

THE DEACON AND THE FELLOWSHIP



By Evangelistic Apostolic Church Diocese
**Becoming a Deacon and the journey within the
Discipleship and our walk with Jesus and Faith**

Discipleship

Authentic discipleship must be motivated by a deep, personal relationship with our Savior. As we begin to model our walk after the example of Christ, we will begin to see true heart-change in the people around us!

What is Discipleship?

A disciple is someone, who believes in Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior, intentionally learns from Him, and strives to live more like Him. Discipleship is a widely used word to describe a journey of spiritual growth. This growth happens as a person comes alongside another to witness to them, pray with them, study the Bible with them, and fellowship with them.

Discipleship is a widely used word associated with a variety of definitions related to growing in our Christian faith. As Navigators, we are passionate about inspiring and equipping believers to embrace what we call Life-to-Life[®] discipleship. Essentially, it involves growing in Christ ourselves and helping others do the same. The Life-to-Life element is about intentionally coming alongside another person starting from wherever they are spiritually and sharing God's love with them in ways you think will resonate. Sometimes it looks like praying with them, sometimes studying the Bible together, other times it involves just spending quality time together.

The verse we often look to as an example of Life-to-Life discipleship is 1 Thessalonians 2:8: "Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well."

Jesus first demonstrated this kind of personal discipleship approach through His relationship with the 12 disciples. He intentionally chose everyday people (rather than religious leaders) and often used the phrase, "Follow me" to invite those around Him to pay attention to what He said, what He did, how He lived, and what was truly important, so His way of life would be replicated through theirs.

Here is a sampling of places in Scripture where He does this:

"'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people'" Matthew 4:19 (NIV).

"Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me'" Mark 10:21 (NIV).

"After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. 'Follow me,' Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him." Luke 5:27-28 (NIV).

“Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me” John 12:26 (NIV).

Why is Discipleship Important?

Jesus told us to go and make disciples, as he knew that was how the Good News would be spread to all the nations. And discipleship is how it would be shared from one person to another through relationships.

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’” Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV).

Jesus illustrated a simple picture of what it looks like to share his love with others in everyday life. “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others” 2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV).

Peter, one of Jesus’ disciples, wrote about how growing in Christ will change our character (2 Peter 1:5-8). The best way to experience this type of growth and life change, while partnering with the Holy Spirit, is through discipleship. We’re called to grow in Christ and help others do the same (1 Corinthians 11:1).

“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples’” John 8:31 (NIV).

Scriptures on Discipleship

Where is Discipleship found in the Bible?

We see discipleship modeled in the Bible and even specific Scriptures explaining what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, follow Him, and become more like Him.

What It Looks Like to Be Christ’s Disciple

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” Matthew 6:33 (NIV).

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able

to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" Romans 12:2 (NIV).

"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" 1 Corinthians 15:58 (NIV).

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" Mark 10:45 (NIV).

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (NIV).

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV).

What It looks Like to Grow in Christlikeness

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" John 13:34-35 (NIV).

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV).

"Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul" 1 Peter 2:11 (NIV).

"So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man" Acts 24:16 (NIV).

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" Hebrews 11:6 (NIV).

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” Galatians 6:9-10 (NIV).

Discipleship Modeled in Scripture

Jesus and His Disciples: Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 4, Luke 11:1-11, John 15

Disciple making

It can sound difficult and overwhelming. But what if you discovered you already have what it takes? It's true! Disciple making can be one of the most natural things any believer does. What you need is just what God has given you—your gifts, heart and relationship with Him. So when it does come to disciple making, you have what it takes.

Have you ever wondered how discipleship happens? Maybe you're thinking, I want to grow in Christ and would like to invite someone to join me, but where do I start? You're not alone.

See if you can relate to Paul, Michael, and Thomas as they wonder about the next steps of discipleship.

1. Paul and his friend James take walks in their local community and often talk about their growing families and the happenings in their neighborhood. Paul wants to talk more about the faith they share. She'd like to invite James to grow and learn as they follow Jesus together, but she isn't sure where to start.
2. Michael loves playing basketball at his local gym. When his son Peter started middle school, he began bringing him along. It's through their time together at the gym that important conversations happen. Sometimes Peter shares about what's going on at school and with his friends. Michael would like to pray for his son and begin to model to him what prayer could look like. This could be an opportunity for discipleship, but he wonders about the next step.
3. Thomas also wonders how to get started with discipleship. He would like to invite someone to study the Bible with him, but isn't sure who to ask. He's curious about how to find that person and what studying the Bible together would even look like.

If you have similar questions, then you are in the right place and we can help. In this we would like to walk alongside you and share what it looks like to disciple someone. Here are a few questions we will answer:

What is discipleship?

What does discipleship look like in everyday life?

What's a good approach for inviting someone to follow Jesus with you?

What does it look like to pray with someone?

How do you study the Bible with someone?

We pray this will help give you confidence that you have what it takes to grow in Christ and help others do the same.

Once we are in Christ, we have what it takes to offer Life-to-Life discipleship to friends, family or neighbors that God puts on our hearts. It's not about being an expert. It's more about just passing on what you're learning as you grow in your relationship with Jesus. A seminary degree or Christian leadership position isn't required to "go and make disciples" of Jesus as He called us to do in the Great Commission. All you need is to be who God created you to be and recognize you have what it takes to grow in Christ and help others do the same.

Life-to-Life Discipleship Story:

"I observed God from afar. I didn't seek an intimate relationship with Him. In fact, I didn't think it was possible to have that kind of relationship with God—a relationship that saw past my many flaws and was built on His love for me and on my faith in Him." Read about Ed's story of discipleship and how he went from being an observer to a follower.

Take the Next Step:

Once we are in Christ, we have what it takes to offer Life-to-Life discipleship to friends, family or neighbors that God puts on our hearts. It's not about being an expert. It's more about just passing on what you're learning as you grow in your relationship with Jesus. A seminary degree or Christian leadership position isn't required to "go and make disciples" of Jesus as He called us to do in the Great Commission. All you need is to be who God created you to be and recognize you have what it takes to grow in Christ and help others do the same.

How has God transformed your life with someone who came alongside you to share the gospel, pray, study the Bible, or even fellowship together?

Inviting Someone To Follow Jesus With You

Are you aware that God knows and understands you intimately? He knows your schedule, your thoughts, your concerns, how you make your decisions, your giftings, your social circles, your personality—He knows it all.

“You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways” Psalm 139:1-3 (NIV).

Since God knows you intimately, He knows what discipleship can look like in your life. Often, He reveals discipleship opportunities as we consider relationships we already have and ask Him to show us who is open or even eager to explore faith. You may begin to see how God is working in your time with them.

For example, Paul already has a relationship with Cathy and they’re involved in each other’s lives. This gives Paul an opportunity to speak about his growing relationship with Jesus. He could bring up a Bible verse that has impacted her recently or what she’s learned about God through a difficult circumstance. Taking that first step and starting those conversations about faith opens the door to continue the conversation. Ultimately, you want to grow in your relationship with God. Then you can share how you’re growing, what you’re learning, and how Jesus is changing your life.

Life-to-Life Discipleship Story:

“Be truthful and let your life situation speak, while putting God first. Whatever it may be: good, bad, happy, sad, joy, trial, our lives are full of unknowns. But if you share your unknowns with people, then they become known, and could become your testimony.”

Take the Next Step:

Pray over the names of people God brings to mind in your family, community and workplace. Ask Him to help you discern whom He might be calling you to invest in personally.

What are you learning in your relationship with Jesus that you’re excited to share with someone else?

Praying With Someone

You've had many conversations with God and understand this is what prayer is all about. Inviting someone to pray with you is simply inviting him or her to join your conversation with God.

“Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective” James 5:16 (NIV).

As James, Michael's son, shares with him about some difficult things happening at school, Bryan could offer to pray for him. By praying for James, Michael is modeling for his son what having a conversation with God sounds like. The next step for Michael could be inviting James to pray with him, giving James the opportunity to continue the conversation with God with someone he trusts.

Do you have people in your life that you regularly ask, “How can I be praying for you?” Prayer is a powerful tool and can bless others in your life richly. Ask someone you know if you could pray for him or her this week. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide your words and share with God what's on your heart for the person you're praying for. They will appreciate your genuine prayer and it might just be the best thing that's happened to them all day!

Praying for them gives you the opportunity to invite them to pray together more often. Once you've prayed together once, look for the opportunity to pray again for each other. It could be as easy as praying together after a game of basketball.

“What if God answered the prayers of many? What if, through this, the faith of many would be strengthened as we corporately humbled ourselves to seek God? What if we partnered with God and witnessed Him do the impossible?”

Invite a friend to pray with you. What was this experience like?

Studying the Bible Together

Your understanding of following Jesus and living more like Him is deepening as you read God's Word. Studying the Bible with someone else could be as simple as reading Scripture, reflecting on it, and discussing what you observe and how this applies to everyday life.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV).

As Helen prayed about who to study the Bible with, Kathy, a co-worker came to mind. They've become friends within the last two years and have briefly talked about their Christian faith. During his or her lunch break, Helen asks Kathy if she's ever studied the Bible with someone. She invites Kathy to read through the Gospel of John one small section at a time and discuss it with her during lunch.

Pray about who to study the Bible with and see whom God brings to mind. It might be a co-worker you've built a friendship with who might be ready to take their next step in spiritual growth. Studying the Bible together can be conversational and uncomplicated. It doesn't require extra tools, just a Bible.

"I invite women to read the Bible and learn about Jesus because He is my treasure and my reason for living each day. How tragic to not know Jesus and not have a relationship with Him."

Four R's of Bible Study

Use this simple four-step Bible study method to: read, reflect, respond, and rest in God's Word. This can be applied in your own time with God and in small group Bible study. Choose a passage that is not too long—four to eight verses—since people will be listening to it being read several times through. You can also practice this pattern in your personal devotional time.

1. Reading God's Word.

Have everyone close their eyes. Say, "Listen for a word or phrase that you particularly notice as I read the passage aloud."

After the reading, have everyone sit in silence for two to three minutes. Then say, "With your eyes closed, speak the word or phrase you noticed. Don't worry about others speaking at the same time."

2. Reflecting on God's Word.

Next, say, "As I read the passage again, listen for how the content speaks to your life today." Read the passage again, slowly and clearly, followed by two to three minutes of silence.

After the silence, invite people to share: “What does the passage mean to you? What did you hear, or what are you feeling or thinking?”

3. Responding to God’s Word.

For the third reading, say, “As I read the passage again, listen to how you might respond.” Read the passage again, slowly, and have the group sit in silence for two to three minutes.

After the silence, invite people to say a small prayer of response. Sometimes someone will hear profound, life-changing words, sometimes someone is challenged or affirmed, and sometimes nothing happens. All is normal.

4. Resting in God’s Word.

Have everyone close their eyes again and listen while the passage is read for the final time. Say, “Receive the words and rest in Jesus’ truth.” After the fourth reading, the group might say the Lord’s Prayer together.

At the conclusion, the group can discuss their experience. What are some questions or insights? How does listening help us to see and hear the Word differently than a Bible study does? How might the group respond to these words from Jesus?

Your new Journey

The journey that you will have as a Deacon within the Discipleship is the first step of the joy of walking in the Lord with Jesus and is a never ending process of learning to better serve within the ministry and of your faith that will grow in your new life’s journey.

As a Deacon you will not only assist the Priest in your duties, but other duties such as overseeing the Mass when the Priest is not available. Visitation to Nursing Homes, Retirement Homes, Hospitals and Home Visitations. Bringing the scriptures, Hope and as well as comfort to those in need of Spiritual guidance.



Proper way to wear a Deacon Stole

Conclusion

We pray this resource has inspired you to grow in Christ and help others do the same.

God uniquely created and purposed you to share His love with those around you. Maybe sharing His love is being there for someone through life's ups and downs or inviting them into deeper conversations about faith. It could be praying for someone and then inviting him or her to pray with you on a regular basis. Or it could be studying the Bible with someone and talking about what God's teaching you both through His Word.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight” Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV).

Trust that you have what it takes to disciple others. The Lord promises to lead you each step of the way.

“The Navigators has given me pretty much every single one of my closest friends. These are people who love me, know me, and encourage me to follow Christ more intimately.” Paul

“I knew if I wanted to be more like Jesus, I would need to learn from a man who reflected His love and power. The best way to learn from a man like Ron was to consistently walk-through everyday life with him.” - Douglas

“In a moment of despair, and in my darkest time, I reached out to God. I was physically and mentally broken. I was full of self-doubt, exhausted, and ready to quit. But I reached out and I said, ‘I just need a little something.’ And then came these four guys that reaffirmed my faith in God and others.” - David

“This is a fruitful time for ministry. Everyone is suddenly available. Just in the past week I’ve walked with and prayed for women through marriage struggles, depression issues, anxiety over current events, and feelings of uselessness.” – Mary

Disciple Five Aspects

*PRAY:

*PAUSE

*REJOICE

*ASK

*YIELD

These five aspects of prayer based on the Lord’s Prayer can provide a structure and flow for your prayer life.

PRAY

Approach them like dance steps rather than hard-and-fast rules to infuse freshness into your prayers.

PAUSE

Jesus said . . . , “When you pray, . . .”

To start we must stop. To move forward we must pause. This is the first step in a deeper prayer life: Put down your wish list and wait. Sit quietly. “Be still and know that I am God.” Become fully present in place and time so that your scattered senses can recenter themselves on God’s eternal presence. Stillness and silence prepare your mind and prime your heart to pray from a place of greater peace, faith, and adoration. In fact, these are themselves important forms of prayer.

REJOICE

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name.

The Lord’s Prayer begins with an invitation to adoration: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name.” Having paused to be still at the start of a prayer time, the most natural and appropriate response to God’s presence is reverence.

Try not to skip this bit. Hallowing the Father’s name is the most important and enjoyable dimension of prayer. Linger here, Rejoicing in God’s blessings before asking for more.

ASK

Your kingdom come, your will be done. . . . Give us today our daily bread.

Prayer means many things to many people, but at its simplest and most immediate, it means asking God for help. It's a soldier begging for courage, a mother alone in a hospital chapel.

The Lord's Prayer invites us to ask God for everything from "daily bread" to the "kingdom come," for ourselves (petition) and for others (intercession).

YIELD

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. . . . Amen.

The final step in the dance of prayer is surrender. It's a clenched fist slowly opening; an athlete lowering into an ice bath; a field of California poppies turning to the sun. We yield to God's presence "on earth as in heaven" through contemplative prayer and by listening to His Word, which is "our daily bread." We yield to God's holiness through confession and reconciliation, praying, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." And we yield to His power in spiritual warfare, asking our Father to "deliver us from evil." It's by surrendering to God that we overcome, by emptying ourselves that we are filled, and by yielding our lives in prayer that our lives themselves become a prayer—the Lord's Prayer—in the end.

Authentic discipleship must be motivated by a deep, personal relationship with our Savior. As we begin to model our walk after the example of Christ, we will begin to see true heart-change in the people around us!

Here is a short study that can help you to get a clearer picture of Christ's heart for discipleship.

Walking in the FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

Jesus was the Creator of the universe, yet He was the supreme example of a servant. If He were a twenty-first-century man, how do you think we would demonstrate His servanthood?

1. What was Christ's purpose in coming to this world?

(Mark 10:45) _____

2. Read John 13:1-7.

a. How did Jesus serve the disciples? _____

b. Why was Jesus able to give so freely of Himself?

(see verse 3)? _____

c. List several lessons that stand out to you from Christ's example in this passage. _____

3. How should we be like Christ (Philippians 2:5-8)?

3. According to the following verses, who are some of the people who gladly bore the title "servant"?

• Exodus 14:31 _____

• 1 Samuel 1:11 _____

• 1 Samuel 29:8 _____

• Luke 1:38 _____

• 1 Corinthians 4:1 _____

5. What perspective did Paul have about being a Servant (1 Corinthians 4:1-5)? _____
