

DISCIPLE MAKING

A PODCAST WITH DR. JOHN TOLSON

Episode 19: Meeting Format for Disciple-Making

Jesus' strategy to change the planet is found in Matthew 28:19 when he says, "Go therefore into all the world and make disciples." One of the most misunderstood verses in the Bible is Matthew 28:19. We've been laboring and trying to unpack and explain what it means to make disciples. There is no greater strategy to change the planet than Matthew 28:19 and yet so few churches and so few ministries are engaged in that process. If you think that's a little too harsh, I hope it will get your attention and you'll pass this along to your pastor or ministry leader. This is a strategy to change the planet and it works, but it's untried.

So, we talked about the expectations that you should have of those you're discipling. Now we're going to talk about the meeting format. So, you will meet together for an hour or an hour and 15 minutes (or perhaps you might even go through this on the telephone or skyping if you aren't in the same city). Here a few tips on this:

1. Meet one-on-one or one-on-two. I believe if you meet with more than two people at a time, you're not going to have the same impact and result as you would meeting one-on-one or one-on-two weekly. Most experts say that the most you should meet with in the discipling process is one-on-two (in other words, a triad). I prefer one-on-one and that's the way I do it.
2. Men ought to be meeting with men and women ought to be meeting with women (or couples meeting with couples). I hope the reasons for that are obvious.

So, what do you do when you meet for that hour or hour and 15 minutes? Let me give you a few tips.

1. Spend a few minutes catching up. What's been going on? What have you been up to? How's your family? Have a brief prayer to open.
2. Share some of the observations that you each had in studying the chapter in The Four Priorities and go back and forth on that for about 30-35 minutes and dig in deeply and try to apply that to your lives.
3. Talk about sharing schedules and making notes on the other person's schedule with key things to remember to pray about for that person, and they'll do the same for you.
4. Ask about relationships: What's going on at home? What's going on with your wife, your kids, people at work, etc? Keep in mind here the things that you want to pray about. Then share briefly where you are right now. What are some of your stress points? What are some of your concerns?

5. Close in prayer. As you pray again at the end, what you're trying to do here is pray about things that you've talked about in the course of the hour or hour and 15 minutes together.

Now let me just add one thing here. If an issue comes up sometime during the meeting that's really on the heart of the person you're discipling, don't insist that you make sure we get through the rest of this chapter. You may not even look at the chapter. You may really hone in on what that person is going through and then get back to the chapter the next time, so please be sensitive to that.

If there are questions that are raised that you as the disciple-maker cannot answer, simply say "I don't know. I'll come back next week with an answer." That's how we learn as disciple-makers, by being asked those questions, going out and digging out the answer, and coming back and sharing it.

Remember, this is a highly relational process, so be a good friend as a disciple-maker.

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