

Shepherding and Discipleship

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Thursday, 2-3:15 PM

Two important kinds of Biblical ministry

“Shepherding”

general oversight of Ctn in a home group or equivalent ministry sphere. This would encompass even unbelievers who are coming. Pre-Ctns, baby Ctns, growing Ctns, etc. We have a responsibility to generally oversee people.

“Discipling”

The intentional development of Ctn workers / leaders in a home group. We are focusing intentionally on certain people who will eventually become leaders.

The VIP is the concept AND that we are on the same page as other leaders.

Shepherding

Help people with their own growth
Maybe a sister is downcast and I help
Helping people with their own growth.
others.

Discipleship

Ministering to others
“Follow me and I will make you fishers of
men. I will help you learn to serve
others.

Hoping to persuade them to become
Christ’s disciple. It is about me.
Helping them come to the commitment to
Follow Christ.

Trying to develop those who have become
Christ’s disciple

Unconditional

Not entirely unconditional – i.e. if some-
One beating people up after group.
There is discipline for those in a chronic
Pattern of sin.

Conditional

“Unless you are willing to...you can’t be my
disciple.
What conditions should you hold out for?
Additional commitments I’m asking you to
make.
“That’s not fair. That’s not biblical.” Yes,
it is biblical.

Sporadic and ongoing. As I become
Aware of someone’s need.
As I am burdened by God.

Consistent and for a period of time.

Let’s get together privately for a time.
At front end we are saying, “let’s do this
For a period of time. But time will come
When we are discipling others and can’t
Meet together. Many months, usually years.
If we succeed a time will come when we
Will split. Painful! Also in small groups.
If we don’t feel pain something wrong but

Something we've decided to do for the welfare of others.

Wider scope

Narrower scope.

Shepherding a whole range of people

Help develop more rapidly

Both ministries are highly relational. Shepherding relationships can and do develop into discipling relationships. But if you don't see and focus on the differences there will be problems.

“Do you want to work with me on becoming a more effective Ctn worker?” I don't ask them if they want me to disciple them or to become “my disciple”

They not only have to say they are willing. They have to demonstrate they are willing.

Why so Important?

We find two conditions fairly commonly.

~ Shepherding without discipleship fails to develop a work-force required for healthy group multiplication. How's the discipling coming in the group? What does that look like? This group will not grow into two healthy home groups. The real problem in multiplication is leaders, we have to be intentional and intensive helping them become leaders.

When shepherding is the main thing going on great problems result. A whole host of disfunction sets in.

~ Discipling people who should be shepherded leads to needless misunderstandings and poor time stewardship for disciplers. Why are you meeting weekly with 6 or 7 people each week? Those getting together with you may not be convinced they want to be a worker in God's kingdom. Now, you discover this. Now you say we can't get together? Problems! People who need shepherding want a friend. If they aren't taking discipleship seriously will not often move toward becoming workers.

Is your goal in discipling always to raise up other leaders. Just about everyone over time could become someone who can help lead. Home groups is the place where true leaders are being raised up.

In healthy groups the leaders and workers understand these different ministries and are appropriately involved in both of them. We are all doing our part to shepherding *and* developing leaders.

What if I get accused of being

The Benefits of Good Shepherding?

- ~ Builds loving unity within the group
 - In home group, what a great time to intentionally get acquainted with others not in My sphere.

- ~ Models the importance of shepherding to those being disciplined.
 - We are trying to develop people who know how to be good shepherds.
 - They won't learn it if you don't model it.

- ~ Enables workers/leaders to help each other in their ministries.
 - They will discover an area of ignorance that I've missed. They will help us.
 - And we will help each other.
 - Protects against carnal territorialism.

It is part of the ethos of Xenos!
That shared set of priorities and convictions that shape that group!
It has a powerful influence in the group.
It is caught, more than taught.

Discipleship is only part of the ethos at Xenos.

- ~ Is a key to appropriate discipleship selection.
 - Highlights the importance of this very important relationships!
 - This is one of the most important decisions we make in how we invest our lives.
 - We need to pick carefully!
 - Lots of problems happen because of careless decisions about who we disciple.

Some will always be on "the committed fringe"
The group being shepherded are benefiting from those serving them.
They are always being challenged to discipleship.
Have you ever considered that the reason you are still in the same place is that you are selfish and not living to serve others.

Selection in Discipleship

- ~ You can't make good selections in discipleship if you aren't shepherding!
- ~ While shepherding someone prayerfully consider: (nothing exotic here)
 - ~ Do they evidence interest in God's Word – a learner
 - ~ Are they sensitive to and honest about God's discipline in their lives?
 - Much of God's leadership in our lives is in reference to moral issues.
 - The HS of God touches the moral areas of my life that are priority
 - And will stop growth and ministry! A disciple generally say "yes" to
 - The areas God places His fingers on. Newborn pagans don't know
 - Enough to resist the work of God's Spirit. It is long term Ctns who
 - Are leading a double life and are whitewashed tombs.
 - ~ Are they willing to serve other people?
 - Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

We live to give!

This isn't just about me.

I'm starting to see that God wants me to give my life away to others

“if you lose your life for Cx you will gain it”

~ Do they take challenging steps of faith?

The Lord calls on you to do something that scares the snot out of you.

Those steps

Admit my need for fellowship

Acknowledge that God wants me to...pray, lead, go,

Finally letting go of...my wallet, confront parents on an issue.

Is your faith vital? Are you responding to these challenges?

~ Do they make the time to be involved in the group?

We are trying to help each other become better workers

It you don't have time for the group and to get involved with other

People and be “in the yoke” I would be personally reluctant

To disciple that person.

There are times when God leads you to be involved in a person's life

For a time and the relationship is not discipleship.

~ Carefully discern their spiritual condition! JC and Paul did this! We have to categorize people in order to have healthy relationships. We have to make discernments about people's spiritual condition! He was labeling people. But do so according to proper standards, biblical criteria, and that we do so with a redemptive attitude toward everyone. You are responsible to disciple other believers according to Matt 28:19-20. 2Tim:2:2 Can't ratchet this into a bar code we can scan people with.

If generally, “yes” consider discipling even though they may have many other rough edges.

Addictions...porn habit...etc. like Jesus' disciples.

But there is evidence that there is hunger to be Christ's disciple.

If generally “no”, resist discipling even though they have many other attractive qualities...like money...personality...talent...talent that our group needs...leadership ability...smart...eloquent...I like hanging around them...numbers...we enjoy the same hobbies...

This is carnal decision-making. Not evidence of a hunger for God. Not many wise, not many noble, not many....

Do you ever consider “personality” matches when considering discipleship relationships? No, deliberately not.

Man to man; woman to woman.

Age is not an issue.

Does the older Ctn look up to the younger Ctn.

Selection in Discipleship

~ Moving into a discipleship relationship:

~ Consider giving a “preview”

I’ll often begin to initiate on a sporadic basis.

Initiating one on one sporadically.

Pray together

Talk about the Word

Getting discernment where this person is really at.

Gives them an idea of what I’m about.

Would you like to get together, just you and me for the next 4 weeks and study Philippians.

~ Be clear about the purpose and conditions of getting together with me “one on one” or maybe three.

“so we can together learn how to become more effective workers for Christ”

That purpose has to be clear.

The conditions have to be clear:

~ Continue shepherding if discipleship doesn’t work out.

JC had one failure in discipleship. Sometimes they take themselves out. Sometimes, reluctantly I come to that conclusion.