Discipleship - We value the ministry of discipleship within the body of Christ. This is the biblical method and divine example of true spiritual ministry within the church. The principles of fellowship, teaching, spiritual authority and accountability are vital to the spiritual growth of Christians. Through the mutual encouragement of discipleship and the expression of each of our own personal spiritual gifts, we seek to be effective and productive ministers of the gospel. This is a vital part of the Christian life for all who seek to obey Christ.

We value the ministry of discipleship within the body of Christ. This is the biblical method and divine example of true spiritual ministry within the church. – It is important to consider what a fundamental part of Christian life that discipleship and disciplemaking really plays. For this let us first try and give a brief definition of what we mean when we say “discipleship.”

What is discipleship? Discipleship is what Jesus did with the twelve, and what the twelve did with the early church, in regard to how they lived out their relationships together and how they did spiritual ministry in and among the church, and the method by which the kingdom of God was spread among the nations. It includes some fundamental elements....

Elements of Disciplemaking –
SEEN in Jesus + the Twelve - -The Twelve + Early Church

- Evangelism
- Intimate personal relationship
- Mutual personal commitment
- Personal instruction
  - Teach them to obey
  - Teach them everything I have commanded you
- Personal Accountability – become Doers of the Word
- Commitment to disciplemaking after maturity

These elements can be clearly seen in the scripture. Let us consider Jesus command to all His disciples...

Matthew 28:18-20 - 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Let’s also consider a scripture where we see the disciples actually carrying out this commandment in the book of Acts.
Acts 2:41-47 - 41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. NASB

All these elements of discipleship can be seen in the example of disciplemaking that Jesus gave us. In other words, look at His relationship with the twelve, what did He do? How did He do it? By this we can clearly see the divine example of how we carry out true spiritual ministry to the world and in the church. In the gospel accounts we see how Jesus evangelized the public, and how He ministered to the growth of His disciples. He would preach and teach the multitudes publically……

Matthew 5:1-2 - 5:1 And when He saw the multitudes, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 And opening His mouth He began to teach them, NASB

Luke 5:3 - 3 And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the multitudes from the boat. NASB

And He would teach and admonish His disciples privately……

Mark 4:33-34 - 33 And with many such parables He was speaking the word to them as they were able to hear it; 34 and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples. NASB

Mark 9:33-37 - 33 And they came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, "What were you discussing on the way?" 34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. 35 And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all." 36 And taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, 37 "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me." NASB

Therefore WE VALUE THE MINISTRY OF DISCIPLESHIP in the church because it is the method of ministry which Jesus taught us both by word and example! Therefore this is to become the standard for our ministry to one another.

The principles of fellowship, teaching, spiritual authority and accountability are vital to the spiritual growth of Christians. – Since Jesus employed this method to nurture and grow His disciples in grace and in knowledge, it only naturally follows that these are the fundamental elements of our lives together. These principles of discipleship are evident throughout the teaching of the New Testament.

Fellowship

Acts 2:41-42 - 41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. NASB

Hebrews 3:13 - 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. NASB

Hebrews 10:23-25 - 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. NASB
Paul and Barnabas make disciples -

Acts 11:25-26 - 25 And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; 26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Teaching

Acts 2:41-42 - 41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Romans 15:14 - 14 And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.

Acts 14:21-22 - 21 And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch. 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

Acts 5:42 - 42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Spiritual Authority & Accountability

Spiritual Leaders are commanded to lead, shepherd and teach.

Acts 20:28 - 28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Believers are commanded to respect and obey the leaders.

1 Thess 5:12-15 - 12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, 13 and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. 14 And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. 15 See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men.

Hebrews 13:17 - 17 Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Believers are commanded to restore one another and hold one another accountable.

Galatians 6:1-3 - 1 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ. 3 Brethren, if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

1 Thess 5:14 - 14 And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.

James 5:19-20 - 19 My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins.

Therefore WE VALUE THESE PRINCIPLES OF DISCIPLESHIP because they cause the body to grow and build itself up in love as each member fulfills their particular part.

Through the mutual encouragement of discipleship and the expression of each of our own personal spiritual gifts, we seek to be effective and productive ministers of the gospel - These things all work together for the edification of the church and cause the individual members of the body to grow in respect to salvation and become like Jesus in thought, word and deed. As each of us uses our own God given spiritual gifts to minister to one another, we fulfill that God-ordained order which He has established for the growth of His church.
1 Corinthians 12:27-28 - 27 Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. NASB

We are all members of the body together, but the body is made up of individual members. As each one of us fulfills the work of service which fits our gifting, the whole body is built up and strengthened, and we grow into maturity.

Ephesians 4:11-16 - 11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. NASB

Therefore we value the use of spiritual gifts among the body so that we can all be built up in the faith and become productive, fruit-bearing ministers of the gospel. We all have the God-given responsibility to fulfill the great commission and to make disciples. Therefore we are to employ our unique spiritual gifts in order to build up the body and also to evangelize the world around us.

Matthew 28:18-20 - 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. NASB

This is a vital part of the Christian life for all who seek to obey Christ. – It is unmistakable that discipleship is a fundamental part of the Christian life. It is what Jesus taught His disciples to do, and then commanded them to go and teach others the same way of life. If we fail to obey this teaching, we are failing to fulfill the most basic elements of Christian life. Jesus has commanded us to make disciples. At some point in our Christian life we need to become the teachers and ministers God has called us to be.

Luke 6:40 - 40 "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher. NASB

If we are to be like Jesus and do what He does and go where He goes, then we must be about the business of making disciples. This is Jesus desire in calling us to follow Him....

Acts 1:8 - 8 but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. ” NASB

Matt 4:18-20 - 18 And walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 And they immediately left the nets, and followed Him. NASB