

CHURCH OF HOPE EVANGELISM AND MINISTRY TRAINING COURSE BY EMAIL AND WEBSITE: STUDY GUIDE: WEEK EIGHT

TOPIC SEVEN: THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING DISCIPLES (INTRODUCTION)

INTRODUCTION TO WEEK EIGHT:

In this week's study I will be looking at the importance of making disciples. Every believer has been saved for a God given purpose and destiny. The Apostle Paul wrote, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 2:10**)

For this reason it is so important to help all new believers to be connected to the life of a healthy bible based church (**Psalm 92:13-15**) where they can be encouraged to grow in their walk with the Lord and to fulfil their God given destiny. (**Hebrews 10:23-25**)

When a believer comes to Christ it is just the beginning of their walk with the Lord. Jesus Himself also emphasised the importance of not just making converts but disciples when He shared about the church's "Great Commission." Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen" (**Matthew 28:19-20**)

As a pastor my heart is to not only see people coming to Christ, but to see them also walking in victory and leading fruitful lives as they fulfil God's plan and purpose for their life. For this reason making disciples is an important part of our church's vision here in Blacktown.

The role of the five fold ministry is to help equip all Christians for the work of the ministry and for the edifying and building up of the Body of Christ so that all Christians walk in victory and live fruitful lives. The Apostle Paul wrote, "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the **EQUIPPING** of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God." "that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, **but, speaking the truth in love**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head-Christ-" (**Ephesians 4:12-15**)

It is when we see all Christians working together in love and unity and flowing in their God given gifts and callings, (**Romans 12:3-8**) (**1 Corinthians 12:4-11**) that we see our churches making a great difference in our communities and that we see the Kingdom of God growing here on earth. The Apostle Paul wrote, "from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself IN LOVE." (**Ephesians 4:16**)

As every Christian is in a constant spiritual warfare, making disciples of all believers is crucial. Jesus Himself said in His explanation of the Parable of the Sower, "But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles."

"Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful."

"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." (**Matthew 13:23**)

In this passage of Scripture we see Jesus emphasising the fact that when new believers are not securely established in their faith, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word sake, they quickly stumble and fall. We see also in this passage of Scripture Jesus emphasizing the fact that many believers never bear much fruit in their lives because of the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choking the word in their hearts and lives. As pastors and leaders we need to be committed to developing good ground disciples who will bear much fruit.

We are also living in those perilous times that the Apostle Paul wrote about (2 Timothy 3:1-5) and which Jesus Himself alluded to. Jesus said in relation to the times just prior to His return, “And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:10-13)

The Apostle Peter also referred to the devil’s constant desire to destroy the lives and faith of all believers. The Apostle Peter wrote, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” (1 Peter 5:8-9)

In the book of Acts we see some great keys that helped people to grow in their walk with the Lord and in seeing the early church making such a great difference in the world. In chapter two of the book of Acts we see a vital church growing.

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:46-47)

HERE WE SEE A NUMBER OF GREAT KEYS THAT WE CAN LEARN THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE EARLY CHURCH AS BELIEVERS WERE DAILY ADDED TO THE CHURCH. In this passage of Scripture we see:

- That the ministry of the Word of God (the apostles doctrine) was greatly emphasised
- Having fellowship with other believers on a regular basis was the normal thing
- Prayer was greatly emphasised in all meetings
- The taking of the Lord’s supper was done on a regular basis to remember what Christ had done at Calvary
- There was a genuine loving Christian community which helped to see new believers being added to the church daily,
- The believers had a great passion to praise the Lord (They had a genuine love for the Lord)
- House group fellowships were also a big part of the early church in addition to the daily temple worship, and
- There was a great spiritual unity as they continued meeting together daily with ONE ACCORD in the temple

The Apostle Paul also clearly emphasised the importance of making disciples when he wrote to the young pastor Timothy, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Timothy 2:2)

The Word of God is a great key to seeing the lives of Christians being transformed and to people coming to faith. Jesus Himself said, “If you abide in My word you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)

The Apostle Paul wrote, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2)

In a world full of ungodly influences, continually meditating on the Word of God (Joshua 1:8) to renew our mind with God’s ways of thinking and living is crucial if we are to fully embrace all that God has planned for our life. Meditating on and speaking out God’s promises in His Word also helps to build up our faith.

The Apostle Paul also wrote, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”(Romans 10:17)

In the book of Hebrews we read, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

Given the power of God’s word to change lives, the following things are important to consider in relation to making disciples;

- Encouraging all believers to meditate on and to study the Word of God themselves (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- Giving all Christians the opportunity of being part of a mid-week small group bible study , and
- The importance of pastors preaching and teaching the Word of God in all of their sermons. (2 Timothy 4:1-2)

I WILL NOW LOOK AT A NUMBER OF THINGS TO CONSIDER IN RELATION TO MAKING MATURE DISCIPLES

- 1) **The importance of love and encouragement in the discipleship process.** (1 Thessalonians 2:5-8) It is so important that we have a genuine love for those that we are mentoring and ministering to. We all need to be encouraged in our walk with the Lord. Encouragement helps people to get through the tests and trials of life. All who live for the Lord will invariably experience persecution and rejection at times for their faith. (John 16:33) (John 15:19-20) (2 Timothy 3:12) It is our ongoing encouragement and support that will be most appreciated by those that we are mentoring when they are going through trials. (Being there for them)
- 2) **Making disciples is a longer term commitment.** Even Jesus took 3 years to train up His twelve disciples. We need to be committed to hanging in with those that we are discipling. We must not give up easily on people
- 3) **The importance of God's Word becoming incarnate in all believers.** (Galatians 4:19) Being fed the Word of God is a key to seeing believers growing in Christ likeness (Romans 8:28-29) The Word of God has power to change and transform lives. Meditating on the Word of God helps us to grow strong in our faith. (Joshua 1:8)
- 4) **A key to helping Christians to become mature disciples is encouraging them to develop a love for God's presence.** In His presence is fullness of joy. (Psalm 16:11) Worship is a great key to helping people to develop an intimate love for the Lord and to knowing God's will for their life. (Psalm 37:4) King David was a worshipper and also a man after God's own heart. (Acts 13:22) Jesus rebuked the church at Ephesus because they had left their first love for Him. (Revelation 2:1-5) **The Apostle Paul wrote,**
"that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Ephesians 3:17-19)
Those who love the Lord will naturally want to obey His word. (John 14:23) We want to encourage people to be always relational and not religious in their walk with the Lord. To simply love the Lord and to love others (Mark 12:30-31)
- 5) **The importance of Christians being connected in small groups.** Particularly in large churches the small groups are where people have their pastoral needs met. Small Groups provide a means for people to be accountable to other believers which is a great key to maintaining a strong spiritual walk (Hebrews 3:12-14)
- 6) **The importance of training up leaders.** (2 Timothy 2:2) For a church to have a greater impact in the community it is important to train up leaders who can run a range of ministries and small groups. We must now also be investing in the lives of the next generation of young leaders and Christians so that our faith will be passed on to the next generation
- 7) **The importance of mentoring others.** All believers need to be encouraged in their walk with the Lord. Mentoring is spending quality time with other less mature believers to help them to become more established in their walk with the Lord and to grow in their faith. It is great for all pastors to invest their lives in other future leaders by mentoring them. (Acts 16:1-5) This is a key to seeing growing healthy churches.
- 8) **The importance of giving guidance to others but allowing the Lord to do the work of change in their lives**
- 9) **The importance of having Sunday School classes for children and youth groups for teenagers as part of our church ministries.** If children are taught the Word of God at an early age in a manner which is understandable to them, they will not depart from the ways of the Lord as they grow up (Proverbs 22:6)
- 10) **The importance of encouraging all Christians to develop their own personal walk with the Lord.** We need as pastors to help all believers over time to develop and grow strong in their faith. That we encourage them to develop an active prayer life (1 Thessalonians 5:17) (Philippians 4:6-7) and to spend time in the Word of God during the week themselves to build up their faith and knowledge of God. (Joshua 1:8) We also need to encourage all believers to learn to be led by the Holy Spirit so that they can continually make right choices in life at all times. (John 14:26) (John 16:13) We must point people to having a dependence on God

- 11) THE IMPORTANCE AS LEADERS AND MENTORS IN MODELLING WHAT IT IS TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. (1 Peter 5:1-4) (1 Timothy 4:12)** As leaders it is so important that we spend quality time with those that we are mentoring. Jesus Himself modelled to His disciples what it was to live a God glorifying life. **(Mark 1:38-42)** The Apostle Paul emphasised the need for more fathers of the faith. **(1 Corinthians 4:15-16)**
- 12) The importance of creating healthy Christian community in our church meetings in which all Christians can be loved and encouraged to be all that God has planned for their life (Acts 4:32-35) (Hebrews 10:23-25)**
- 13) The importance of all new believers having a clear understanding of the foundations of their faith.** Monthly New Believers Classes can help all new Christians to have a good start in their walk with the Lord. It is crucial that all new believers have a clear understanding that the moment they give their life to Jesus they are totally forgiven of all of their sins and have been justified and declared righteous in God's sight. **(Ephesians 2:8-9) (Philippians 3:9) (2 Corinthians 5:21) (Romans 3:20-28)**
- On our church of Hope website: www.coh.org.au under the Downloads page we have a 6 page New Believer's Guide to help new Christians to get started in their walk with the Lord and an 86 page New Believers Training Manual that can be used to disciple new believers. We also have 28 practical bible based teachings on our Christian Growth Keys Page on our website, to help get all new believers established in their faith.
- 14) The importance of encouraging all Christians to follow the Ephesians 2:10 plan for their life.** We were all saved for a purpose. A key to experiencing the abundant life that Jesus spoke of, **(John 10:10)** is for believers to follow God's plan for their life. Joy comes from living wholeheartedly for the Lord. **(Matthew 25:14-23)**
- 15) As pastors it is important to feed on the Word of God ourselves so that we have a word in season to preach each week to those in our congregations.** As pastors we need to first nourish our own soul in the words of faith and good doctrine **(1 Timothy 4:13-16)** and then teach the people the essentials of the faith. The more that we study the word ourselves the more we will be able to impart into the lives of others. "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master." **(Matthew 10:24)**
- 16) The importance of prayerfully seeking the Lord for His Discipleship strategies for our church. Unless the LORD builds the house, they labour in vain who build it..." (Psalm 127:1)** Every community and every church is different, so we need to seek the Lord for His strategies for both reaching out into our community with the gospel and love of Christ and for how to best disciple those in our church. God's ways are higher than our ways. **(Isaiah 55:8-9)**
- 17) The importance of helping all Christians to identify their spiritual gifts.** A church full of believers that are actively flowing in their gifts and callings will make a great difference in the community. As pastors we need to help encourage all believers to identify their unique gifts and callings and to use them for the expansion of God's Kingdom. Spiritual Gifts workshops help believers to identify their spiritual gifts. The spiritual gifts questionnaire form which forms part of this week's readings will help believers to identify their spiritual gifts.
- 18) Encouraging all believers to mentor at least one other Christian who is younger in their faith** Encouraging all Christians to develop a mindset of helping other younger believers to grow strong in their faith is a key to seeing strong and healthy churches developing. As we mentor others we also grow in our own faith as well.
- 19) The IMPORTANCE of praying for those who have been entrusted to our care as pastors. (Acts 20:28)** The Apostle Paul prayed much for other believers to grow strong in their walk with the Lord. As a church and as a pastor it is important to pray for those in our church to grow strong in their walk with the Lord. Prayer moves the hand of God and helps to see lives and circumstances being transformed by the love and power of God. "For with God nothing will be impossible" **(Luke 1:37)** In the Epistles we see a number of ways in which we can pray for those in our church. **(Colossians 1:9-11) (Ephesians 1:15-23) (Ephesians 3:14-19)**
- 20) The importance of all believers being Baptised in the Holy Spirit to be empowered to witness to others and to fulfil their ministry callings in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) (1 Thessalonians 1:5)**

- 21) The legacy that we leave when we go to be with the Lord is all the Christians and Ministries that we have helped to raise up through DISCIPLING others.** Making disciples is a key to seeing growing healthy churches.
- 22) The importance of following up new believers and those who have drifted out of fellowship** Part of being a loving local church is that we follow up with those who have drifted out of fellowship or who are struggling with things in their life. Establishing a follow up team which contacts people who are out of fellowship is one way of showing people that we care for them as a church family. Just a simple SMS letting people know that we are thinking about them is a great comfort to those who are going through personal struggles. As we do this people will be encouraged to reconnect and fellowship again with other believers. Consistently following up new believers is also important until they become connected to the life of a healthy local church
- 23) We must never neglect our ministry at home. Our family needs to be our most important ministry. As parents we have the ability to disciple and to demonstrate what it is to be a Christian to our children every single day.** It is important that we do not neglect this responsibility in the busyness of our ministry activities
- 24) The importance of ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit and being led by the Holy Spirit in our Bible Study Groups and Home Fellowship meetings.** When our small group meetings have a worship focus and the teachings are anointed and Spirit directed, the meetings will be encouraging and life giving to all those who attend. For this reason equipping and preparing small group leaders to run meetings in this way is also very important.

The Apostle Peter wrote, “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen” **(1 Peter 4:11)**

The Apostle Paul wrote, And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” **(1 Corinthians 2:4-5)**

SMALL GROUP MOVEMENTS are now becoming more and more common in many countries where small groups are run in such a way as to also train up and equip the members in the groups to also run small groups themselves. Small groups are great for helping to connect new believers to the life of a church and for increasing the pastoral care side of the church as people have their pastoral needs met in their small groups.

- 25) I will finish by emphasising again the importance of all that we do in ministry and when discipling and mentoring others being undergirded by love.** Continually loving and encouraging those that we are ministering to and discipling is a great key to helping Christians to grow strong in their walk with the Lord. Nurtured people will become strong in their walk with the Lord

The Apostle Peter wrote, “But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.” **(1 Peter 4:7-9)**

To complement this study guide, I have included for the reading for this week our teaching on “A good leader mentors others” which comes from our Pastors Workshop Guidelines and Teachings manual which can be downloaded from our Church of Hope Website: www.coh.org.au. I have also included the Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire Form which can be used to help other Christians to identify their spiritual gifts.

Some Questions just for Self Evaluation:

- 1) Do most of those in our churches have a strong devotional life in which they regularly pray and read the word?
- 2) Do we have a strong focus on connecting believers into mid week small group fellowships?
- 3) Are those in our church actively encouraged to use their spiritual gifts and to follow God’s plan for their life?
- 4) Would those attending our church for the first time feel welcome and accepted when arriving at our church?
- 5) Do we cater for the children and youth in our church meetings?
- 6) As a pastor am I investing my life in mentoring and training up other future leaders?
- 7) Do I spend enough time in the word to nourish my own soul and do I include enough scriptures in my sermons?