

Belong to a Life Group

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Sunday, January 31, 2016

Matt. 28:18-20(NLT) ~ ¹⁸Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

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Did you know a lot of churches use the same type of strategy when it comes to making disciples- “swing hard, close your eyes and hope for the best.”

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- Seeking out and making disciples is not a suggestion or option, it is a commandment for Christians and the local church of which they belong.
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- If we as a church are obedient to the commands of Jesus, then our everlasting mission, our continual goal is to “go and make disciples.”
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- Question- have we been obedient to our mandate to go and make disciples?
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1). What is a disciple?

## 2). How do you make people disciples?

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Some people believe that a disciple is a person who possesses a lot of biblical knowledge.

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· Unfortunately we have become religiously educated beyond our level of obedience.

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James 1:22(NLT) ~ But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.

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Others have a strategy that a disciple is made by continually being on mission-doing the work.

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· This type of strategy leads to a group of baby Christians without the foundation needed to defend their beliefs.

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1Peter 3:15(NIV) ~ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

### 1). What is a disciple?

The word "disciple" comes from the Greek word to "be a learner."  
But it not only means to just be a learner it also means, "to be a learner accompanied by endeavor."

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· A disciple is a follower of Christ striving to become more like Jesus in every aspect of their life.

Luke 9:23(NLT) ~ Then he said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me.

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John 12:26(NLT) ~ <sup>26</sup> Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me....

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2). How do you make people disciples?

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Matt. 4:19(NLT) ~ Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!”

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· Jesus was calling very common men to spend time with him on mission. The disciples were gaining knowledge by spending time with Jesus and one another.

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Jesus invited people to follow him and when they agreed to do so-the first thing Jesus did was to get these new followers in a group.

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· A disciple of Christ will automatically move in two directions:
1). They will move toward Christ (come follow me...)
2). They will move toward others (I will show you how to fish for people...)

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· Discipleship does not happen in solitary confinement and it cannot happen without being a part of a group of other disciples.

Did you know the phrase “each other”; “one another” is used 58 times in the New Testament alone.

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· Heb.10:25 (NLT) ~ ²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

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· 1 Thess. 4:18(NLT) ~ So encourage each other.....

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· Rom. 12:10(NLT) ~ Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.

· Gal. 6:2(NLT) ~ Share each other’s burdens....

· 1Cor. 12:25(NLT) ~ This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other.

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· James 5:16(NLT) ~ Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

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· Gal. 5:13(NLT) ~ .....let love make you serve one another.

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· Col. 3:13(NLV) ~Forgive each other.

Acts 2:42~47(NLT) ~ They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give

to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

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- The earliest form of the church was dedicated to large public gatherings and also smaller home fellowships. ( they met together in the temple courts and they met in their homes)

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Forty Years following the church's start-the temple was destroyed so their venue for large gatherings went away-so they had to meet in homes and small groups.

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For the next 300 years the church met in homes and small groups. It wasn't safe to meet in large gatherings. Many larger cities had thousands of Christians living there but they met in groups of 10-30 people in homes. It was also illegal for churches to own property-so they had to meet in homes and small groups.

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Constantine legalized Christianity in 313 A.D. and the church was never the same. The pattern of home fellowships was replaced by a system focused on public worship led by official clergy. Many things were improved for the church, but for the next 1200 years the notion of the priesthood of the believer was lost. The church became dependent on trained ministers who took over the function of helping people grow in their faith. People were discouraged from reading the bible and told to allow the professional clergy to teach them.

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- Circles of fellowship became forward –facing lines of observers.

In the 1500's Martin Luther introduced the reformation which emphasized the priesthood of the believer again. That the church wasn't just a human organization it was invisible and lived inside of people who showed up for worship.

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Then John Wesley in the 1700's began reaching an audience outside of the church walls. He realized a weekly worship service was not enough to enrich new believers. So he used classes and groups to help people connect and change.

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So Sunday School and many other types of classes emerged and they were great. However many classes outgrew their ability to foster interpersonal relationships. There is simply not enough time for participants to talk about life and complete a lesson. So we ended up increasing head knowledge but not heart involvement.

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· Disciples who seek to grow in their faith need a community that both merge the truth of scripture and the ability to discuss the challenges of life. We believers need a special place to encourage one another to stay on the spiritual path.

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· Disciples need a community that motivates us to mission. To maintain an outward focus and not just be focused on ourselves.