

# Planning for discipleship

## 1. The importance of small groups

### (i) The early-church model

The early church saw what we would call an incredible revival, and experienced a vibrant life.

**A) She Grew in \_\_\_\_\_**

*Acts 9:31, Acts 16:5, Acts 4:32*

**B) She Grew in \_\_\_\_\_**

*Acts 2:40-41, Acts 2:47, Acts 5:14-15, Acts 6:1*

**C) She Grew As A \_\_\_\_\_**

*Acts 2:46, 47, Acts 20:20-21, Romans 16:2-5*

### (ii) The educational / disciple-making logic

Jesus both taught \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

**Funnel illustration of the Church's purpose and discipleship process**

### (iii) The necessary context of the 'one anothers' of the NT

These instructions/commands can only be obeyed in a context of \_\_\_\_\_

#### Some of the more than 50 'one anothers'

John 13:34-35	Love one another
Romans 12:10	Be devoted to ... in brotherly love and giving honour to...
Romans 15:7	Accept one another
Romans 15:14	Living harmoniously with one another
1 Cor 11:33	Admonishing one another      Waiting for each other
1 Cor 12:25	Demonstrating equal care for one another
Galatians 5:13	Serving one another
Galatians 6:2	Bearing burdens of each other
1 Thess 5:11	Giving comfort to one another; building up each other
1 Thess 5:13	Maintaining peace with each other
1 Thess 5:15	Doing good to one another
Ephesians 4:2	Lovingly bearing with each other
Eph 4:31-32	Be kind & compassionate to ..., forgiving each other
Ephesians 5:21	Submit to one another
Colossians 3:13	Forgiving one another
James 5:16	Confessing to and praying for each other
1 Peter 3:8	Live in harmony with one another
1 Peter 4:9	Exhibiting hospitality to each other
Hebrews 3:13	Encourage one another daily
Hebrews 10:24	Spur one another on toward love and good deeds
1 John 1:7	Fellowship with one another

#### **(iv) Where it went wrong in Church history?**

##### **IN AD 313**

Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, officially tolerating the church and ending the persecutions.

##### **In AD 323**

Emperor Constantine started to build church buildings after the Roman forum. Believers that met underground now began to meet exclusively in these big buildings.

##### **About AD 400**

Emperor Theodosius made Christian the state religion and suppressed all other religions.

As a result, many who called themselves Christians had no born-again experience.

#### **The impact on the Church**

- A deterioration of \_\_\_\_\_
- A shift of focus from 'holy people' to 'holy \_\_\_\_\_'
- a shift in roles from 'Holy People' to "Holy \_\_\_\_\_"

(See table on next page)

#### **(v) How God is putting things right**

##### **Reformation of Theology**

- John Wycliff (1329 – 84)
- Martin Luther (1483 – 1546)
- John Calvin (1509 – 64)

##### **Reformation of Spirituality**

- Puritans (17<sup>th</sup> Century)
- Pentecostal Renewal (1901)

##### **Reformation of Structures**

#### **Reflection: What then is God's ideal for church leadership?**

Eph 4:1-13

Godly Leadership

i.e. \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 12

and the Priesthood of all Believers

and \_\_\_\_\_ groups

**('RELATIONSHIP') ('RELIGION')**

	<b>NEW TESTAMENT FIRST CENTURY CHURCH</b>	<b>FOURTH CENTURY CHURCH ONWARDS</b>
LOCATION	Moved from House To House	Meets in Church Building
SIZE OF GROUPS	Small, Intimate Groups	Large, Impersonal Groups
ACTIVITIES	Daily Fellowship	Weekly Worship Service
SUPPORT SYSTEM	Building Up One Another	Problem? See the Pastor
RELATIONSHIPS	Intimate; Helping One Another	Remote; Little Transparency
DISCIPLING	"Mouth to Ear;" Modeling; Personal Values Shaped	Classes, Notebooks; Little Modeling; Value Not Shaped
PRIMARY TASKS OF LEADERS	Every Believer Equipped to do the Work Of The Ministry	Directing The "Program Base Design"
PRAYER LIFE	Hours Daily; Heavy Emphasis	Individual Choice; Limited
PASTOR'S DUTY	Model the Life Of A Believer	Preach Good Sermons
EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBERS	Ministering To Others; Total Servant hood And Stewardship	Attendance; Tithing; Work In The "Programs" (became legalistic)
PERSPECTIVE	Cell Groups the Focal Point	Congregation the Focal Point
KEY WORDS	"Go And Make Disciple"	"Come Grow With Us"
TEACHINGS	Apply the Scriptures To Needs and Relationships (heart based)	Subscribe to the Distinctive Beliefs Of This Church (head based)
SPIRITUAL GIFTS	Regularly Exercised by All Believers to Build Up Others In the Cell Group Gatherings	Either Downplayed or Often Used As a "Crowd-Pleaser" In Public Services
COMMITMENT	To Increase the Kingdom; Unity, Body Life	To Enlarge the Institution; Uniformity
MATURITY	How You serve and love	How much you know
SOURCE FOR SECURING STAFF	Servant Workers Developed Within; Tested Before They Are set Apart for Ministry	Trained, Professional Clergy

**Conclusion**

- What generally happens to the church when it has no large-group meetings?
- What generally happens to the church when it has no small -group meetings?
- How essential might small group gatherings be to the function of the Church?