together they would have got to know each other really well and would have lived in close quarters as they traveled.

Jesus uses everyday encounters as learning opportunities

It is in the everyday environment that they learnt together and Jesus takes every opportunity to use circumstances that they find themselves in as teaching moments. Because Jesus' ministry was to people, it is around these people that situations unfolded. As they arrived at Peter's home his mother in law was unwell and Jesus healed her (Matt 8:14). Shortly after that they encounter a storm on the lake and Jesus stilled it. Jesus chose to talk about who he came to save as he ate with 'tax collectors and sinners', an everyday occurrence for Jesus but not for other Rabbi's of his day. They were walking in the fields on the Sabbath and picked grain to eat. This led to a confrontation and yet another teaching moment (Matt 12:1-7). There are so many of these situations where Jesus taught out of the moment that was at hand and often used very ordinary situations as great learning points for the disciples.

It is very much on the job training and feels quite far removed from our class room approach. In one instance Jesus walked nearly thirty miles one way to be in Caesarea Philippi for a lesson that fitted the location perfectly. Surely he talked with them along the way, but the whole trip seems to have been geared for one lesson that takes less than ten minutes to give (Matt.16:13 - 28).

Jesus asks many questions

As we mentioned earlier, Jesus' teaching style was often to bring the hint of a story or to allude to a well known incident, leaving his hearers to fill in the gaps and draw their own conclusions. An outworking of this style is seen in the number of questions he asks, realising that the answers we most remember are those that we deduce for ourselves. If anyone had a great deal to say then surely it was Jesus, but he chose not to give answers in many cases but simply to bring a question as the response to a situation. This got his hearers thinking for themselves and encouraged them in their ability to answer not only their own questions, but also potentially the questions of others.

Jesus expects the disciples to do what he does

Being like the rabbi is the major focus of the life of talmidim (disciples). They listen and question. They respond when questioned. Jesus intentionally chose disciples who would become like him and he took them on excursions and shared life with them until they began to be influenced by him to such a degree that they wanted to become like him. Above all of this, he empowered them specifically to do what he had been doing. Luke records one such episode where Jesus sent them out (Luke 10: 1–24) in pairs to *‘heal those who are sick and say to them the Kingdom of God is at hand’*. They discovered that not only being like their teacher is possible but doing the things he did was also possible for them, and there was great joy as they return (v17). *‘Lord even the demons are subject to us in your name’*. Jesus’ response is great and shows his delight in the fact that they had experienced the power that is available to them in his name. *‘I was watching Satan fall like lightning’*. Even in this response he did not miss the opportunity to teach them further. He explained that the real reason for rejoicing should be that their names are written in the book of life. In the Rabbinic tradition there is a very real sense that disciples will be those who eventually gather their own disciples and as they do so become rabbis in their own right. This is Jesus’ expectation for his disciples and is seen explicitly in his commissioning of them in the familiar verses at the end of Matthew’s gospel. Then Jesus came to them and said:-

‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’.
Matthew 28:18 – 20

Early church discipleship

The early church wanted to create disciples from within a pagan culture. It was a very hostile world for Christians in the early centuries after Jesus’ death. As a result, as we shall see, they devised a system which may seem to us to be very disciplined. It required a disciple to follow a clearly set out path before being fully welcomed into the community of believers. We are increasingly operating in a pagan society and should be learning to be intentional about our discipleship process. We are not suggesting that we follow exactly the story you are about to read, but rather to take the principles from it and find a culturally relevant way of doing this today.

It is a short journey in both geographical distance and time from Jesus death and resurrection to the continuing development of his kingdom in the hands of the early church. As best as they knew how, the disciples continued to live out what Jesus had taught them. Let us look briefly at what

they did and try once again to understand the key elements in their original setting rather than look for confirmation of our particular ideas.

We are indebted to Alan Krieder and his research into the history of the early church and could think of no better way to look at how discipleship was practiced in this early church setting than to use the following story of Cyprian as a point of learning and reflection. For a fuller understanding of Alan's work see:

The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom published by Continuum International Publishing Group - Trinity (1 Nov 1999)

Expectation of a change in behaviour

Let's ask the question how did someone become a Christian in the third century? We will look at the story of a Christian leader called Cyprian. By his early thirties Cyprian had achieved his professional goals; he was rich and successful. But he was unhappy. His life was unsatisfying. He called it "darkness and gloomy night". He had superb food, elegant clothes, admiring friends, but he felt empty. Worse, he felt himself to be a slave, addicted to luxurious living. But Cyprian had a friend, Caecilianus, who was said to be a Christian. Caecilianus was as happy as Cyprian was frustrated.

Cyprian, accompanied by his sponsor Caecilianus, went early in the morning to be interviewed by Christian teachers. The teachers asked Caecilianus whether Cyprian was a suitable candidate for Christian teaching. Then they asked Cyprian about his lifestyle; was he actively involved in violence, sexual immorality, activities associated with paganism? If Cyprian had been involved in any of these, the teachers would have told him to go away, change the aspect of his life that was unacceptable to Christian teaching, and then come back later to apply again. They did this because they believed that only people who were living like Christians could understand Christian teaching. For them living took precedence over thinking.

This reversal of living over thinking is rather a shock to many of us as our focus has been very much on thinking/ believing the right things rather than on behavioural change.

Once he was accepted for teaching, Cyprian entered into a process of initiation that could last for a number of years, a period of teaching called the "catechumenate." Hopefully the catechumenate would culminate in his

baptism. During this period Cyprian could go to church, but only to the first part of the service He could only stay for the reading of the Bible and the sermon. He and the other catechumens (the people receiving teaching) had to leave before the prayers and the communion. The Church held Cyprian at arms length, powerful, rich and well-connected though he was. Cyprian was a catechumen, but he was still an outsider. The Church didn't say, "Well, he comes from a good family. Let's give him a fast track to membership." But the Church taught Cyprian. Together with other catechumens every morning before work, Cyprian came to the house where the church met. He came with his sponsor Caecilianus, whom he called "the friend and comrade of his soul" - a great commitment of time on the part of both Cyprian and his sponsor.

What Cyprian learnt in these sessions was a 'new narrative'. The story of the Bible and of Jesus replaced the tales of gods and goddesses which he had learned from his parents. He also learned new ways of living. He received the teachings of Jesus as a rule of life. He probably memorized these and also learnt how to apply them to life. He would have looked at how Christians deal with the addictions of sex, the occult, materialism and violence. How they respond when they are persecuted or interrogated. Cyprian learnt a set of priorities in relating to poor people that would have seemed odd to his upper class family. It is reported that "as a catechumen, Cyprian loved the poor."

*You didn't think yourself into a new kind of living;
you lived yourself into a new kind of thinking*

Through this process the Church was socializing him into the lifestyle and habits of an alternative community. Cyprian could not move towards baptism unless his sponsor thought that he was ready and could answer searching questions posed by his teachers. The question was not, "Does Cyprian understand Christian doctrine?" Rather the questions were, "Has he lived a good life while a catechumen, honoured the widows and visited the sick? Has he done every kind of good work?" Only if his sponsor Caecilianus could answer positively could Cyprian move towards baptism.

In the final weeks before baptism, two things happened. Cyprian went through a series of daily exorcisms with the churches exorcist. We can imagine that the exorcists named Cyprian's addiction to luxury and glamour as a spiritual force and cast it out. The Church's catechists taught Cyprian indispensable things that they had saved until now: the beliefs of the church, based on the local creed; the basic prayer of the church, the Lord's Prayer. Cyprian memorized these. He also tried to understand them.

We can see that the early church didn't start with theology. It ended with theology which made sense of the lifestyle of the resident alien that the candidates had already learned to live.

Cyprian's account indicates that it was deeply empowering. He had despaired that he could ever live as a lover of the poor, as someone who was free of the materialism of his culture. He had thought that his addictions were incurable. But now, thanks to "the water of new birth" and the work of the Holy Spirit, the impossible had become possible.

Christians were known for the way they lived

Alan Kreider quotes an Epistle to Diognetus, (mid second century) to show how effective the catechumenate process was in creating Christian communities that lived a very different life to those around them.

This was a good life, creating healthy communities that could be good news to others. Christians were confident that their life in Christ provided 'soul' for their civilization. They had no doubt that others were attracted, because the persecuted Christian movement was growing at an average of 40 per cent per decade.

'I believe today we are as powerfully shaped by the pagan society around us as people were in Cyprian's day; our values, instincts and drives are thoroughly shaped by television and advertising. The advertisers want us to be addicts. We may imagine ourselves to be free and may talk about the "free world", but we are as enslaved as Cyprian was. How are post modern Christians, in the face of this, to impart gospel values, the teachings of Jesus, and genuine freedom?' *Alan Kreider*

So... what are we saying might be key ingredients for good disciple making?

Jesus and the early church teach us that there is a need for radical life style change, which takes time and attention.

There will be progress through various growth stages as a normal part of the Christian experience, including an increasing responsibility for others.

The discipleship path is one that is shared.

The involvement of a key person, a mentor, is a major consideration.

The learning in a discipling relationship is often mutual and the growth occurs for both parties.

Learning takes place in an interactive, question based way, where a disciple takes responsibility for their own maturity and seeks answers to questions for themselves.

'They marry, like everyone else, and they beget children, but they do not cast out their offspring. They share their food with each other, but not their marriage bed . . . They love all people, and by all are persecuted. They are unknown, and still they are condemned; they are put to death, and yet they are brought to life. They are poor, and yet they make many rich . . . They are reviled, and yet they bless; when they are affronted, they still pay due respect . . . To put it simply: What the soul is in the body that Christians are in the world'.

Discipleship happens in the context of everyday life and involves everyday situations.

Being part of a church community was not optional but essential to the discipleship process.

The shared lives demonstrated by Christian communities made them challenging but attractive places to be.

Disciples find their own disciples, with the goal that the disciple would overtake their teacher in all ways, growing up to maturity. Throughout a life time of discipleship there would be a series of these relationships

Chapter 3

Our culture and discipleship

The way we think and behave is being strongly influenced by the culture we live in. This is complicated for us by the huge changes that we have experienced in the last 30 years in our culture, which the church has often struggled to keep up with. Our ideas about discipleship have been affected by these changes. It is almost as if culture creates the invisible bars of the cage that we live in, unnoticed until we crash against them. Then we do notice where the differences are in the beliefs and values in our culture from those of Jesus.

So how has our understanding of the way to live as a disciple of Jesus been affected by our culture?

We realize that we are writing this to readers who are potentially in two different cultures. The sociologists tell us that those who are in their late thirties and above will have been strongly influenced by modernism. These people grew up in Christendom largely surrounded by Christian values. Readers who are younger than this have been far more influenced by post-modern ideas many of which assist the Gospel. Discipling in an increasingly pagan world does bring its challenges.

Where have we come from?

Although our culture has been changing, we are still living under the

influence of what is known as the Enlightenment – the way culture has been for over two hundred years. We will try to give an overview of the influences that have shaped our thinking on discipleship. How much of this do you recognize as being a part of your church experience? How familiar are these ways of thinking to you when we discuss discipleship?

We have focused on five aspects of modernism which we identify as strongly affecting our view of discipleship.

Living compartmentalized lives

Just as we study English and History at school as two separate subjects, we have tended to compartmentalize other parts of our lives. We tend to see our spiritual life as separate from our everyday living and put religion in a box. One way of recognizing this dividing up of our lives can be seen in how little support there often is for those who are working in everyday jobs. There are few sermons preached about the work place or prayer support given or thoughts shared about how Christians can influence their work place. This separation is a very different pattern of thought from the world Jesus lived in.

As disciples of Jesus we recognize that Jesus has the right to be the Lord of our total lives. We are to live every part of our life with him in mind. He is interested in all that we do, all day and every day, not just when we are doing ‘Christian’ activity or thinking about him, but in everything. We can serve him just as well while we are at work as we can in the church. We need to work against the way our culture tends to keep our lives in separate boxes, work, family, leisure etc.

Separating evangelism and discipleship

In the same way, we have made evangelism into a separate area which has often been seen as being in opposition to discipleship. We are either a church community strong in evangelism or strong in discipleship. Discipleship has been thought of as more closely linked to pastoral care and yet the reality is that discipleship occurs most profoundly and readily in the context of evangelism. The two are inextricably linked – being witnesses to the gospel is something that disciples are called to do and discipling unbelievers to the point of commitment to Jesus, is also part of the journey towards God.

A key component in our own discipleship is the discipling of others, seeing others coming into a relationship with Jesus and going on from that point as new Christians. As new believers grapple with issues, they enable us to

grow along with them as we seek to help them. As we are vulnerable to God and to others, especially those who are new believers, we will have issues highlighted from which we will then have to deal with in our own walk with God. Together we change to live a lifestyle worthy of the Kingdom of God and we do that within a discipling community of God's people. That community is responsible for integrating new believers. They can then go on their own journey of change, with new priorities, new life style and new behavior. Jesus often reveals himself to us through the words of others and their actions towards us. This was the way he saw change in his own disciples. He lived with them and used informal situations as opportunities for learning and change for his disciples.

Christianity based on Knowledge

Each culture reads and interprets the Bible through its own cultural lens. Over the last few decades we have read the Bible in the UK under the influence of our enlightenment based culture which has been dominated by a scientific world view. In our world, facts, information and knowledge have been king. Our Christian faith has been taught and lived out in this context.

Some of us have thought that our discipleship has been about us learning the right things. We are disciples because we have learnt all that we need to 'know' about being a Christian. And we have communicated our faith as a series of propositions that need to be understood and received as true. As a result we have not focused on the experiential side of our faith, or the relational dimensions. Experiencing a relationship with God has not been as important as understanding who he is. Using our imagination to build our relationship and deepen our experience has been looked on as being 'fluffy' and dangerous when compared to solid knowledge. We have wanted to be certain of the truth, which is important of course, but have lost out on relationship and intimacy as a result.

Objectivity has been the key and we have exchanged community for formal learning situations. Perhaps the Sunday morning sermon has been the central point of interest in our church. We have trained and chosen leadership on the basis of the gift of teaching – a good teacher has attracted large numbers of Christians to their church. We have lost the sense of shared experience and our communities have revolved around meetings. We think growth happens as we obtain more knowledge rather than seeing

that real growth and development happens within the context of mutual relationships.

Emphasis on results

Our culture has led us to measure success in terms of numbers and results. They need to be measurable. We feel we are doing well if our churches are growing numerically. Numerical growth is our measure of success. Growth is a dynamic of God's kingdom, but numerical size is only one measure. We have exchanged wanting large numbers for seeing the value of real depth in individuals and community. Large numbers make us feel comfortable, but can hide immaturity in the believers.

'Discipling involves a close personal relationship with Jesus, but is always set in the context of a discipling community.'

Sylvia Collinson - Making disciples

This has affected our attitude to evangelism. Because we measure results in numerical growth we have wanted to focus on seeing people saved, counting the responses, rather than looking to make disciples of Jesus. When objectivity is the key (because in scientific research the observer cannot be allowed to effect the outcome) it produces a sense of me doing this to you rather than a shared experience which has a more subjective feel to it. This thinking has affected the way we go about our evangelism. 'I have the knowledge, you need it and I am going to give it to you'.

For our lives to be shaped and formed by each other the level of relationship needs to be such that we cannot hide or run away or move on to new relationships when the going gets real and probably tough. When the main expression of Christian community has been the large gatherings where teaching is central, little if any depth of relationship has been possible. The resulting quality of discipleship has been limited.

On the other hand where small groups have been encouraged, these have developed the same methodology as the large group settings. There has been an emphasis on learning information rather than on encouraging vulnerability and openness, which are the keys to discipleship within a community. Even these groups have tended to be too large in themselves. Anything beyond eight or so people discourages honest discipleship.

Although we are living in a time of constant change, it is possible to see some of the emerging trends around us. Some of these are encouraging to us as we try to live as disciples, although others do work against us.

Where are we now?

The new religion of consumerism

We are learning that post modernity is being built on the foundations of modernity and young people are influenced from these roots. You can see this most clearly in the development of consumerism as an outworking of individualism.

Bishop Graham Cray identifies that consumerism has become the new religion. We can see that the new place of worship is the shopping centre; our identity is based in what we own and how we look; we derive comfort and a boost when we are low from what we buy; our purpose is to ensure that we earn enough money to consume at a level that satisfies us.

What will it take for us to wean ourselves off consumerism as we become disciples of Jesus? Although our young people might not warm to the disciplined approach of the early church, it is probable that some degree of accountability will need to be in place for this to be effective.

Our society emphasizes individualism

As our communities fragment due to a very mobile population and to pressure on time, we have become increasingly individualistic. We think we need to be independent of others to survive. We give each other permission to create our own beliefs and moral code. Each person works out their own truth and we are very tolerant of each others conclusions

‘The goal of biblical conversion is not to save souls apart from history but to bring the kingdom of God into the world with explosive force.... conversion in the new testament can only be understood from the perspective of the kingdom of God.’

Jim Wallace

provided they are not imposed upon us.

Then we find in the church an emphasis on each individual’s relationship with God. We no longer think of ourselves as a community reflecting the very nature of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit in community together. The individuals see that they need to work out their own relationship with God on their own. They have their preferences about how they like church

and move around to find it.

Even though this is what we experience, it is emerging that young people want to belong to a real community. They are creating this through the internet, by texting and by 'hanging out' together in pubs and clubs. It might not be the way community has been recognized, based on the family, but these communities are real to young people. When Jesus is part of these communities there becomes an opportunity for discipleship through close relationships.

Permission based leadership

Never in our recent history has authority had such a bad press. Many of those in positions of leadership and authority are mocked and ridiculed rather than being respected because of their position and role. Along with this has come a distrust of institutions, unless of course it is possible to belong and participate in the institution. There needs to be a sense of ownership by those involved.

On the other hand where authority is based on relationship, people will willingly give authority to those they know and have grown to trust and respect. Laurence Singlehurst suggests that this can change the nature of leadership in the church. With more relational leadership, seeking to get everyone involved, there is a greater possibility of church becoming a real community.

Intolerance of religion, but acceptance of spirituality

At the same time as there is an increased intolerance of institutionalized religion, there is an increase in the desire and pursuit of spirituality. Conflicts in the name of religion around the world have caused so much pain and disillusionment. There is a fear of fundamentalism, but a desire to seek happiness and help with many of the problems that we all live with. One avenue of help has been the growing numbers of alternative spiritualities that are available through the New Age movement. For many it is more acceptable to turn to these therapies and ancient spiritualities than to ask for help from the church.

This may seem to be a threat to the church, but could also be a positive challenge for Christians to offer not religion, but the power of the gospel. Jesus sent his disciples out into a pagan world and gave them their mission strategy in Luke 10. It is built on relationship, a loving meeting of people's needs and a witness to the power of God to change lives. We need to learn how to relate with our message to this changing culture, but we can see that many are seeking solutions and comfort through a spiritual route – and we do have answers for them.

Living within our culture is very challenging for those of us who seek to be disciples of Jesus. Here are some pointers to think about:

We are to be 'in the world, but not of it' John 17:15-17

We need to live within our culture, but be aware of the pressures that the culture puts on us

As culture is changing, we need to be prepared to change the way we express the gospel and how we choose to be 'church'

We can build on the desire to recreate community amongst young people. We can embrace the changes in leadership styles and work to eradicate 'religion' from the church

Chapter 4

The Process of discipleship

We have tried to highlight some of the factors that have influenced our understanding of the concept of discipleship. Culture does have its effects, but of itself is neutral. Modernity and post modernity both have helpful contributions to make to the way we go about living as followers of Jesus. Equally we are unhelpfully influenced by other aspects of culture. Our challenge is to be thoughtful and reflective as we engage with our world.

Before we get into the detail of how we go about being disciples of Jesus, let us remind ourselves what we mean by discipleship. We have been building the definition over the previous chapters and will now try to sum it up. In chapter one, we saw that discipleship is about our personal transformation, becoming completely who we were made to be and increasingly carrying the image of Jesus. In chapter two we discovered that disciples of Jesus recognise his right to be Lord of every aspect of their lives. We saw that the process was to be undertaken in the context of relationships and that there would be progressive stages in our growth.

Now we can come to some sort of definition of discipleship, although we will continue to build on this as we explore further.

The changes in our beliefs come about as we learn all we can know about our God and how he wants us to live. These beliefs are tested through our experience and checked out by our contact with the beliefs of others. They lead to a change in our values – those things that are important to us. We begin to value the same things as Jesus showed us that he valued.

The result of these changes can be seen as changed behaviours. The choices we make about what we do and how we respond to life are influenced by both our beliefs and our values. Often we do not realise that this is so, but the process of discipleship will lead to obvious changes in the way we live our lives. It is these life style changes that are observed by others and should mark us out as being different. For example, Jesus said in John 13:35 that others would know that we are his disciples by the love we have for one another.

Becoming Disciples

We are ready now to look at the process of discipleship – how we can become people who love God, love one another and love our neighbours.

Discipleship is like a buffet meal. The table is laid out with a spread of

different plates laden with food. Some plates have food that is good for you. They might not look attractive but you need them for health. Others look good, taste good and will also build you up. Still other plates are laden with food which you should avoid if you want to stay healthy. Your job is to choose the right food at the right time to enable you to be healthy and to grow. And of course there are those of us who are a bit faddy about our food and others who are up for eating anything. Some like one thing some like another.

Or you could say discipleship is a bit like an adventure playground. There are all sorts of different activities, some of which are easy for you, others are fun, but others require persistence and perseverance. They require practice and repetition before you can say you have mastered them. On a sunny day the adventure seems attractive and achievable. In the wind and ice you will need character and strength even to go there, let alone have the courage to try those things that stretch you. The good thing about the adventure playground of our lives is that things which seem impossible when we are younger become more possible as we get older if we have submitted to the process of discipleship. Experience and perseverance help the process even as our physical strength reduces.

Active participation

Although we can trust that God is at work in us, disciples are people who are actively involved in the process. It starts with an understanding that change is necessary at every level; in the way we think, our attitudes, our priorities, our choices and our activity.

Disciples are willing to learn and to change. Our willingness is all that is needed for the Holy Spirit to teach us and to mould us into the likeness of Christ. He will often use others in this process and we need to be willing to receive from them. We need to be actively involved with sitting at the table and choosing and eating what is in front of us. We need to enter the adventure on a daily basis whatever the weather or the things we are experiencing and take part in all.

This begins with a commitment to Jesus which is affirmed every day as we live to serve him and choose to be disciples. We are disciples in the context of our daily lives and circumstances. We are also living within our

Discipleship is the process by which our belief system is rewritten and our values are changed through an experiential encounter with God, both by revelation and through our life's experiences.

culture and should be fully engaged with it so that we can live as Christians in a way that is relevant and appropriate for our time.

What does your active participation in the process of discipleship mean for you?

A willingness to learn

A willingness to change

A willingness to receive from others

A willingness to do those things which are helpful and to stop doing those things which are unhelpful

What will help us?

Spiritual Disciplines

Spiritual disciplines are the activities we can do to provide us with the food we need for our souls, to develop us into fully mature disciples of Jesus. They are called disciplines because that is just what they are. In our picture of the meal table, these are the plates of food which are there every day. We might not like them at times or even find them a bit repetitive, but they are essential for health. We need to make a choice to continue with these disciplines even when we don't feel like it or perhaps get much reward from doing them.

Of course there are other times when we receive so much from God during these activities that we are hungry for more and it is not hard to motivate ourselves. But come rain or shine, whatever we are going through, these activities lead us to a place where we can be open to God, where he can teach us and give us revelation about himself or our situation. As a result we find that we are able to do things which at first seemed impossible. We can begin to 'pray without ceasing' or 'bless those who curse us' or 'put aside our anger' or whatever seemingly impossible task we are called to.

'By 'disciplines' we understand consciously undertaken or chosen activities, specifically relevant to growth and attainment in the spiritual life, that enable us to do what we cannot do by direct effort. For example, Jesus' encouragement to the disciples in Matthew 26:41' Dallas Willard 'The Great Omission'

If you've not been into spiritual disciplines before, this list may seem

And the purpose of this adventure....?

We will become more Christ-like.

We are more healed and more fruitful.

We are more able to receive God's love and to live from that place of security

We can participate in building his kingdom

daunting and impossible. Or perhaps you are tempted to rush into a programme of hyper spiritual performance. Getting started is about choosing one of the disciplines and learning how to become accustomed to it. You could do some research by finding out what resources are available to help you; Bible notes, a book on fasting or silence, a group to join. Or just get going by setting low targets and building towards the goal you have in mind. At first, five minutes of silence seems a long time and filled with your thoughts about your 'to do' list or a situation you are worried about. Eventually you may find a five day silent retreat a wonderfully uplifting experience.

Serving others

Using our gifts to serve others could be thought of as a spiritual discipline. This aspect of being a disciple is of great value. We have each uniquely been given gifts which we are to use and develop in the 'Family Business' of building the Kingdom of God here on earth. As we commit ourselves to serving others with our time, talents and resources we will be challenged to overcome selfishness and to take risks. Putting our time and energy into others is a helpful antidote to consumerism.

Do we really have to go?

Part of our service is to be obedient to God in loving our neighbours. One outworking of this love is to want to introduce them to Jesus. He told us to go and make disciples. He gave us a pattern for doing that when he sent out his disciples with instructions. Look in Luke 10 to find Jesus' mission strategy for the disciples. We must find ways to do this which are relevant to our culture and time.

Keeping our motivation for this can be difficult, especially as times get harder and Christians are increasingly marginalised. We need each other to 'spur us on'. We need to help each other out, through support and prayer, being interested and involved with each others' friends and family.

Our thinking about the 'how' of mission should be continually changing as

things change around us. For example, many Christians do not know their neighbours where they live, but know their work colleagues very well. How can we support one another as we seek to love those at our work place, to serve them and to introduce them to Jesus?

Learn to be obedient to God

All this could be summed up in one phrase ‘learning to be obedient to God’. This is a life long learning experience and we are going to need help along the way, God’s help and the help of others.

Who is it who has set the table for us or laid out the adventure playground?

Use this?

You must be joking.

Who could find comfort

In such a bitter water?

Rather, let this cup

Pass from me.

This cannot be your will.

Why should life be

Like this?

Why me?

Why not?

And anyway,

There’s not much choice.

It’s this or nothing.

Use it for a well,

And see what happens

Worship

In whatever way you choose, give God the honour and respect that he is due

Taking communion

Following Jesus’ instruction in Matt 26:26-28

Prayer

Withdraw and communicate with the Lord

Silence

Rest in the Lord’s presence, to wait on him

Bible reading

Studying the scriptures for understanding

Meditating

Spending time with a few verses to allow God to speak to you through them.

Fasting	Going without food or something else for a period of time
Meeting together	Gathering with other believers for a variety of purposes
Spiritual journal	Recording the events in your life which have impact on your spiritual life
Retreating	Taking extended time out to withdraw and to seek the Lord
Giving	Finances, time or resources to others
Serving	Doing practical things for others
Relaxation	Taking time out to have fun and relax
And many others . . .	

In the heat of struggle
 It is not sweetness which refreshes,
 But the astringent bitterness
 Which sets the teeth on edge.
 Drink deep and find
 Mysterious refreshment.

Ann Lewin

Taken from Psalm 84:5 - 6

Becoming part of a discipling community

One thing that is helpful is to make this journey accompanied by others. Becoming a member of a small group or cell does make a difference to our discipling journey. Why is this so?

A discipling community, simply put, is a group of believers who understand the concept of discipleship and are seeking to live together as disciples of Jesus. Jesus of course created a discipling community with his first disciples. We might not be able to live together so intensely, but we can create a community of real relationships which is marked by honest, trusting, loving relationships – a safe place to take risks.

This community will value growth into maturity of its members, so there

will be time prioritised for one another and a healthy accountability. Individuals will be encouraged to know their gifts and to make their contribution with confidence not only within the community, but in evangelism, in the workplace and in relationships. Outreach will be a natural part of a discipling community and an openness to welcome new people in.

Discipleship in small groups

Small groups that have discipleship on the agenda are set up to encourage a set of values that are biblically based. The way the meeting is run each week will encourage these kingdom values to become part of the lives of group members. The community of the group deepens over time and there is a very real possibility of developing honest relationships where issues can surface and be dealt with.

The support and encouragement of a loving community helps us to be open and face difficult areas. Hearing one another's stories and learning from older Christians sets us up for growth. Worship and prayer are part of the community's life together. Both help us to lead our lives with God at the centre.

Together we have opportunities to serve, using our gifts both within the community and for our 'neighbours', often encouraging us out of our comfort zone to risk doing something we wouldn't do on our own. Leadership can be developed in these small groups which allows for new small groups to come into being as the numbers involved increase. The same set of values permeates the new groups and there can be an on going expectation

It is God who forms us – and our job is to respond to his leading. Romans 8 v29 says that we are predestined to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus. We cannot do that ourselves. It has to be the on going work of the Holy Spirit in us. We need to give him permission and to make choices to respond to our circumstances in a way that does give him that permission.

Human tools – our context and circumstances. Most of what happens to us in our lives is not in our control, but everything we experience can be used to build Christ-likeness in us. Our work, our relationships, our experiences all have an important part to play. We need to be fully engaged in our culture and in our world. We like the following poem as it encourages us to approach difficulties in life with the heart of a disciple.

of discipleship.

Each one of us has a unique journey of discipleship. There are no rules about the route we should take or the order in which we should tackle things. Being part of a small group which is its self part of the discipling community of a church is possibly the best environment for our discipleship to occur. There is however one more factor in this scenario. We will find we make more progress if we can meet regularly with a trusted friend where we can be honest and feel accepted. In the next chapter we will look at the detail of how this could work.

Chapter 5

The mentoring relationship

In our experience, one of the most effective ways that the world's values are unearthed and replaced by the values we see in Jesus is through one to one relationships. These unique relationships are based on us taking a right responsibility for each others growth. Let us take some time to explore together some of the things that need to be in place for these relationships to work.

Developing Kingdom people

First we need an understanding of where we are headed. Romans 12 verses 1 and 2 have always been a challenge. *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.'*

The goal of our discipling relationships is to see the kingdom of God come in both our lives as we share together. This happens as the verses above

suggest - as our 'minds are renewed'. We may think that this is something which happened to us at the time we became Christians, but there is a definite sense from these verses that this is an ongoing process.

We can fall all too easily into a trap - we do not need to put effort into our ongoing discipleship because we are saved by grace. It can seem like a denial of the grace that we have received. The truth is that grace is not opposed to effort but to earning. Where our effort is driven by a desire to earn greater favour with God, then it is misguided. If however our effort is driven by a desire to live more out of the values of his kingdom so that we might represent him better in our everyday lives, then that is a completely different matter. We should be aspiring to this. In this sense the verses in Romans 12 have a very active outworking. We are choosing, with our minds, to no longer conform to the pattern of this world but we are looking to develop kingdom ways of thinking.

The mentoring relationship

Many of us have found that in our desire to become kingdom people it has been a great help (and privilege) to find a series of others who will join us on our journey for periods of time. Proverbs 27:17 says '*As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another*'.

This relationship has been about creating a safe place of unconditional love where healing, sustaining and growing can take place. Those involved can see the potential in the other and want to see them reach their potential. It can begin with an initial nurture period and lead on to an on going process of growth as we seek to mentor another.

There are some issues which need to be thought through as we approach this relationship.

Making disciples who follow our example

We see Jesus calling his disciples to follow him "*Come, follow me,*" Jesus said, "*and I will make you fishers of men*" (Matthew 4:19). Many of us would think that this is fine for Jesus but not something that we would want to say about ourselves. It sounds very presumptuous of us to think that any one would want to follow us. Jesus was the son of God so it was only right that the disciples should follow him. How could we possibly ask any one to follow our example when we are so aware of our faults and shortcomings? However we see that it was exactly Jesus' intention that others would not only follow him but follow his disciples too. Why else would he be saying '*I will make you fishers of men?*'

If you are still uncomfortable with the idea of people following you, let's

look at how Paul deals with this. He holds out his life as a model (tupos) for others to follow. In 1 Corinthians 11:1 he says quite simply *'Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ'*. We can see that he is quite clear that he expects others to imitate him. Was he just special and able to do this? Did he assume that he would be the only model that people followed? As we read 1 Thessalonians 1:6 and 7 we see that not only did he see himself as a model, but he also expected those who imitated him to be imitated by others. *'You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word with much tribulation, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.'* So this appears to be quite definite. Not only does Paul know that others will imitate him, but he sees that this process of imitation will ripple out beyond him. It is important to note that in both of these cases he is careful to point out that there are two influencing factors. He not only points to himself but also to Jesus, hence the phrase 'us and the Lord'. So it seems that despite our reluctance and often great fear that others will imitate us, it is an expected outcome of our discipleship.

The people potential

One of the things that is most thrilling is seeing people reach their potential. We meet people who are on 'tick over' who we can see are designed to be a racing car but have settled for being a taxi. There is nothing wrong with the taxi work they do, but it somehow just doesn't add up for them. Have you had these types of conversation? Jesus words from John 10:10 come to mind. *'I came that they might have life and have it abundantly'*. It appears for many that the earlier part of the verse is truer, that *'the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy'*. We want to see the plans of the enemy thwarted and the abundant life that Jesus offers rise up and bring the person to fulfill all that God has in mind for them. Seeking God, asking him to reveal the person's hidden potential and then working with them to see this dynamic life released is a great privilege. Many of those who we disciple in this way will out run us. We cannot be in this for our own glory but simply to see them flourish. Once again we need to follow Paul's encouragement to *'regard one another as more important than yourself.'*

Discovering and applying Gods truth

Much of our focus on truth has been around its discovery rather than its application. This has led to what can be described as a 'theory only' version of our Christian faith. We have spent considerable amounts of time and energy in pursuit of truth but little in seeing it worked out in our lives. With this in mind as we engage in mentoring relationships it is essential that we ask the vital question; quite simply 'so what?' This brings

our theoretical conversations to focus and application. Let's take an example of a common area in discipleship, our identity. We can study our bibles and talk about how we are to find our value and identity in Christ, but for many this is a concept that is hard to grapple with. We can learn the appropriate verses and paste them in prominent places around the house, but maybe this is only the beginning of the journey. So how can we help someone work this truth into their lives? In my experience when we ask the 'so what' question around this key issue we discover that an

Practical objectives of a discipleship relationship:

Understanding God's truth

Practical impact on lifestyle:

Belonging to a Community

Being ready to serve

existing belief system needs dismantling to allow the new truths to be integrated.

The impact

Asking the 'so what' question presupposes an outcome and this outcome should demonstrate itself in a changed life style. This life style will of course vary from individual to individual but as we discussed earlier will have a number of common components. What determines our style of life is the choices we make in any given situation and it is the sum of these choices that accumulate to create the environment we live in. There has been something of a disconnection here which needs to be re addressed in

The means of the mentoring relationship:

Informal learning

An impartation of a kingdom lifestyle based on modelling, explaining and challenging.

Following an example

Asking questions

Patently journeying alongside

Encouragement to apply knowledge to every area of our lives

Accountability

our thinking.

Our British culture largely determines that faith is a private matter and

should be kept that way. From this premise we have put our faith in a separate box to the rest of our lives and it is not expected that the fact that we are a Christian will make a significant difference to the way we live. It will probably affect what we do on a Sunday morning and possibly one evening in the week but will not generally be evident in many other areas. We have separated our faith from our lives. James has something to say about this; *'faith if it has no works is dead, being by itself.'* James 2:17. It would appear he encountered a similar problem. He goes on to say, *'But some may well say, "you have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works and I will show you my faith by my works"'. The fruit of our faith is seen as it informs our choices and so determines our actions. Just to make sure we have got the point, he goes onto say that 'faith without works is useless'!* Most of us need the support of an relationship of accountability to encourage and enable our faith to bear fruit and make a difference to the way we live.

Do I have to belong?

Our mentoring relationships need to be earthed in the context of the Christian community. This is essential for a number of reasons. In the first place we are called to demonstrate Gods love to the world by the way that we love one another (John 13:35). Without being a part of a Christian community in relationship with other believers, we cannot fulfill this commandment. Also our spiritual growth and indeed all other areas of our growth are outworked in the context of our relationships.

How many times have you heard it said that this particular group or organization would be great if it wasn't for the people! It is precisely for this reason that we are called to live out our faith in community. This is the crucible where our faith is refined, where forgiveness, long suffering, patience, kindness and a whole load of other things are tackled and worked through. This is the very context in which we are called to learn to love one another. It is out of these relationships that we will review and revisit our choices and actions as we are mentoring one another. The love that we learn to demonstrate in this setting is sacrificial and so emulates the very love that God demonstrates to us. So our Christian communities really do act as the hot houses for our growth and are indispensable in the process of discipleship.

Ready to serve

As Kingdom people we are called to live out the values of the kingdom. It is these values being lived out that are evidence of our salvation. If our lives do not demonstrate an increasing desire to live out these values then we must question whether we bear the name of Jesus and consider our-

selves his followers. Jesus himself made the cost of being a disciple very clear to his followers, *'he who does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me'* (Matt10:38) It is not exactly a hip advertising slogan for a contemporary group.

We need to remember that we have been called to a life of service; to serve Jesus as our Lord, to serve our fellow brothers and sisters in the Christian community and our world. Many of us enjoy the idea of a future in heaven and would like to skip the bit between then and now. We are however called to live in the expectation of that future and be 'in training for reigning' in the meantime. Jesus teaches us to pray *'your Kingdom come'* (Matthew 6:9) and as we do, he sees us as agents for that incoming kingdom.

We have found that the best way to ensure these kingdom values are lived out and that we don't settle for second best is to be accountable to someone for the way we live them out. They have permission to challenge us and encourage our ongoing discipleship.

It's all in the mind

We should round off this section back where we started with Romans 12. We live our lives in our heads. Our vision of ourselves and the world in which we live is contained there. As such, we all see things slightly differently. In fact it is remarkable how different our perception is. We have learnt to interpret the world that we inhabit through filters that have been put in place as we have grown and developed. Many of these are good but many are not. Romans 12 says that these patterns in our minds need to be transformed and renewed. This is an area we will pick up on a little later but for now we just need to highlight that these patterns have been developed by a multitude of experiences and circumstances. As such it will probably take new experiences and circumstances to help the transformation process that the writer to the Romans encourages.

Chapter 6

Making the relationship work

How do I mentor someone?

We need to recognize that each of us is on our own journey of growth. As such we will all be starting from different points and traveling at different speeds. With this in mind, what we offer here are some principles that we have found helpful and could help you as you encourage someone in their spiritual growth and development. You may read some of the things we write in this section and say “I could never do it like that” which is fine, but don’t just leave it there. Take a few moments to reflect and ask how you would tackle the situation. We are proposing here some principles that you might like to adopt or rather adapt into your situation and we hope that they will give you an idea of some of the components that are helpful in a mentoring type relationship.

Who should mentor?

A mentor can be someone who is further on in the faith journey who is respected and good to be with. The discipleship relationship is always a two way process. By this we mean that we are going to learn and grow together. I will influence you and you will also influence me, but the focus will be on the one who has asked to be mentored.

Another way of setting this up is with a peer, someone at the same stage of life and growth. Setting the goal that we are going to grow together in our relationship with God and others is key. Whoever you are meeting with, the relationship needs to be real, marked by honesty and vulnerability and appropriate to the stage of life you are in. It is helpful to choose someone of the same sex.

Choosing a mentor

How do I know who to ask to be my mentor and how do they know wheth-

er this is something they should be doing? There are some helpful principles, the first of which is to pray about it. Opening up your choice of person to God and waiting for his answer must be foundational.

Having prayed, you are looking for someone who you can be open with and who you respect. There is no point in choosing a person who you need to perform for or who you won't listen to. You might want to grow in a certain area, so looking for a person who has gifts and experience in that area makes sense. Mostly you want to approach someone who you like, who you 'click' with, who you will enjoy spending time with.

As a mentor it is always good to wait for an invitation to come from the other person, and then you know they will be open to you. Check that you are not going to say yes because you are flattered by the invitation. You will not be able to sustain the commitment if that is your motivation. Time is also a factor in your decision. You will need to meet on a regular basis for a while. It is not worth starting if you don't have time for the relationship. You will also need to know that you are going to enjoy spending time with this person. If they drain you it will not be long before you will find excuses for not being with them.

Creating a safe place

We need to set some boundaries that will act as a frame work in which we can operate and feel safe. These do not have to be highly detailed or over restrictive but it will help if we can agree on this.

Confidentiality

Its good to agree on things being confidential, but equally there may be some things that are shared which will need to be taken to another person. This needs talking through and agreeing.

Where we meet.

What meeting place would help us to relax and encourage us to be open?

How often and how long

Setting a time frame is important. Not only how often we shall meet and for how long, but also over what period of time – are we going to meet for three months and then assess how it's going?

Review

Agree that from time to time you will check with each other that this is being helpful. Honesty is required even if it is painful. It is counter productive to be in a relationship that is unhelpful or not getting you anywhere.

Be able to finish well.

Work out how you will say difficult things to each other

If you have decided this from the outset it will make it easier when the time come as it surely will.

What are the two things that wreck a sense of safety and undermine the whole relationship?

We cannot stress too strongly that a relationship where control and dependency creep in is totally dysfunctional. These are very real dangers and require a ruthless commitment to honesty. A mentor is not someone who is controlling someone else into making choices they think are right. The relationship will have failed if one party becomes dependent on the other or if the mentor takes wrong responsibility for the other's life.

Gaining permission

A discipleship relationship works best when it is based on permission. This means that an individual has given you permission to speak into their lives. Where this permission is not given there is limited scope for real influence and change. So this needs clarifying and talking through. Often when we raise this issue we will be surprised at the level of permission we are given. It is usually more than we anticipate, particularly with those who are keen to grow. So once we have established some safety boundaries it is good to ask what areas of life or issues an individual wants to be working on and what might be helpful. As the discipler you will probably have some hunches about the sort of areas where you would like to see the person grow and move forward. These thoughts are yours however and you need them to be identified by the individual and allow them to give you permission to work on them.

Greg and Andy are getting together in the early stages of their discipleship relationship and Andy has a few of the hunches we talked about just now. He spends some time prior to their meeting praying about these and asking God how to proceed. The sense he gets through his prayer time is to create space for God to stir in Greg's life by asking which areas of his life God seems to be highlighting at present. By asking this question Andy is allowing Greg to identify the areas that need to be talked through and also puts the responsibility with Greg rather than Andy. What can happen in this type of situation is that the things that come up are often at a greater depth and give far greater permission for discipleship than Andy would ever have imagined.

Asking questions

As you can see from the previous illustration there is a great power attached to good questions. It is interesting to see how many questions Jesus asked in the course of his ministry. If ever anyone had things that were worth saying it was Jesus and yet what we see him doing is asking question after question. Many of us think that we have a lot to say and wish that people would just listen. Often what is more powerful is following Jesus' example by asking questions. This highlights an interesting challenge for us because asking questions demonstrates we are more interested in the other person and their answer than our own agenda. It should come as no surprise that by asking good questions Jesus was showing a high level of interest in others and demonstrates his love for them in this way. Learn to ask open questions which require more than a yes or no answer.

Allowing space and time for growth

A friend of ours says "you can take a horse to water but you can't make it drink". Nothing new in that, but he then goes on to say "but you can salt its oats". Much of what we will be doing as we disciple people is just this; we will be creating a hunger for them to grow. This takes time and we have to be patient with people. Many will not see the need for growth in their lives as we see it and we need to give them space and time to realize that change in some areas is necessary.

We also need to think holistically and realize that there are other life issues that impinge on their growth and ours. Often these are circumstances and events that are totally out of our control. Thinking back to the picture of an adventure playground, different activities are set before us and we have to experience them. The circumstances of our lives create opportunities for us to grow if we process them with God.

We recognize that we are only one component in the discipleship arena. Their home and work situations are often the cause of huge growth and we need to be flexible to give space to reflect with them in these other important areas. It is great to see something that we have been working through with them come to focus and find its outworking in a totally different area of life.

Many people have such a negative self image that it takes time just for them to realize and accept that we want them to grow for their own sake and not because we have hidden agendas.

Unwrapping world views

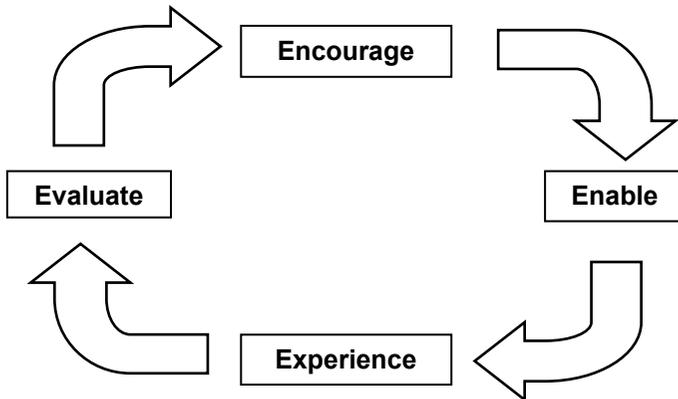
In a previous section we thought about the fact that we live life in our heads. We see the world through certain filters. Part of our role in mentoring is to highlight some of these filters, particularly where they are detrimental to the individual's growth and development. We see Jesus doing this time and time again. It often happens as he poses a question or tells a story and let's his hearers draw their own conclusions.

What we are trying to do here is get to the values that inform our decisions and behaviour. These values for the large part have been taken on board without much thought or reflection. They have been passed on to us through our home situations and peer environments and have seeped into our lives and shaped us to see the world in a particular way.

Chapter 7

Building the relationship

We are going to describe one way that we have found useful in developing a mentoring relationship. It is helpful to have some stages in mind as we think about growth in the relationship. The following 4 Es of encourage, enable, experience and evaluate are an outline for stages in this relationship. Many of us may have experienced the first two through the more established teaching environments of church life but often little if any consideration is given to the last two. Let's look at each area in turn and see how these simple steps can be used as we engage in the discipleship relationship



Encourage

There is a strong biblical encouragement for us to be encouragers of one another:

- ✓ Hebrews 10:24 says that we are to ‘*encourage one another*’. This is in the context of our need to keep meeting together and makes encouragement one of the key ingredients to our discipleship times.
- ✓ Romans 12: 8 lists encouragement as one of the motivational gifts. ‘*if it is encouraging, let him encourage*’.
- ✓ In 1 Thessalonians 5:11 we read ‘*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing*’.
- ✓ However the verse that speaks to us most in this context is 1 Thessalonians 5 :14 ‘*And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.*’ This stimulates us to action and in particular to ‘encourage the timid’. It is so good to see someone who is unsure and timid gaining certainty and strength as they are encouraged. Their whole demeanor can change before your very eyes as they are encouraged by you. It is such a privilege to be able to bring about this transformation.

Encouragement needs to be genuine! By this we mean that it falls flat if you just look to make things up or exaggerate as you encourage. People soon see through your unreal enthusiasm and can take exception to the false vibes that they will pick up from you all too easily. What this means is that we need to foster the art of observing people doing good things or responding in appropriate ways to challenging situations so that we can encourage them in a real and honest way. It may take some focus to develop this skill of encouragement, noticing or searching for genuinely positive attitudes and actions in someone, but it is well

Encouragement is a choice. It has to be made out of a non competitive spirit. It will be hard for us to encourage someone if we feel threatened by them in any way. Our own insecurity can lead us not to encourage for fear of being misunderstood. Or we might feel threatened by the thought that the other person might get better than us and so back off. We need to develop this gift of encouragement out of a very real sense of our security being in God and his love for us. Paul picks up this idea for us, writing to the Thessalonians: ‘*May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word*’. 2 Thessalonians 2:16

Enable

All too often we think that encouragement alone is enough and that is all

we need to do to see growth and development in another person. We have all had the experience of listened to an inspirational talk, gone away feeling encouraged and inspired, but done nothing about it. If it is not followed up with some 'how to' then it is a bit like eating celery; the experience is good but the ongoing benefits are negligible as it takes as much energy to munch as it gives you by eating it!

So what will it mean for us to enable growth in another person? This is the area where some sort of activity is useful which will bring new insight to the disciple for their next stage of the process.

Formal Learning

If we think back to our picture of discipleship as a table set out before us with a choice of plates for us to choose from, this can be the moment to introduce a new discipline. Suggest good books for them to read and help them to get into reading the Bible. Think of conferences you can go to together and teaching CDs that you can share. With our encouragement and a sense of accountability to us our disciple may want to try one of the spiritual disciplines that they have not yet experienced. In discussion and prayer a helpful choice can be made (a list of resources is available in the appendix).

For some the word 'accountable' sends signals of control. When our motives are healthy, wanting to see change for the good of the person, then accountability can be just the encouragement a person needs to move forward or try something new. When we know that someone will be asking us how we are getting on with a task or a new way of thinking, we are more focused to try.

Informal Learning

Informal learning comes about as we share our own experiences with our disciple. We should not be afraid of them being influenced by our journey. We know that in a close discipleship relationship the disciple is called to become an imitator of the one they have chosen to disciple them. Why would they want to devote precious resources of time and energy into this relationship if they are not prepared to be influenced by the one they have chosen to disciple them?

It is surprising how much we already know that we have never considered passing on to others, particularly about the practical dimensions of our faith. Areas such as how we pray, what has been helpful for us as we have engaged with the bible, how we have worked through areas such as forgiveness, generosity and the other life challenges that come our way. It does challenge us to be people who are 'seeking after God' ourselves so

that we have something authentic to hand on to another.

All that we do in this area of enabling needs to lead towards our disciple taking responsibility for their own journey with God; *working out their own salvation with fear and trembling* Philippians 2:12-13. We should guard against them becoming unhelpfully dependent on us.

Experience

This opportunity of allowing our experience to form our spiritual life is often missing in our thinking about discipleship. In our view it is one of the most critical areas as it is where life is worked out in reality. We need to approach this from two areas. Firstly, to work through which experiences would be helpful for the disciple and to encourage and enable them to take these experiences as they are created. Secondly, to consider those areas that are already being experienced and using them as learning opportunities. Let's start with the first.

Create opportunities

In our conversations we will see areas where a gift has been expressed or partly explored but never had an avenue to be developed through a relevant experience.

In church life

This has been true for many spiritual gifts in church life where the main context of operation has been Sunday services. There are a limited number of opportunities and a high risk factor for people who are starting out. Who wants to stand in front of a congregation with their heart pounding to share their first prophetic word! Fortunately with the advent of cell groups and other expressions of small group life where discipleship and participation are encouraged, these sorts of gifts can be developed in a safe environment. It is vital for us to be part of such a small group community if spiritual growth is going to happen. It is in this context that so many experiences can be encouraged that will lead to growth in individuals. These groups need to have active participation and accept a degree of experimentation so people feel they can have a go.

In evangelism

Another area that has been off our radar as far as growth of gifts is concerned is in evangelism. This has been so dominated by the idea that it is a specialist area that only evangelists can really work in that we have seldom considered how our spiritual gifts can be used in sharing our faith with our friends. As the current rise in spirituality continues in our culture it is vital

that we are seen to be spiritual and use our gifts in this area.

Use opportunities

The second area, is to look at where current experiences through the work place, family life and other experiences of social interaction are happening. It is important that we bring a holistic approach to our mentoring and help those we are discipling to make connection between the various areas of their lives. How is the individual's relationship with their boss or husband or wife, what about their colleagues? These are all relevant areas of life where our values and actions should be shaped by our faith. Permission to talk about these areas is often gained by talking about your own experience of them, opening the way for similar conversations from their perspective.

If we think of the picture of discipleship through an adventure playground, our daily experiences are opportunities for growth when we want to find God within them. How we respond to these experiences can be part of our discussions and leads us on the final part of our model of discipleship.

Evaluate

Feedback can be feared, but is often very fruitful for the individual. With this concern in mind, it is vital that we take time to talk through how feedback and evaluation can best be given and more importantly received. Have an honest conversation at the start of your mentoring relationship about how this is going to work best. Some people like full, frank and immediate evaluation. Others like time out to reflect for a few hours or days before they can talk through how things went and be open to your input. If you get this wrong it can be disastrous, so make sure you check what your disciple thinks will work best for them!

As you evaluate together it is always good to start and end with encouragement. It does not matter how much of a disaster the situation turned out to be, look for positive things that you can encourage them in.

Work out some positive comments that avoids talking about the particular details of the experience but creates a positive atmosphere, for example:-

It was really good that you had a go

I really appreciate your willingness to learn and take these opportunities

It is good to share in outline what you are thinking fairly early on or they will automatically assume they did badly. Finding out what they felt about the experience and what they learnt through it will be important to look at

with them. Bear in mind that some people find it easier to tell you what they thought about it rather than how they felt about it. Through this whole process remember that this is all about them and not you. You are a privileged catalyst for their growth and development.

It is difficult to evaluate an experience with them that you have not witnessed because they can slant the reporting to put them in a good light. Sometimes their report will be the opposite. They will be unduly hard on themselves. However you can learn many things about your disciple as they tell you the story of their experience. Look out for themes that develop over a period of time.

You will find that if you choose to conclude your evaluation as we suggest on an encouraging note, then you will find yourself back at the beginning of the process quite naturally. As such you can continue through the cycle bringing encouragement, having input as you enable them, prompting new experiences and spending time evaluating together.

Chapter 8

The future is yours!

As we come to the end of this journey into understanding more of the meaning and process of discipleship, we would like to encourage you

by giving you an opportunity to reflect on what you have learnt. Would you create a space which allows God to speak to you about where you need to go with the things that have come up as you have read through this book?

One journey that some disciples of Jesus took was on the day of the resurrection. Two of them were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus and discussing between themselves the happenings of the previous few days.

You could read the story yourself in Luke 24: 13 – 35. Imagine yourself into the story; feel the heat and the desperation these two experienced as they walked. Imagine for yourself how totally overwhelming their experiences were and how much they needed understanding and comfort. What did it mean for them to have Jesus draw alongside them and explain to them what had happened?

Take a little time right now in a quiet place to recreate this story in your imagination and to walk with these two disciples. Allow God to speak to you as you do.

What happens when Jesus joins us as we are grappling with difficult issues, circumstances we cannot understand or times when our hopes are dashed?

What do we experience when we become aware of his presence? How are we changed?

What have been the major themes that have emerged for you as you have read this book?

What has God been speaking to you about as you have journeyed through?

What is your next step?

Maybe you need to become part of a discipling community, or encourage your small group to go further in helping each other as you journey together.

Perhaps you need to approach someone to help you on a one-to-one basis.



Maybe there is an issue where you have been stuck and lost hope that you can change. How can you begin to move forward again accompanied by Jesus?



Whatever you need to do, make sure you do it.

A disciple of Jesus is someone who, having made the commitment to believe that Jesus is who he said he is, wants to follow him through a life time of change. The change is God led, but with full permission and cooperation by the disciple. The end goal is transformation at the deepest level to become more like Jesus himself: to take on his beliefs and values, to be renewed and become all we were made to be and to live to build his kingdom here around us.

The process of discipleship is multi faceted. It is led by our circumstances and developed through our choices. We need to be proactive, choosing those things which will build our spiritual life. In particular this will be a journey accompanied by others who we need to seek out to help us. At the same time we can also be of help to others on the way.

Nothing could be more important or more satisfying. Nothing could be more challenging and worthwhile.

Appendix

Discipling Others

*Material shared with us by Ness Wilson
from Open Heaven, Loughborough*

Let's recap for a moment. We have said that disciples are made, not born and they are made through the process of discipleship. Discipleship should be at the very centre of church life as it was a major concern of Jesus. The process of discipleship is the way we grow as Christians. In many churches the pulpit is at the centre of church life, but our own experience tells us that an accumulation of knowledge does not automatically transform us. Having someone to help us apply that knowledge and invest into us, does transform us.

Discipleship can take place in a variety of different ways and is a combination of attitude and activity. The attitudes that facilitate discipleship are:

*a willingness to learn
a willingness to change
a willingness to receive from others*

As we have already said, the activities that facilitate discipleship are many and varied, like a banquet laid out before us, but we believe that one of the most effective ways to be a disciple is to be in a discipling friendship with someone who is a little further on in their own discipleship journey with Christ.

Thinking back to our idea of the discipleship journey being like an adventure playground, the discipleship relationship is particularly important at those times in life when we meet challenges. We need encouragement and

an opportunity to process what is happening to us by bringing God into the very centre of our experience. We perhaps also need this help when we are cruising through life with no particular challenges – when the apparatus we are engaged with is within our ability to achieve. The temptation at these times is to leave God out. We feel we can be independent of him and are in control. This is also a danger time for disciples where input from another is really useful.

There is no set pattern for this relationship. There are as many ways of working out how to do this as there are people willing to get involved. The following are ‘helpful hints’ of how to go about this if you are just starting out or want to hone your skills.

Practical Pointers

- ✔ Start by **building friendship** and trust with the person you are discipling. For example invite them round for meals, go out for a drink etc.
- ✔ Clarify **expectations** of how often you’ll meet up and for how long. It is better to set a regular rhythm for meeting up - the same time every week/fortnight/ month and keep to a set time so people come ready and prepared to talk and you can make the most of the time together.
- ✔ We believe in ‘**permission based authority**’ that means we need them to give us permission to ask the difficult questions or tackle certain areas. Decide together how you will approach them with difficult things so that it can be of most help to them.
- ✔ Find out what their previous **experience and understanding of discipleship** is. If necessary, explain what discipleship is. Also establish if they are involved in a discipling friendship with anyone else in other aspects of their life.
- ✔ Use the skill of **asking questions** and go with your gut instincts. **Be open** yourself in an appropriate way in order to cultivate openness in them and don’t be satisfied with superficial answers.
- ✔ **Don’t make people’s choices for them.** Help them process the options and if useful look at relevant biblical principles together and encourage them to go away and hear from God for themselves. We must not cultivate spiritual or emotional dependency, but must treat people as adults.
- ✔ Make sure that you are not getting **your significance** from this relationship.

If you see things in them that need **confronting**, ask God for the **wisdom**

to know the right **time** and the wisdom to know **how to bring it up**. Generally wait until you are having a specific discipleship time to point out any areas that need adjusting. Sometimes asking people to read **relevant scriptures** and pray about them, allows God to challenge where necessary (rather than it simply being your opinion).

- ✔ Be prepared with information about who else can help them with issues that come up which are beyond your ability to help. **Being realistic** about your limitations of gifting and experience is absolutely key to this process. This is NOT a counseling relationship. If they need a counselor help them find one.
- ✔ Have a **strategy of development** for them. Pray and ask God for the next steps/resources to use that will cause them to grow.
- ✔ As your discipling time together comes to an end, **pray for them**, covering the main areas that have been talked about. Stand with them in faith if they need to see breakthrough in certain areas.
- ✔ Look for opportunities where you can **serve together**, at first asking them to help you with a task or project. In due course it would be good to support them in some practical way when they step out to serve.
- ✔ Lastly and most importantly **love them**. Let them know that you really like them, believe in them and take every opportunity to encourage them, affirm them and speak to the very best of who they are.

Having established the relationship and begun to get to know each other in this deeper way, it may be helpful to work through a scheme with them such as 4Life or Deeper (both available from Cell UK). The following pages are outlines of areas to cover to establish foundations in the Christian Life and then going beyond that to encourage wholeness and freedom, service and calling.

Building the Foundations

Salvation

1. How did you become a Christian? Look for a clear understanding of the work of the cross and God's forgiveness of sin. Col 1:19-22, 2Cor 5:21.
2. What has changed in your life as a result of knowing Jesus as Lord? Look for examples of conviction of sin, obedience and change.

Resources to use: if you are unsure if someone has made a personal commitment, explain the gospel and lead them to Christ

Baptism

1. Have you been baptised? If not explain significance of baptism and encourage them to do it. Matt 28:19, Acts 2:38

Holy Spirit

1. Have you had any experiences of the Holy Spirit? If not explain the HS is a gift from god to help us live the Christian life more effectively. Receiving the HS is not based on feelings but on God's promise, Luke 11:9-13. Pray with them to receive the Holy Spirit, Acts 8:14-17.
2. Do you operate in any spiritual gifts? Which ones would you like to develop in? 1Cor 12:4-11 and 27-31, Rom 12:6-8. Encourage them to step out in those gifts.

Resources to use: 'Come Holy Spirit' David Pytches, 'The Holy Spirit' Clive Calver

Bible

1. How do you find reading the Bible (honestly)? If they find it hard, recommend a different translation e.g. New Living, Message, or listen to Bible tapes. Suggest a daily bible reading plan e.g. Deeper. Also encourage them to read in the context of worship and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to them, 1 Cor 2:10-12. Explain the different types of literature in Bible and how to go deeper in study. 2 Tim 3:16-17, Heb 4:12.

Resources to use: 'How to read the Bible for all its Worth' Fee and Stuart
Blueletterbible.com, Biblegateway.co.uk, Bible in Year, CWR

Prayer

1. How easy to you find it to pray? Encourage a daily time of prayer as well as cultivating a lifestyle of prayer. Encourage a prayer journal to be kept to record answered prayers. If they are struggling to know how to pray, use ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication (requests). Matt 6:9-13, Eph 6:18.

Resources to use: ‘Don’t just stand there, pray something’ Ronald Dunn, ‘Prayer’ Philip Yancey, take part in the next 24-7 prayer week.

Who God is

1. How would you describe God?
2. Do you mainly feel that God delights in you as a Father or that He is disappointed in you? If they do not know God’s fathering and approval, pray into that and encourage them to read books about Father Heart of God. This foundational truth is critical for everything else. Matt 6:9, Ps 103:8-13, Ps 139, IS 49:15-16, Zeph 3:17, 1 John 3:1, Luke 12:6-7, Luke 15:11-24.

Resources to use: ‘The Father Heart of God’ Floyd McClung, ‘God’s Passion for You’ Sam Storms, ‘Rediscovering the Father Heart of God’ Jeff Lucas

‘Walking with Jesus’ by Gary Gibbs is available from Cell UK for those looking at the foundations of the Christian faith

Building Wholeness and Freedom

Self-awareness

1. What are your strengths? - character and gifting
2. What are your weaknesses? - character and gifting
3. How are you using your strengths?
4. How can you develop in your weaknesses?

Resources to use: personality questionnaires e.g. Myers Briggs.

Past

1. Describe your childhood - the best aspects and the worst aspects.
2. Describe your relationship with your parents.

Sin

1. Are there repeated patterns of sin going on?
2. Are there areas of your life that you are not in control of? E.g. eating, drink, temper.
3. Are there areas of sin that you need to confess and become accountable on? Eph 5:8-11, James 5:16

Resources to use: 'Victory over Darkness' Neil Anderson, 'Bondage Breaker' Neil Anderson, '12 ½ Steps to Spiritual Health' Howard Astin

Christ-like character

1. How do you rate yourself in areas of servant hood, humility, faithfulness, teach ability, integrity, being truthful, security, self-control, contentment. Gal 5:22, 1Cor 13:4-6

Resources to use: '4Life' Mark Powley - available from Cell UK.

Identity in Christ

1. Do you mainly feel significant or worthless, secure or insecure; have a good self-image or a low self-image? Ps 8:3-8
2. Do you like yourself? If not encourage them to meditate on and memorise a scripture about their identify in Christ daily.

Resources to use: Scriptures about 'Who I am in Christ', Head to Heart retreats

Relationships and Sexuality

1. Are you in a relationship at the moment? Is it helping you grow in God? Are there healthy boundaries in place? If they have a history of unhealthy relationships ask them to consider a year of singleness to go deeper in God.
2. Is there sexual sin/brokenness you need to repent of and get prayed for?
1 Cor 6:18-20

Money and Time

1. How do you handle money? Matt 6:19-21
2. Are you in debt? Have you a plan to help get out and stay out of debt?
3. Are you generous with your money? Do you give regularly to church and other projects/people?
4. Are you caught up in materialism? What can you do to simplify your life? Heb 13:5, 1 Tim 6:17-19
5. Do you spend your money ethically e.g. fair-trade

Time

1. Do you manage your time well or do you waste time?
2. What do you want to spend your time doing? Does it actually happen?
3. Do you have a healthy rhythm of work, rest and play? Do you have a day off a week? Heb 4:9-10

Encourage them to keep a time sheet for a week and record how much time is spent on various activities. Then look to reorder time, and spend more on priorities.

For advice on dealing with specific pastoral issues, suggest they contact those in your church who are skilled and trained in this area. The discipling relationship is not expected to deal with everything that might come up. Consider referral to appropriate professionals when necessary.

Building them into church

Understanding role of church

1. Do you see local church as important in your growth in God? Help them to recognise they cannot be a Christian in isolation, 1Cor 12:12-25, so need to place priority on cells and gatherings.
2. What has been your previous church experience? Were you involved in any areas of serving the church?

Understanding vision and values of your church

1. What do you understand by the mission statement of your church?

Resources to use: Vision and values statement of your church

Cell or small group

1. Do you know and understand the five cell values? (Jesus Centred, Every Member in Ministry, Every Member Growing, Community, Multiplication)

Community

1. Are there key relationships you are going deeper in? If not, identify some.
2. Are there people in church you have fallen out with? How can you work towards reconciliation? Matt 18:15-17. Have you talked it through with them one to one? If so and still not resolved, would getting a third party involved help restore the relationship?
3. Are you sharing your life and home with others?
4. Would you say you are more independent or more dependent on others? How can you become healthily interdependent?
5. Do you need to develop in openness and honesty?

Resources to use: 'Everyone's normal until you get to know them' John Ortberg

Playing their part

1. In what ways are you serving and giving of yourself to church? Matt 20:25-18
2. What further ways could you do that?

Gifting and embracing responsibility

1. What areas of gifting do you feel God has given you? How are you developing that?
2. Is there some leadership gifting in you. If so how can you grow in it? Work hard at developing the character of a leader, 1 Tim 3:1-10
3. What areas of responsibility can you embrace?
4. What do you identify as your passion, unique set of spiritual gifts and preferred style?
5. How would you like to get involved in your church?

Resources to use: 'Courageous Leadership' Bill Hybels, 'Understanding Leadership' Tom Marshall

Arrange for people to spend time with those further on in a particular gifting.

Strength Finders

Town wide church

1. Do you see your church as part of the town wide church? 1 Cor 1:2. Is there any town wide team you would like to be part of? E.g. musicians, youth, elderly, outreach?

Find town wide events you can participate in.

Encourage them to read '**Purpose Driven Life**' by Rick Warren

Building them into maturity

Evangelism

1. Do you have a heart that is seeking to love people?
2. Which non-Christian friends can you see becoming Christians?
3. What strategies have you got in place to accelerate the process e.g. invite to Alpha, a cell social, a baptism meeting. Offer to pray for them.

Resources to use: 'How to be a Contagious Christian' Bill Hybels, 'Kiss and Tell' Pete Gilbert

Discipling Others

1. Who are you discipling? How is it going?

Resources to use: This booklet!

Spiritual Disciplines

1. What are the disciplines you want to develop in most?
2. Are there discipleship vows you want to make? Use the list of spiritual disciplines to go decide which ones to focus on for the next seasons.

Resources to use: 'The Life You've Always Wanted' John Ortberg

Calling

1. What dreams or aspirations do you have for your life?
2. Have you had any prophetic words given to you?
3. What makes you feel fully alive?
4. What are you consistently good at doing?
5. What do you want to be doing in 5 years time?

Ensure they have a good understanding of Kingdom and ministry into every sphere. Eph 2:10

Write some short-term, medium term and long term goals.

Decision making

1. How do you make decisions? Who do you include in the process?
Ps 119:105, James 1:5

Going deeper with God

1. How is your relationship with God going?
2. How do you cultivate God-awareness throughout your day? Ps 24:1, Is6:3, Jer 23:23-24.
3. How do you hear from God? What is He saying to you at the moment? Do you act on what you hear?
4. How do you worship as a lifestyle? Rom 12:1.

Sacrifice

1. How is God calling you to sacrifice in your life?
2. How can you practically put the needs of others before your own?
3. What are you too dependent on/gain comfort from - consider a time of abstinence e.g. TV, luxuries, buying clothes.

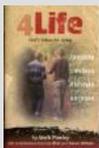
Crisis and hard times

1. How have you responded to God in the last hard time you went through? Are there ways to respond even better next time? James 1:2-4
2. Do you have a sound view of God that He will be with you in the hard times, but won't make you exempt from what everyone else goes through?
3. How do you deal with disappointment? Are you aware of becoming cynical or disillusioned?
4. Are you able to allow every hard situation to become redemptive by learning something through it you could not otherwise learn? Rom 8:28

Resources to use: 'Where is God when it hurts' Philip Yancey, 'Disappointment with God' Philip Yancey

Go through '**The Life You've Always Wanted**' by John Ortberg together. Also at this stage, going through a book of the Bible together would be good, maybe start with a gospel or a letter e.g. James.

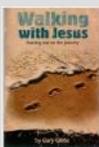
Other Resources



4Life

by Mark Powley

Do you want to know God better, find your place in his plans, have your value system transformed, have some help along the way? Take the risk, follow this guide for a deeper journey into the Christian life. 4Life has been developed for new Christians or anyone seeking to refresh their faith and go deeper with God. It's full of honesty, passion and humour, and seeks to give a solid foundation for practical Christian living today.



Walking with Jesus

by Gary Gibbs

Designed for new Christians, each section is packed with principles by which to live. The interactive style not only helps to apply the ideas, but also gives energy and confidence to use them. This book will help the reader more clearly define God's plan for their life.



12½ Steps to Spiritual Health

by Howard Astin

This is a powerful course for new Christians and mature believers alike, designed to clear the rubbish out of our lives and help us grow towards spiritual maturity. Howard takes us through each of the steps and gives instructions at the end of each chapter to enable us to move forward and deal with the issues that will surface.

Other Resources



Passion

by Paul Hopkins

Passion is written for young people to help them build their relationship with god. It has 12 modules to work through, made up of five days of material to do solo and then encouragement to meet with a cellmate for an honest moment. This has proved to be a highly valuable discipleship tool for many young people.



Deeper (based on Ralph Neighbour's Arrival Kit)

by Gabriel Smy

Among the superficial wash of today's student culture there is a group of people determined to go deeper into what life is really about: a relationship with Jesus Christ. Not content with splashing around in the shallows they are taking the plunge into the depths of a journey with God that will last forever. Designed for new Christians to go through individually, with the guidance of a sponsor, each module delivers the maximum impact of challenging biblical truth through relevant application.

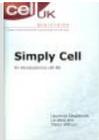


Help! I'm leading part of my cell meeting

by Trevor Withers

This booklet is for cell members leading one of the 4Ws. If your heart sinks when it's your turn to lead part of your cell meeting, this booklet is for you. It aims to give members confidence as they participate in the cell meeting. Presenting the key components needed to make each of the 4Ws run effectively, it offers practical advice and ideas which will stimulate cell members' creativity and enhance their leadership abilities.

Other Resources



Simply Cell

by *Laurence Singlehurst, Liz West and Trevor Withers*

What it says on the cover is what this book is about. It explains cell in a dynamic yet simple way. Suitable for anyone about to join a cell whether they are from an Alpha course or they are existing church members who are new to cell. This booklet will also encourage long-term cell people.

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Cell UK also offer a range of training opportunities and conferences. For current information browse our website at:
www.celluk.org.uk

CellUK Magazine

Helping you discover working principles from cell churches throughout the UK and world-wide

With its combination of inspiring articles and practical ideas for cell leaders, cell supervisors and church leaders, it is an invaluable tool for anyone involved in cell-based church life.



KEY AREAS COVERED:

- √ Cell leading
- √ Youth cells
- √ Stories of churches transitioning
- √ Student cells
- √ Children's cells

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About the Authors

Liz West works with Cell UK and Network Church, which has been in cells for over ten years. The opportunity to plant cell church has given her experience in leading and supervising cell groups through all the stages of cell life. Leading a group of local church members through the process of changing values and structures has equipped her to help other leaders through written resources, conferences and consultations.



Trevor Withers is the team leader of Network Church, a cell church in St. Albans. He also leads the executive team working for Cell UK. Building on the foundations of the Church Planting and Evangelism Course he completed at Spurgeons College, his experience in church planting and leading at every level within a cell church forms the basis of his contribution to those developing the model in their churches.