

# Disciplemaking in the Early Church

## What is discipleship?

In one sentence **discipleship is what Jesus did with the twelve**, and what the twelve did with the early church. Let's look at three simple elements of discipleship.

- Discipleship is what it means to be a follower of Christ.
  - It is the responsibility of every Christian
- Discipleship is God's method for growing the church.
  - Reproductive
- Discipleship is a non-optional mandate for those who will obey Christ.
  - Disciplemaking must be done-

**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.

## Elements of Disciplemaking – seen in Jesus + the Twelve

- 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

## **Question -**

How well did the disciples carry out the ministry of disciplemaking as they were taught it by Jesus?

Great Commission is restated –

**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

Number of disciples was increasing - Reproduction

**Acts 6:7** - 7 And the word of God kept on spreading; and **the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem**, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith. NASB

Paul baptized and discipled -

**Acts 9:18-20** - 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and **was baptized**; 19 and he took food and was strengthened. Now **for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, 20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus** in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." NASB

Paul and Barnabus 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. NASB

#### Making Disciples

**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." NASB

### Question -

What elements of discipling do we see in the book of Acts? Is it consistent with what we learned about Jesus method of making disciples? **Check the boxes on the elements seen in the text below.**

- 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 discipling after maturity

**Acts 2:41-47**- 41 They then that received his word were **baptized**: and there were added [unto them] in that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they **continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers**. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 And all **that believed were together**, and had all things common; 45 and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. 46 And **day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home**, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 praising God, and having favor with all the people. And **the Lord added to them day by day** those that were saved.

1. v-41 – Baptizing
2. v-42 - Continually in Apostles teaching, (Jesus teaching extended)
3. v-42/44 - Fellowship – A vital element of Discipling
  - i. Relational, eating together, intimacy
  - ii. Sharing and conversing allows Q&A and relevancy to learning
  - iii. Discipling cannot be impersonal
4. v-42 - Given to prayer –
  - i. Aligning with God's will together brings intimacy and accountability
  - ii. Teaches trust and reliance upon God
  - iii. Strengthens faith
5. v-43 – Awe of God as they learn and grow
  - i. Coming to know Christ bears the fruit of Worship, Reverence and Awe
  - ii. Strengthens faith
  - iii. Demonstration of the Spirit's power

6. v-44-45 – Demonstration of God’s love in sacrifice and sharing
  - i. Vital element of Discipling
  - ii. Great Commandment – Foremost in our teaching/example
7. v-46 – Worshipped at Church and homes
 

**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. NASB

  - i. Corporate worship is vital
  - ii. Small group ministry is vital
8. v-46-47 – Fruit of the Spirit
  - i. The product and evidence of saving faith
  - ii. The purpose of God fulfilled
9. v-47 – Evangelism/Reproduction
  - i. The product and evidence of Maturity
  - ii. The mandate and goal of Discipling

Q. Therefore in response to this, what should we assume should be the practice of the church today? (**Matthew 28:18-20**)

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Q. Should we be carrying out the ministry of discipling as they did and in the method they were instructed by Jesus? (**Matthew 4:19**)

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Q. Should every Christian be instructed and commissioned with carrying out this ministry?

**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

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Q. How do you suppose this would affect the expansion of the gospel?

**Matthew 24:14** - 14 "And **this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations,** and then the end shall come NASB

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Q. How do you suppose this would affect the love, fellowship, and personal holiness of the members of the local church?

**Acts 2:46-47** - 46 And **day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home,** they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 praising God, and having favor with all the people. And **the Lord added to them day by day** those that were saved.

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