
LIFT

Ministry Group April Resource

Discipleship Models

Discipleship is the core mission of the Church, embodying Jesus' Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19, ESV). Yet, implementing effective discipleship in our churches can often be challenging... and the ways you do it might vary quite a bit from one church to another!

Because discipleship is not a one size fits all type of experience, we want highlight nine different discipleship models that could bring lift to your church.

- **One-on-One Discipleship** involves a more mature believer mentoring a less mature believer in their spiritual journey. This model is highly relational and personalized, allowing for deep, meaningful connections and tailored spiritual growth.
- **Small groups** consisting of 6-12 people, meet regularly to study the Bible, pray, and support each other. This model fosters community and mutual growth.
- **Life-on-life discipleship** integrates spiritual growth with everyday living. Discipleship happens through shared activities and experiences, such as family meals, service projects, and daily routines.
- **Peer discipleship** involves believers at similar stages in their faith journey discipling each other. This model emphasizes mutual growth and accountability.



When it comes to discipleship there is no shortage to the number of models from which to choose. Some are modular and lecture driven while others focus on mentoring and spiritual community. Although the models may vary, there are some key ingredients necessary to disciple-making.

Jesus speaking to the apostles in Matthew 28:19-20 declared,

"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."

From this passage of Scripture, we see four essentials necessary in developing new believers into disciples:

- **Intentionality**-Jesus commanded them to go and make disciples of all nations. His directive elevated the significance of spiritual growth in the life of every believer.

Discuss: What does discipleship look like at your church? Are you operating from an inherited model (Sunday School), or have you *intentionally* developed a discipleship strategy that engages and equips your congregation?

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- **Digital Discipleship Model** engages the use of online platforms for virtual Bible studies, mentoring via video calls, and social media engagement.
- **Programmatic Discipleship Model** involves structured programs with clear steps and milestones. It often includes courses, retreats, and events designed to facilitate spiritual growth.
- **Family-Based Discipleship** equips parents and guardians to disciple their children at home. This model emphasizes the role of the family in spiritual formation.
- **Mission-Oriented Discipleship** combines discipleship with mission and service. It focuses on discipling believers as they engage in outreach and ministry activities.

Which Discipleship Model is the "right one?"

Here's the bottom line:

Every model has elements of real discipleship. Jesus Himself used multiple approaches—He taught large crowds, disciplined in small groups, mentored individuals like Peter, James, and John, and sent His followers out on mission.

Every model has gaps. No single approach covers everything, which is why churches often blend models to meet the needs of their people.

The right model is the one you'll actually DO. Just like diets, the best one isn't the most detailed or famous—it's the one you'll stick with. A well-intended but unused discipleship model is no better than having none at all.

<https://www.newstartdiscipleship.com/post/9-models-of-discipleship-a-comprehensive-guide-for-pastors>

- **Engages Scripture**-Jesus instructed His disciples to teach them everything that He had commanded them. Discipleship requires us to engage the Word of God. It involves active participation through reading, listening, meditating, memorization, prayer and application of God's Word.



Discuss: How do you engage your congregation in God's Word? How do you equip them to dive deeper into Scripture outside of your pulpit ministry?

- **Promotes Spiritual Growth**-Jesus' inclusion of baptism as part of the discipleship process points to the necessity of walking people beyond conversion into a deeper relationship dynamic with Jesus. These catalytic moments propel us forward in our relationship with Christ.



Discuss: Conversion or Discipleship? Which one of these receives the greatest amount of your time, energy and resources? Does your discipleship strategy propel people to develop and grow in their relationship with Jesus?

- **Fosters Community**- One of Jesus' greatest discipleship strategies was "being" with His disciples. Although the models may vary, Jesus demonstrated that effective discipleship requires us to walk alongside people in their daily lives and demonstrate throughout our own lives how to live out the gospel in meaningful and practical ways.



Discuss: How crucial a role does community currently play in your discipleship strategy?