



Movements of **Discipleship**

Introduction

Just like the human body has different movements that enable us to function effectively, so our discipleship has different movements that enable us to effectively and fruitfully be disciples of Jesus. At Chapel Hill Uniting Church we call these the 5 C's:

- Conversion
- Community
- Catalyst
- Conversations
- Contribute

This booklet contains a description of Christian Discipleship, including 5 practices that the church has embraced for 2000 years to facilitate growth in each of these areas.

It also outlines the 5 C's including key scriptures that describe the importance of each movement.

As you read and ponder these movements, I pray that the Holy Spirit will unlock the fulness of discipleship in you.

Rev Karen Ross

What is Discipleship? Why be a Disciple of Jesus?

At its core, discipleship is following someone's teaching and becoming more and more like him or her. In the Christian faith, that someone is Jesus.

Discipleship starts with the realization that I have turned from God. I have not obeyed God and therefore I have sinned against God and stepped outside of the heart of God for me. This inclination has caused me to be alienated from God.

The penalty for sin is death – both physically and spiritually. And the only way to be saved, the only way to be bought back into relationship with God is through Jesus. He made the way. He bridged the gap. He paid the penalty for our sin by dying on the cross. His blood covers our sin.

Therefore, discipleship starts with believing and receiving Jesus as our saviour, and allowing Him to be the ruler or the Lord of our life.

This is a new rebirth. A whole new beginning. Everything within us comes alive – it's as though our entire life has been lived in black and white, and now all of a sudden, colour has emerged. And from this point on, we want to follow the teachings of Jesus and we want to become more like Him.

None of this is possible without the Holy Spirit who makes Jesus known to us.

Being a disciple of Jesus is the greatest adventure you will ever have. It will change your life!

Key Scriptures

Romans 6:20-23:

What are the wages of sin? What is the free gift?

Ephesians 2:1-6:

What does the Bible say about our state of being before and after Jesus?

1 Peter 2:24:

What did Jesus do for us on the cross?

John 1:18; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 4:14-16:

According to the Bible, what enables Jesus to do this for us?

Ezekiel 36:25-27:

What did God promise to give His people?

John 1:12-13:

What happens when we receive Jesus as Lord and saviour?

John 3:3-7:

What did Jesus say must happen before we can enter the kingdom of God?

John 8:31-32:

How did Jesus say we can know we are truly His disciples?

Luke 6:40:

What does Jesus say is an important aspect of discipleship?

Mark 8:34:

What three things did Jesus say all disciples must do?

Matthew 4:18-22:

What did Jesus tell His first disciples to do?

John 14:15-17; 26:

What has Jesus promised to give us?

Acts 2:38-39:

How do we receive the Holy Spirit?

2000 Years of Tried & True Discipleship Methods

Discipleship through Growth of Knowledge

The Bible is more than an instruction manual or a rulebook. It is more than a random collection of stories, poems and letters. It is the voice of God communicating with us. That is why the Bible is often referred to as the 'word of God'. Therefore, knowing and understanding the scriptures enables us to grow in our discipleship.

Discipleship through Mentoring:

Discipleship through mentoring did not begin with Christianity (except in the sense of discipleship toward Christlikeness). In fact, one can find discipleship systems in the form of mentorship or apprenticeship in many pre-Christian societies, perhaps most of them. This is the key way we teach and pass on the faith to the next generation.

Discipleship through Joining in Christ's Suffering

Trials and even persecution may be inevitable for any follower of Jesus. The New Testament writers, and Jesus himself, talk about joining in the suffering/trials of Jesus. A by-product is these trials will yield both personal as well as corporate growth and strength.

Discipleship through Imitating the Asceticism of Jesus

Many have sought to become like Jesus by imitating the ascetic aspects of Jesus' life. For them, discipleship to Jesus meant total imitation of the life of Christ. To take but one example, the intentional poverty of Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), the son of a wealthy Italian merchant, laid the groundwork for an entire Franciscan order that would 'live simply so that we can use any wealth we have for the benefit of others.'

Discipleship through **Spiritual Practices**

From a bird's-eye view, this approach is similar to the previous one since it advocates the imitation of Jesus's life; however, it is broader in that it is not focused exclusively on habits of abstinence and self-denial. It also includes practices like solitude, simplicity, fasting, prayer, worship, meditation, Bible study, spiritual guidance, journaling, and even celebration.

Helpful Resources

- ✓ *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth*. G. Fee & D. Stewart
- ✓ *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*. G Fee & D. Stewart
- ✓ *Mentoring*. John Mallison
- ✓ *The Purple Book*. R. Brooks & S. Murrell
- ✓ *Franciscan Spirituality*. Brother Ramon
- ✓ *Celebration of Discipline*. Richard Foster.
- ✓ *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*. Adele Calhoun
- ✓ *Following the Way*. (Podcast) John Mark Comer
- ✓ *Open Doors Website* (supporting the persecuted church)

The 5 C's

1. Experiencing Ongoing **Conversion** through Jesus

In the Christian faith, conversion means embracing an ongoing change of heart that aligns us with the life and teachings of Jesus.

The English word *conversion* is a translation of the Greek word *metanoia* which can also be translated as *repentance*. This term signifies not simply a change of mind but a change of heart.

Conversion is not a new attitude nor a richer personal life nor a new self-understanding but rather a spiritual rebirth, a new existence, which is a gift of the Spirit of God.

In John 3 Jesus has a conversation with a religious leader and He says this:

⁵“Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.” (John 3:5-6)

Putting all this together, conversion means being changed inwardly by the Spirit of God, and it means declaring and demonstrating that change outwardly through a life committed to following and becoming like Jesus.

Conversion is not a one-off experience, but rather a life long journey of transformation. As we spend time reading and applying the scriptures, and as we spend time in the presence of God gazing upon His majesty and holiness, as we walk according to the Spirit and not the flesh, we are changed – and that’s why *Experiencing Ongoing **Conversion** Through Jesus* is such an important part of being and making disciples.

Key Scriptures

Joel 2:12-1:

What does God desire of us?

John 3:5-6:

What does the Spirit give birth to?

Acts 2:38-39:

What must we do to receive the Holy Spirit?

2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Titus 3:5:

What does the Spirit do in us?

2 Thessalonians 3:5:

What are our hearts directed to?

Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:22-24:

What is our role in conversion?

2 Corinthians 7:10.

What is Godly grief and why is it important?

Hebrews 4:12:

What does God's word have the power to do?

John 17:17-19:

What did Jesus ask God to do for us?

James 1:19-25:

What must we do to be blessed?

Romans 12:1-2:

What are we to do with our mind?

2 Corinthians 10:3-5:

What are we to do with our thoughts?

2 Peter 3:17-18:

What are we to be aware of, and grow in?

Philippians 3:12-16:

What does Paul call us to lay hold of?

Colossians 2:6-7:

What are we to do from now on?

2 Corinthians 4:16-18:

What happens when we persevere in conversion?

2. Doing Life and Faith in **Community**

Amidst the busyness and fragmentation of contemporary life, many people yearn for the experience of authentic community. Many people feel lonely or disconnected and cut off from any real sense of belonging. They long for a church that is more than just an organization, more than the occasional gathering place for an inspirational talk and a chat over coffee.

We were created with the desire for a fulfilling and deeply satisfying community. We all need someone who can make us a cup of coffee and already knows how we take it — a community where knowledge of both the mundane and intimate is connected with a security that comes from mutual trust and a commitment to doing life and faith together.

God is a community of three. God is throughout eternity the community of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Therefore, creating a community of people who love God and walk according to God's will, is the overarching essence and purpose of God.

In community we receive encouragement, support, and inspiration. But we also have moments of frustration, disappointment and hurt. All of these experiences help us to grow in faith, hope and love.

Consequently, a disciple of Jesus cannot be a Christian on their own. God created us to need other Christians to do life and faith with in order to be complete – and that's why *Doing Life and Faith in **Community*** is such an important part of being and making disciples.

Key Scriptures

Genesis 1:26; 28.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12:

What are the benefits of being in community?

1 Corinthians 12:13:

What forms us a one body?

1 Corinthians 13:

What is Christian community marked by?

John 15:12-13:

What is the measure of Christian love?

1 John 4:11-12

How is God's love perfected in us?

Ephesians 4:1-6:

What behaviours maintain unity in the church?

Ephesians 4:25-32:

How do we relate to each other in the church?

Hebrews 3:13-14; 10:23-25:

How do we help each other to remain faithful to the end?

James 5:16:

How do we experience healing in community?

Galatians 6:1-2:

How do we bring correction/reconciliation to each other?

Acts 4:41-47"

What enabled growth within the first church?

Romans 15:14:

How can we help each other grow in faith?

1 Peter 4:7-11:

What disciplines are we called to embrace?

1 Thessalonians 5:12-15:

What are Paul's final instructions for the church?

3. Living as Kingdom Catalysts

As disciples of Jesus we are called to be in the world, not of the world, bringing the rule and reign of God to the people we meet.

There are two components to this: kingdom and catalyst.

Firstly, the term the Kingdom of God/Heaven signifies God's sovereign, and dynamic rule and reign. The Kingdom of God lay at the heart of Jesus' life and His teaching.

Secondly, the word catalyst. In the science world, a catalyst is a substance that increases the rate of change without itself undergoing any permanent change.

Do you know what Jesus asked us to pray for? (Yes, the Lord's prayer is a model for prayer). But Jesus asked us to pray for this one thing:

*"The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to **send out labourers into his harvest.**"* (Matthew 9:38)

God created and called us to go into the harvest bringing the kingdom of God with us.

We do this by doing the works of Jesus with humility, love, and boldness. We cannot do this in our own strength, but by the power of the Holy Spirit living in us, as seen in the Acts Church.

The more we experience the kingdom of God, the more we are filled with passion, boldness, and grace – and that's why *Living as Kingdom Catalysts* is such an important part of being and making disciples.

Key Scriptures

Isaiah 42:6-9; Acts 13:47:

What is Jesus (and His disciples) called to be and do?

Matthew 5:13-16:

What are disciples of Jesus called to be?

Matthew 4:18-20. 28:19-20:

What are Jesus' first and last instructions to his Disciples?

John 14:12-14:

What did Jesus promise to do with faith?

Luke 9:1-6:

What has Jesus sent us to do? What has He given us?

Luke 4:16-19:

How was Jesus a catalyst for the Kingdom?

Acts 1:8.

What have we received and why?

Acts 2:43; 3:16:

What happened when the disciples stepped out in faith as Catalysts for the Kingdom?

Philippians 2:10-11:

What happens through the name of Jesus?

Acts 3:6-10:

How were Peter and John catalysts for the Kingdom.

Acts 14:1-10:

How were Paul and Barnabus Catalysts for the Kingdom?

Acts 8:4-8:

Why did the people of Samaria pay close attention to Philip?

4. **Conversations About Jesus**

Jesus Christ has entrusted to his followers the message of the gospel, which contains the power of God for salvation. The authority to share the good news comes through the Holy Spirit, who makes us witnesses.

Having conversations about Jesus with other people is an outpouring of our own faith and relationship with Jesus. But that doesn't mean it's always easy!

The goal of conversations about Jesus is not to convert people to Christianity. The goal is to tell the good news of what God has done. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convert the human soul.

We can reflect Christ through kind words, patience, a gentle temperament, choosing to love even difficult people, carefully monitoring what we watch or listen to, and treating others with respect. At the same time, we must do more than live godly lives. People need to hear the Gospel—to hear that God loves them, Christ died for them and that they can have new and eternal life.

Conversations about Jesus can happen at any time or place such as in the car, at the dinner table, after Sunday worship, over coffee with a friend. They do not have to be well planned four point sermons, but rather authentic expressions of one's life and faith with Jesus.

Jesus Christ has entrusted to us the message of the gospel, which contains the power of God for salvation – that's why **Conversations About Jesus** is such an important part of being and making disciples.

Key Scriptures

Mark 16:15:

What is Jesus' final command to His disciples?

Acts 1:8:

How are we empowered to have Conversations about Jesus?

Romans 1:16:

What power does the good news about Jesus have?

1 Peter 3:15-16:

What are we to be ready to do?

2 Corinthians 5:20:

What are we in Christ? And what do we do with that?

Matthew 10:7-14:

What do Conversations about Jesus open the door to?

Acts 8:26-40:

What happened as Philip talked about Jesus?

Romans 10:14-17:

What does this tell you about the power and beauty of Conversations about Jesus?

Acts 4:29-31:

What did the disciples pray for, and what happened next?

2 Corinthians 4:3-4:

Why are some people unable to receive the good news of Jesus?

Matthew 10:11-14:

What do we do when the message of Jesus is not heard?

Acts 20:24:

What is Paul's only aim?

5. **Contributing** to the Life of the Church

We serve Jesus by serving His body. We cannot be a disciple of Jesus without the church, neither can we be a disciple of Jesus without contributing to His body.

As the body of Christ, our goal is to embody and advance the kingdom of God until our Lord returns. Therefore, the church exists for the sake of the kingdom of God. And Jesus has called us and given us the privilege and the responsibility to participate in this.

Paul's image of the church as the body of Christ emphasizes the organic and living reality of the church as a people who share life with Jesus and with each other. Just as each part of the human body contributes to the health of the whole, so each member of the church through the exercise of unique ministry gifts, and offering their time and resources builds up the body of Christ.

Every disciple has a place in the church. And every disciple has a purpose in the church. That purpose is to build up the whole people of God in faith, hope, and love for more effective service in the world.

Therefore, we serve Jesus by serving His body – and that's why ***Contributing to the Life of the Church*** is such an important part of being and making Disciples.

Key Scriptures

Ephesians 1:15-22:

What does Paul thank God for? What does he pray for? Who is the head of the church?

Ephesians 4:11-16:

Why does God give different gifts? What are they to be used for?

1 Peter 2:4-5; 9:

What does Peter call the church? How does that help to define our contribution to the life of the church?

1 Peter 4:10-11:

Why do we serve each other with our gifts?

1 Corinthians 12:1-3:

What enables us to live under the Lordship of Jesus?

1 Corinthians 12:12-13:

How is the Body of Christ held together?

1 Corinthians 12:14-26:

What does this passage say about the importance of Contributing to the Life of the Church?

2 Corinthians 9:

In what ways are believers called to contribute to the life of the church?

Matthew 25:14-30:

What does this parable tell us about contributing to the life of the church?

Philippians 2:3-8:

What attitude underlies our Contributions?

Hebrews 6:9-12:

What are we called to do to the end?

Matthew 16:27; Rev. 22:12:

What does Jesus say we will receive?

Notes