



# BODY – DISCIPLESHIP

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## Introduction

We are on our journey in our new series Church Alive. **We're trusting that each one of us will be awakened in our God-given gifts and callings in a fresh way and begin to serve one another and make a difference in our city.**

We have examined the topic of Identity and are now turning our focus to the church as a Body. We have learned the importance of fellowship and the need for close, loving relationships in the church, as well as the value of the generations walking together in unity. Today we will examine Jesus' call for us to make disciples.

## Discipleship

Definition of discipleship:

Following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, being committed to the mission of Jesus, and helping people trust and follow Jesus, which includes the whole process from conversion through maturation and multiplication. (discipleship.org)

*Matthew 28:18-20 NKJV <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> 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.*

*Luke 24:46-49 NKJV <sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> And you are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."*

Why is discipleship important?

The means by which the Kingdom of God is growing and advancing in the world is: disciples of Jesus, making disciples of Jesus. This is the call, **Jesus' command, to** every Christian (follower of Jesus) throughout history, today and in the future.

This call is very important to explain!

Illustration: Story about Uncle Bob

Would you agree that my going to see Uncle Bob was very important?

**Jesus'** instruction to his Disciples here, is also very important!

Jesus had completed His mission (His plan):

- He showed His disciples how to live (for God and one another).
- Then He **died for the sin of the world...** He took the penalty of sin on our behalf, broke its grip on us through His shed blood on the cross, and removed its affect by rising from death to life!

And now, just before He was going to ascend, He came to give His followers one last, very important instruction: Go make disciples!!!

Was Jesus calling all Christians to make disciples?

YES:

*John 17:18-20 NKJV<sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. <sup>20</sup> I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word:*

When Jesus said, "Go and Make Disciples," what was He calling us to do?

1. **He's calling us to:** live like He did... **to follow Him!**

Throughout the Gospels we see Jesus calling His disciples to FOLLOW HIM.

Illustration: "Following" online (on social media) is very different to how Jesus defined following him. Following online is watching from the outside looking in. But Jesus said "Follow me!" which meant, to accompany him; to be with Him and imitate Him!

- *John 17:18 – As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.*
- *1 John 2:6 – He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk as He walked.*
- *1 John 4:17 – ... as He is, so are we in this world.*
- *1 Corinthians 11:1 - Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. (Paul)*
- *Ephesians 5:1-2 – <sup>1</sup>Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. <sup>2</sup>And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*

Following or imitating Christ involves sacrifice!

- *Luke 9:23 NKJV Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*

He calls us to love (one another) like He did.

*John 15:12-14 NKJV <sup>12</sup> This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do whatever I command you.*

If we love people: we'll force ourselves to confront our minds with the reality of their spiritual state.

What is their spiritual state?

*Matthew 9:36 NKJV But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary (wasting away) and scattered (discarded), like sheep having no shepherd.*

2. **He's calling us to: Preach** the Gospel (repentance & forgiveness of sin).

Our lifestyles are like lights; when we follow Jesus, putting others above ourselves, while preaching the Gospel! They stand out!! Our lives, when lived this way, become COMPELLING!

The Gospel calls people into Christ and His body through repentance and forgiveness.

Jesus' presence in His people is a witness to those without Christ, and our love for one another convinces them of the reality of the Kingdom of God.\*

*Mark 1:14-15 NKJV <sup>14</sup>Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, <sup>15</sup> and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand". Repent, and believe in the gospel."*

\*Illustration: If you see a great army coming at you, you would say something like, "War is at hand!"

When Jesus said:

...**repent** for the Kingdom is at hand He was saying that His physical presence was a sign to you that: (1) God is calling you to Himself and (2) everything was about to change! He was calling for change.

What is repentance?

From our website: To repent means to turn away from sin and selfishness and turn to God the Father who, loves us and sent His son to die on our behalf. True repentance is not just a change of mind, but a paradigm shift that changes the course of our lives.

When Jesus said repent, he was calling for change. People were living their lives; following their own selfish ambitions and Jesus came calling for repentance from their selfish, sinful, godless ways.

**STOP what you're doing!**

TURN AWAY from your selfish, sinful, Godless lifestyle.

TRUST Me as your Saviour!

TURN or (RETURN: Old Testament) **to God, HE LOVES YOU...**

The Kingdom of God is at hand!

3. The Church: A community of disciple making, disciple makers of disciple makers, who make disciple makers.

**Jesus' intension** for His glorious church, His obedient community of people, His bride, is that: we embody a life that reflects God and share this life with everyone in our relational spheres of influence. Our families, friends, colleagues, enemies, everyone, **and anyone...**

The church is not and never was a building or a day and time to meet in a building. The church is and has always been a people, empowered by the Spirit of God, making disciples who make disciples.

Illustration: Tools & the box they came in. Sometimes we're so fascinated with the box, the building, that we forget about making disciples.

Some notable quotes:

When the church becomes an end in itself, it ends. When Sunday school, as great as it is, becomes an end in itself, it ends. When small groups ministry becomes an end in itself, it ends. When the worship service becomes an end in itself, it ends. What we need is for discipleship to become the goal, and then the process never ends. The process is fluid. It is moving. It is active. It is a living thing. It must continue to go on. Every disciple must make disciples.

[Robby Gallaty - Author of: Growing Up / How to be a disciple who makes disciples]

Discipleship is not an option. Jesus says that if anyone would come after Me, He must follow Me.

[Tim Keller - Pastor, theologian, and Christian apologist. He is the chairman and co-founder of Redeemer City to City, which trains pastors for service around the world.]

Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.

[Dietrich Bonhoeffer - German Lutheran pastor, theologian, anti-Nazi dissident, and key founding member of the Confessing Church.]

Discipleship isn't a program or an event; it's a way of life. It's not for a limited time, but for our whole life. Discipleship isn't for beginners alone; it's for all believers for every day of their life. Discipleship isn't just one of the things the church does; it is what the church does.

[Bill Hull - Author of: The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ.]

Thriving churches have the Great Commission as the centrepiece of their vision, while dying churches have forgotten the clear command of Christ.

[Thom S. Rainer - Author of: Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive.]

#### 4. Empowered for the task.

Luke records (in Luke 24:49 and again in Acts 1:4) Jesus telling His disciples, after giving them their most important **instruction, to wait in Jerusalem for the "Promise of My Father,"** the Holy Spirit, to empower them to be witnesses.

We see the result of what happened in Acts 2, when the Spirit of God came and Peter preached the Gospel to those in Jerusalem.

*Acts 2:38 NKJV And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

And how this community continued:

READ: Acts 2:40-47

## Conclusion

In a world:

- That is hostile toward the Gospel and the message of repentance,
- Where self has become the god of choice,
- Where church goers are comfortable with their spirituality consisting of 2 hours on a Sunday and 2 hours during the week.
- Where “biblical” theological views are just as divided as the hundreds of “Christian” sects that exist around the world.
- Where people are lost, weary and scattered.

The call to follow Jesus and be disciples, who make disciples, is more relevant than ever.

Potential of a disciple making disciple:

- If 1 Christian intentionally takes the responsibility to make 1 disciple making disciple, once a month, for a year, that 1 Christian would potentially have reached over 4000 people!
- If you carry that into a second year the potential reach is over 16 million people!
- If 100 Christians intentionally take the responsibility to make 1 disciple making disciple each, once a year, for 5 years, they would potentially have reached over 3000 people!

Jesus has called every one of his followers to be disciple making, disciple makers of disciple makers, who make disciple makers.

**If you're a Christian**, a follower of Jesus, who are those you are discipling, to make disciple making, disciple makers?

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. If Jesus has so clearly called us to continue His mission and make disciples, why do we not see more Christians doing it?
2. How do you understand Jesus' command to make disciples and what is your experience with making disciples?
3. How can we encourage one another/ our CCA community to follow (obey) Jesus in this more?

CONSIDER: Can you commit to walk with ONE PERSON in a discipleship relationship for ONE YEAR?

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