

Discipleship Essentials

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Setting our Focus

Turn to the person next to you and share in 1 minute:

Why are you here?
What do you hope to take away?



Our objectives

1. We want you to feel that creating a discipleship culture is possible.
2. We want you to develop concrete next steps for:
 - Your own discipleship
 - Next steps for your church leadership to engage in discipleship.



From our Polity

It is the responsibility of the session to plan for and provide an effective disciple-making, ministry-discernment process for the congregation and new believers, equipping them to be missional Christians and being faithful to nurture them into spiritual maturity and significant ministry.

- *ECO Polity 1.0603*



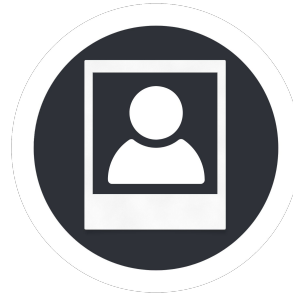
Discipleship Gaps

- There is a big gap between understanding what discipleship is and living it out.
- There is a big gap between thinking discipleship is important and living it out.
 - Evidence of this:
 - We say - Flourishing Churches are led by Flourishing Leaders who are Flourishing Disciples...but...
 - Most equate discipleship with information or knowledge
 - Behaviors show lack of fruit of spirit
 - Congregations spend way too much time doing things that don't produce disciples
 - We get more concerned with the budgets, butts, and buildings than discipleship
 - Church leaders are not being discipled or discipling others
 - Pastors/Leaders know it is a problem but most will treat the lack of discipleship as something that can get fixed in a 6-week program



3 Essentials of Discipleship

1. Clear definition and picture of discipleship/disciple



2. Relational



3. Reproducible





Essential #1 Clear Picture & Definition of Disciple

You shall love the Lord your God with all your HEART and with all your SOUL and with all of your STRENGTH.

Deuteronomy 6:4

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your HEART, all your SOUL, all your MIND

Matthew 22:37





Essential #1 Clear Picture & Definition of Disciple

Our call to discipleship is holistic in nature

- Heart = Being - Our inner life and outward character
- Head = Mind - How we think and know about God and his character and mission.
- Hands = Doing - The outflow of God's love into the contexts in which God has placed us.





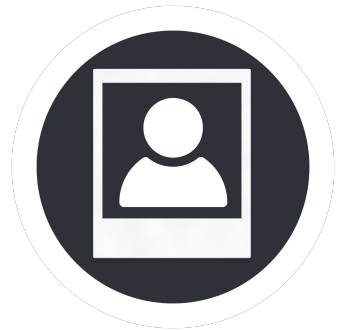
Essential #1 Clear Picture & Definition of Disciple

- Must be from the Word & centered on the Word
- Goal must be transformation not just information
- Should include: being on mission

Questions to answer:

What does a flourishing disciple of Jesus look like?

How do we grow people into this picture? What does the process look like?

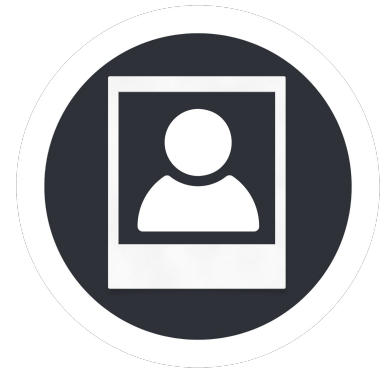




Sample Definitions

“A flourishing disciple is someone who is learning to live the way of Jesus in their context at this moment’.”

- Neil Hudson





Sample Definitions

“A disciple is someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to Jesus’ kingdom mission”

- *Discipleship That Fits*, Bobby Harrington and Alex Absalom





Sample Definitions

Discipleship is a lifelong apprenticeship to Jesus and with others where we are learning to love and live like Him.

-Lisa Johnson





Sample Picture

HEAD – Mind shaped by the Word of God

A mature disciple will increasingly understand the person of God, the glory of God, and mankind's need for grace as a result of dedicated time spent in the Scriptures.

HEART – Heart shaped by the character of God

A mature disciple will increasingly evidence character traits consistent with the life of Jesus.

HANDS – Priorities shaped by the mission of God

A mature disciple will increasingly orient their life around the spread of God's glory both near and far.

Based on Matthew 22:34-40





Essential #2: Discipleship is Relational

Must be intentional – structured, life-on-life, covenanted, regular meetings for encouragement, accountability & growth.

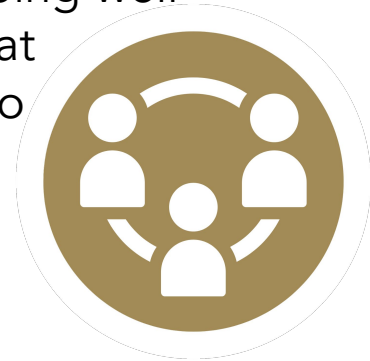
Cannot be program driven, curriculum driven, or teaching driven. Relationally driven!!





Relational Stats for Christians

- 79% of Christians believe that spiritual maturity requires no connection to a community of faith
- 37% of Christians believe that their own spiritual growth is “entirely private”, but Scripture shows us that there is no such thing as solo discipleship
- Only 1% of church leaders surveyed said that they were doing well in discipling, but 90% believers in this same survey said that they would take seriously their church’s recommendation to pursue a discipleship path if one was presented to them





Essential #2: Discipleship is Relational

Must be by personal invitation – Inviting someone directly, personally and by name (how Jesus made disciples.)

A personal invitation grounds the discipleship process in relationship and allows for a covenant to be made.





Essential #2: Discipleship is Relational

Must have Transparent trust – people are able to be authentic and honest in their discipleship groups about struggles, doubts, sins, and progress.

Micro-groups (2-4 people) are where this is possible.





Transparent Trust

The extent to which we are willing to reveal to others those areas of our lives that need God's transforming touch is the extent to which we invite the Holy Spirit to make us new.

- Greg Ogden,
Transforming Discipleship

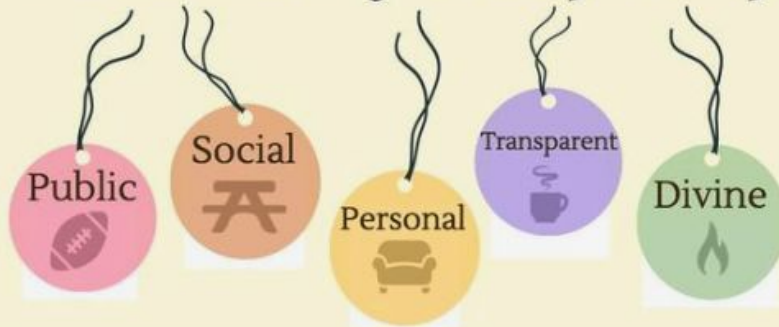




Are you in a discipleship relationship?
If not, who can you invite into one?



The 5 Contexts of Discipleship



Defining The 5 Contexts

PUBLIC CONTEXT is where people gather in their 100s, around outside resources (eg a crowd watching a game of football)

SOCIAL CONTEXT is 20 to 70 people, sharing snapshots of who they are, thus building affinity (eg a backyard party)

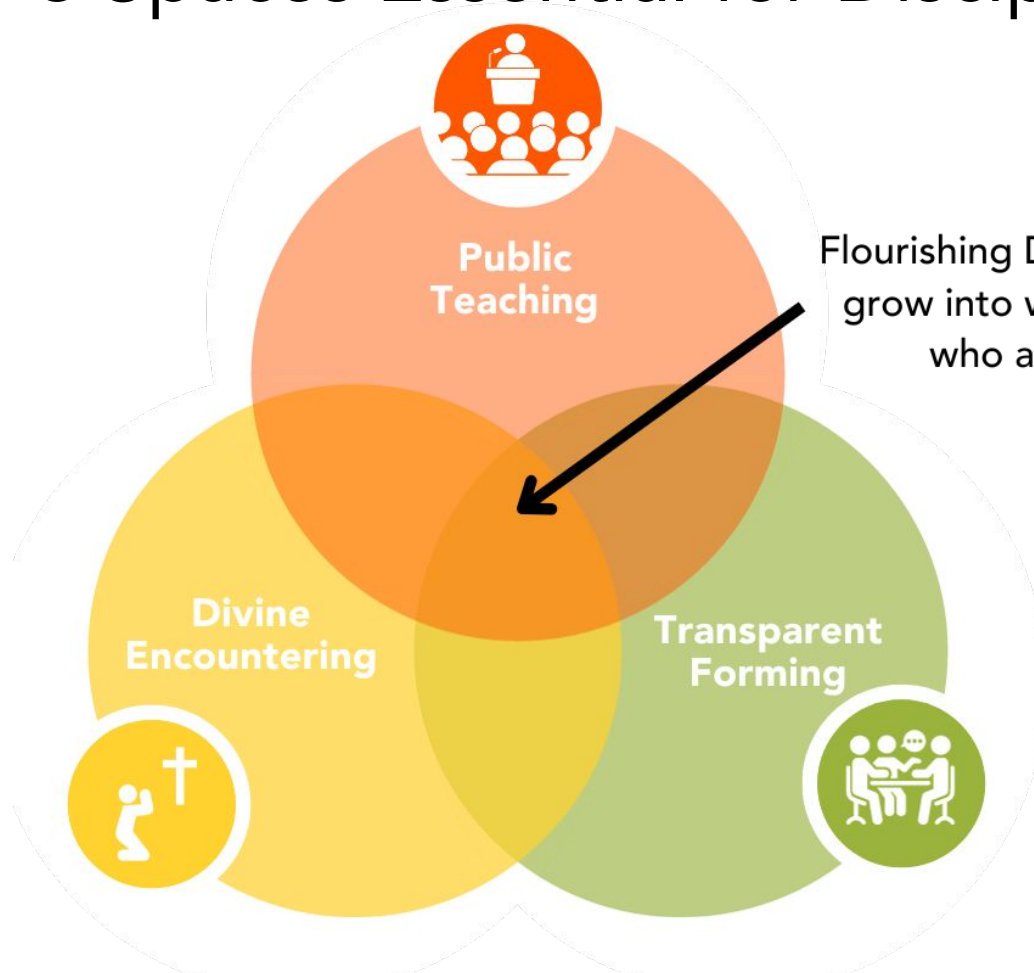
PERSONAL CONTEXT is a group of 4 to 12, revealing private information (eg good friends sitting and sharing freely)

TRANSPARENT CONTEXT is complete candor, 2-4 people, in the closest of relationships (eg best friends being accountable)

DIVINE CONTEXT is being alone with God, your Creator and Redeemer (eg intentionally sitting and enjoying His presence)



3 Spaces Essential for Discipleship



Flourishing Disciples continually grow into whole life disciples who are on mission



3 Spaces Essential for Discipleship

Public is forward-facing



Transparent is facing towards others



Divine is facing God





Space #1 Public Teaching

People gather in large groups to learn key aspects of Scripture, faith and discipleship.

- Preaching and teaching that covers the themes of Scripture to create a holistic understanding of the Biblical story and complete picture of the Christian life
- Preaching and teaching that focuses on discipleship: encourages people towards other 2 spaces
- Preaching and teaching that gives information focused on transformation: growing into Christlikeness





Space #1 Public Teaching

- Church could regularly offers classes on basics of faith, basics of Bible and basics of discipleship
 - This takes the pressure off of the micro-groups space/leaders to provide essential teaching
- Encourages all covenant partners to take “Basics classes”
- Possibly offer 101, 201, 301 classes as people mature
- “This Time Tomorrow” in worship

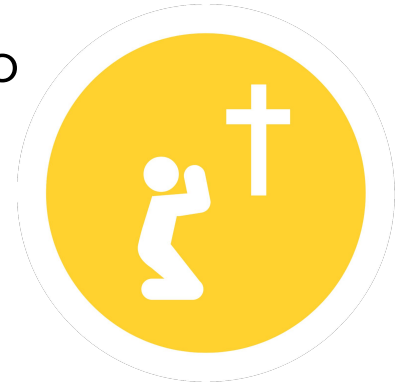




Space #2 Divine Encountering

Being alone with Jesus, enjoying His presence and listening for His voice.

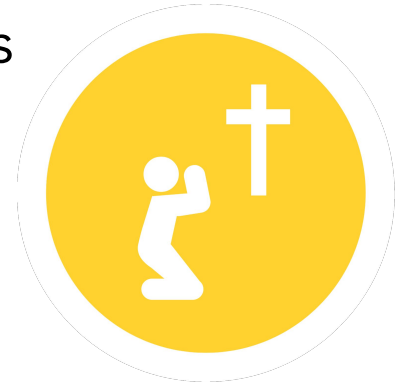
- Solo time daily with the Lord
- Abiding in Jesus
- Word-centered silence & solitude
- Spiritual practices that help to open our souls to Christ (E.g. prayer, Sabbath-keeping, Scripture meditation, fasting, etc.)





Space #2 Divine Encountering

- Normalized as part of the definition of disciple at your church
- Encouraged and talked about often in church
 - For every believer/disciple
 - Start where you are at: 5 mins or 30 mins.
- Resources given & shared for covenant partners
 - Have people share what they do in their solo time during worship





Space #3 Transparent Forming

Micro-groups of people who build with trust with each other enough to be transparent, intimate and accountable for the purpose of growing into maturity in Christ.

- Accountability – someone is checking on you
- Grace Filled- to Counter Shame (no comparison or judgement)
- Modeling – sharing their own life (highs and lows)
- Vulnerability – sharing struggles & doubts
- Authenticity – ideal versus the real
- Mutuality – building each other up, Iron Sharpens Iron





Space #3 Transparent Forming

- Might require a culture shift in your church
- Weekly or bi-weekly meetings
- 2-4 people maximum
- By invitation
- Clear covenant
- To build trust: share life journeys





Space #3 Transparent Forming

- Has a leader to facilitate group, but is also peer to peer discipling
- Ideally, people should not facilitate a group until they have experienced this for themselves
- Choose a structure or method that your microgroups will use (centered on the Word)
- Expect key leaders and staff to always be leading/part of a microgroup



Sample Discipleship Micro-Group Meeting #1

Discipleship Check-in <i>Seeing growth</i>	How is God growing me? <i>(Review Discipleship Design or ask an Accountability Question)</i>
Word in Community <i>Listening for God</i>	3 questions to ask when reading Scripture <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What does it say? (What is this about?)2. What does it mean?(for all Christians)3. What is the Holy Spirit saying to me?
Reflection/Action <i>Responding to God</i>	What will I do about what I have heard from God today?
Prayer <i>Asking for God's help</i>	Pray for commitments made Pray for personal concerns





Sample Discipleship Micro-Group Meetings

It is best if brand new Christians (and untaught long-time Christians) focus first understanding of the basics of Christianity and the christian life. There are several tools:

1. Safar (online safar.org or App)

30 planned meetings with structure & Biblical teaching

- walk with God
- Live Free
- Stay Strong

2. *Discipleship Essentials* - Greg Ogden

3. Discipleship Designs- Dana Allin, *Simple Discipleship*



Name: _____ Start/End Date: _____

Outcome: _____

<i>Spiritual – I engage with God</i>	<i>Experiential – I engage with real life situations</i>
<i>Relational – I engage with other people</i>	<i>Instructional – I engage with truth</i>





Micro-Groups: The Ask

1. Life on Life (2-4 people)
2. 15 minutes a day (with Jesus & Bible)
3. 1 hour together a week (or bi-weekly)
4. 11 months
5. Commit to inviting 2-3 others into discipleship with you next year

Write all these things in a covenant that you ask your group to sign.





Essential #3: Discipleship is Reproducible

“Disciples who disciple” is the expectation built into the covenant from the very first invitation to discipleship.

After a person has experienced true discipleship, then they are encouraged to help disciple others in a new micro-group in a way that is possible for them.





Essential #3: Discipleship is Reproducible

The structure or method used to disciple must be transferable to all people: pastors, staff, and lay people.

If it is too complicated or relies on “experts” then people will not feel equipped to lead a micro-group.





Questions and Principles for Leading Discipleship Change

- Unlearning old patterns
- How much is top down vs peer facilitation?
- Start with the core vs fringe
- Add on vs. stop doing vs. repurpose



Recommended Resources for Discipleship

If you were pre-registered for this breakout you will receive this resources list via email.

If not registered and you want this list, please contact
Taylor@eco-pres.org

Next Steps:
Time of Silent Reflection
Using ECO Card



Next Steps
Share briefly in pairs



Next Steps:
Share with large group



Next Steps:

1. Take a photo of your card & email it to yourself and one other person
2. Turn your card in to ECO staff



Next Steps:
Prayer over our commitments