

INVESTING IN A FEW

When Jesus invested time discipling the men who would carry on his ministry, he was very selective. He didn't disciple any and every person that He could. His method was to choose a manageable number of guys and give them most of His time. We call this being intentional. To be effective in discipling others, it requires carving out significant amounts of time that you reserve for just a few people. We suggest a group with 2-4 others or 1-on-1. With a small group, there is greater opportunity for personal attention and training.

Read Mark 1:14-20, Mark 2:14, Mark 3:13-14

Jesus did not neglect preaching to the massive amounts of people that were far from God, but He could be more useful with His time by training leaders who could disciple those masses by helping them follow His teachings. We must reject the notion that bigger is better or more successful. People need hands-on attention and nurturing to be effectively disciplined. In addition, there is only so much of you that you can authentically give, so instead of giving a little of you to a lot of people, why not give all of you to a few people? In this case, smaller and deeper is better than bigger.

Discuss: Why is investing in a few people more beneficial for your time and their time?

Commitments to investing in a few people

Focusing on Jesus

Jesus taught His followers that remaining in Him and loving Him was the key to living a fruitful life. When we disciple others we want to keep Jesus at the center of everything. A disciple maker's main material is the scriptures, for through them we know Jesus. The more we know Jesus, the more we love Jesus and the more we love Jesus, the more we obey or follow Him.

Read Col. 1:28-29, Eph. 4:11-15

Discuss: This principle observed.

Journey

Jesus invested in His disciples for 3 years before leaving earth. Effective disciple makers understand that discipleship is a long-term time investment. We suggest a 12-18 month investment. You must set your mind and count the cost for how long this investment is. We must prepare our hearts for delayed gratification. There are no quick solutions to teach people to follow Jesus.

Read John 14:9, Gal. 4:19

Journeying with people also helps create space to go really deep with them. We want to help people root themselves in the gospel and uproot all that is not aligned with the gospel. This requires a lot of time laying foundation, working through perspective changes, and equipping people to be dependent on God.

Journeying with a few people also makes us realize that we must depend on prayer to see people changed to follow Jesus.

Discuss: This principle observed

Accountability

Jesus' disciples were accountable to Him. They were expected to live lives of obedience and mission. Effective disciple makers have accountable relationships with those they invest in. This means that we must have the courage to confront people when they are in patterns of sin and stronghold. We must learn how to tell someone the truth, in a gentle and kind way.

Read John 15:10, Mark 6:30, Luke 9:10

Along with this, Jesus was vulnerable and transparent to allow His disciples to see Him physically demonstrate a kingdom life. He modeled how to pray, quote scripture, evangelize, and give his life to serve others. Effective disciple makers demonstrate how to follow Jesus. They are also accountable for their ongoing discipleship.

Read John 15:12-15, Luke 11:1-4, Phil 4:9

Things we should make a focus of accountability in

- Fellowship with God
- Holiness
- Obedience to God's word
- Disciple making etc.

Discuss: This principle observed.

Our Strategy

Because investing in a few is so important, our discipleship strategy is to form discipleship groups.

What are d-groups?

Discipleship groups are same gender, small groups of 3-5 people, including the leader. These groups are closed groups, that agree to meet together for 12-18 months of intentional growth. The purpose of discipleship groups is to lead people to learn to obey all that Jesus has commanded and train them to do the work of the ministry. Discipleship groups have a rhythm of formal meetings and informal times of life-on-life mentoring. Discipleship groups are key to our disciple-making strategy because we believe that God's plan to grow the church is for every member of the body to be trained to use their gifts to minister to others. (Matt. 4:19, Luke 6:40, 2 Tim. 2:2)

Where did this come from?

Jesus ministered in groups

- Congregation - Our corporate worship environment (Luke 10:1-23)
- Core - Our community group environment (John 13:1-5). Jesus did life with 12 men, we want community groups to be a place where people find relationships and do life together following Jesus.
- Cell - 3 closest disciples (Matt. 17:1-2) This is where the d-group model comes from. Jesus gave 3 men significant attention, accountability, and training, we want to pursue that intentionality with just a few people as well.

- Crowds - Multiplied his disciples to lead the masses (John 6:10-13)

Discuss: Can you describe a small, intentional environment that helped your spiritual growth? What kinds of pressures do we face concerning size of groups we minister to? Can you think of a few names that you would focus on if you were to start a d-group?

Pray

Ask God to help you consider the adjustments you would need to make in your life to invest in a few people.