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Discipleship: Helping New Christians Grow in the Faith

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Discipleship: Helping New Christians Grow in the Faith Jacob Bundy Thu, 03/14/2024 - 10:00 One of the great joys of the Christian life is helping to nurture the faith of young Christians. There's just nothing like leading someone to Christ and then encouraging them as they take steps of faith and grow in the Lord. In its pure definition, New Testament discipleship means to be a fully-committed follower of Christ. This commitment should be the very DNA of our Christian walk. Furthermore, as church leaders, developing disciples is our mission—given to us by Christ Himself. Shortly before Jesus ascended into Heaven, He commanded His disciples to go, baptize, and teach (Matthew 28:19–20). Thus, both evangelism and discipleship have been at the heart of God's purpose for the church since its earliest days. So how do we engage in this essential process of discipleship? And what are its results? Discipleship helps believers grow up spiritually. “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock” (Matthew 7:24). Spiritual growth takes place as believers build their lives on the rock-solid foundation of the Word of God. This is one reason biblical preaching is so important. Every Sunday, when a pastor preaches, he may not realize it, but he is discipling his people in the Word of God. By the way he handles it, he teaches them how to handle it. By the way he is moved by it, he teaches them to be moved by it. By the way he obeys it, he teaches them to obey it. But it's not just the pastor who models how to use God's Word. When new Christians have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with a “discipler” as they work through a discipleship program, they gain invaluable knowledge from God's Word. In this setting, a new Christian has the opportunity to ask questions, develop basic, systematic doctrine, learn Baptist distinctives, and be personally encouraged in early steps of Christian growth. (In our church, we use Continue by Paul Chappell for our formal discipleship program.) Discipleship helps believers give back generously. “And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:27–28). One of the challenges of parenting young children is rooting out their innate self-centeredness and teaching them to think first and foremost of others. This task for parents is not always easy, but it is vital if their children are going to grow into maturity. The same can be said of new Christians. It's important that they learn that the church isn't just a place where others serve them; it's also a place where they serve others. It's important that they learn that it is more blessed to give than receive. It's important that they learn to give back to the Lord and to others. Part of discipleship, then, is inviting growing believers to give and serve. I love sharing with newer Christians specifically how God has blessed my family's giving in the past, and I love encouraging them to take steps of faith in this area of their lives. I also love sharing with them the various spiritual gifts that God gives members within a church body and encouraging them to use their gifts to serve others. Discipleship helps believers go forth passionately. “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Evangelism is a calling God places on the life of every Christian, and new believers are not exempt from that calling. In fact, new Christians are typically the people in the church that have the most connections to lost people. What an incredible opportunity that is for those young Christians to see the multiplying effect of evangelism first hand. As a pastor, I work diligently to engage new Christians in our church outreach. Pairing a new believer with an experienced soulwinner helps the new believer learn how to invite others to church, how to share their testimony, and how to take a lost person through the plan of salvation. When we, as church leaders, give consistent emphasis to the process of discipleship, God blesses those efforts, and new Christians become mature in the Lord. Category Outreach & Discipleship Ministry Resources Continue Continue Dr. Paul Chappell Tags Discipleship Local Church Church

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