

Group Notes 8 January 2012

Discipleship 1: L plates

Welcome - Ice Breaker

Have you learned to drive? How did it go? If not, is there another difficult skill you have learned?

Word – Philippians 3:12-16, Luke 9:1-6

introduction

Today we kick off a series on *Discipleship*. Please see Colin's blog for a message about St Matthew's year of discipleship in 2012 and some thoughts about how you can be part of it. Discipleship is a relationship in which the disciple learns from a master. The goal of discipleship is more than just finding out about the master's teaching. It is to grow to be like the master.

Question 1: What are your feelings about the words *Year of Discipleship*? "Great – let's get on with it?" Or "Oh no, that sounds grim..."

Lifelong learning

Discipleship is actually about being a learner. In almost every workplace now there is a commitment to life long learning and Christianity is no different. We need to learn how to get closer to Jesus and grow to be more like Him. If you like, discipleship is being an apprentice to Jesus and we are learning the trade of how to live for God from Him. There are four stages to any learning process:

1. I do, you watch.
2. I do, you help.
3. You do, I help.
4. You do, I watch.

Question 2: Which of the four stages do you think the disciples had got to in Luke 9?

- Can you think of examples of the other stages in the gospels?
- Have you seen any of these learning stages in your own Christian life?

learning together

Jesus didn't teach His disciples one at a time. He chose them as individuals, but they followed Him all together. They went through all their experience of Jesus' ministry together and reflected on what it all meant together. Then when He ascended He sent the Holy Spirit to lead them into all the truth (John 16:13) and also to unite them as one in the Spirit. So many of the things Jesus wants to show us are about relationships – love, forgiveness, generosity... We also need people to inspire and mentor us. Small groups are ideal for this kind of learning – Jesus chose twelve people to change the world.

Question 3: What is your learning style? Do you learn best on your own? In company? With a book? By talking it through? By copying someone?

learning by mistakes

We said earlier that discipleship is like being an apprentice. The difference from *The Apprentice* is that God is not Sir Alan Sugar and He does not say "You're fired!" when you mess up. You learn from your mistakes. In fact if you never make a mistake you can't be a disciple because it means you never stepped out in faith. It would be very easy for a learner driver to have a car with no dents and scratches – just keep it in the garage. Peter would not have sank in the water if He had not stepped out of the boat – would you have dared to do that on that dark and stormy night? Peter wouldn't have denied his Lord if he hadn't followed armed soldiers into the very courtyard of the high priest – would you have done that? But Jesus did not write Peter off. He forgave him and recommissioned him. He knows we often learn more by our mistakes than when we get it right.

Question 4: What do you think Peter learned through the terrible experience of denying Jesus?

- Do you agree we often learn the deepest lessons when things go wrong?
- Why does God entrust His kingdom to fallible human beings?

Worship ideas for groups with no musicians.

What are the qualities that make Jesus such a good mentor?

- Ask people to call out their thoughts. List them.
- Give thanks to Him for being such a great teacher and master.
- In prayer, dedicate the coming year to learn from Him and to grow to be more like Him.

Works/witness.

Encourage people to sign up for the Gifts Course – see extract from *Smatterings* below:

Gifts Course 25 January and 1 February This two-session course is intended to enable you to discover the gifts God has given you. It will help you develop a sense of the ministry He is calling you which will lead to a greater sense of personal affirmation and fulfilment in His service. It will also help you stop doing things that aren't really you and are just wearing you out.

- Think what a tremendous blessing it will be for St Matthew's to get everyone using their gifts to bless others and no-one overburdened with tasks they are not really suited for.
- The course will be particularly helpful to new Christians who are still finding their feet and to longer term Christians who may have got into a bit of a rut!
- Please think seriously about coming and let Colin know urgently.