



# CITY CHURCH

## City Planning Participant Guide

### Week 4 – “To Be Disciples”

- I. **How Should We Define a “Disciple”?**
  - a. The importance of a careful definition
  - b. Possible methods
    - i. Careful investigation of Scripture
    - ii. Investigation of popular literature, especially in an attempt to find a “catch-all” synonym for disciple (e.g. a disciple is a “learner”)
  - c. Wrong methods
    - i. Synonym searching
  - d. Right method
    - i. Careful investigation of Scripture
    - ii. Particular emphasis on Jesus’ ministry to his disciples and their response
    - iii. Dynamic definition
  
- II. **What is a Disciple?**
  - a. Disciple defined
    - i. Disciples are repentant, teachable, Spirit-empowered followers of Jesus Christ who faithfully obey God as they imitate Jesus in word and in deed despite the costliness of their obedience.
    - ii. Be aware: the New Testament definition of a disciple is actually more dynamic than a long sentence can possibly capture.
  - b. What disciples do (the definition explored) – Eight Principles
    - i. **Humbly Repentant**
      1. “Failures” are inevitable – major theme in the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Mark
      2. Repentance is mandatory. Not only for salvation – for it is the mark of a genuine disciple (Matt. 5:12 – Lord’s Prayer; James 5:16). Even as disciples we will continue to sin and be sinned against.
      3. Diagnostic:

- a. Are you vulnerable/willing to confess sin? Are you willing to admit mistakes? Are you approachable (particularly when you are critiqued)?

**ii. Teachable (learners)**

1. Matt. 13:11-17 – A negative example that demonstrates the folly of hearing without understanding. The religious teachers thought they had “arrived” and were not teachable.
2. Diagnostic:
  - a. Are you teachable and constantly seeking to learn more? Or do you think you’ve “arrived” (dangerous).

**iii. Spirit-empowered**

1. The effectiveness of our ministry as disciples is completely dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 10:20; John 20:22; Acts 1-2). Accordingly, we can confidently rest in Jesus and boldly pursue the kind of living that God has called us to.
2. Diagnostic:
  - a. As you grow in Christ and minister accordingly, do you rest in Jesus (Matt. 11)?
  - b. Are you a bold disciple (2 Cor. 3:12; Phil 1:14).

**iv. Followers of Jesus Christ**

1. Disciples proudly and publicly align themselves with the person and work of Jesus Christ.
  - a. Matt. 16:13-20 – Who do you say that I am?
  - b. 2 Cor. 5:14-15 – Disciples don’t live for themselves – but for the sake and glory of Jesus Christ.
2. Disciples are in his “camp” – not the camp of a famous pastor/leader/influencer.
  - a. This was a significant problem in Corinth (see 1 Cor. 1-3).
  - b. Free advice: learn from leaders who point people to Jesus, not from leaders who promote themselves and gather massive personal followings.
3. Diagnostic:
  - a. Are you passionate and open about your allegiance to Jesus? Do family/friends know you love Jesus?

**v. Faithfully Obedient**

1. Matt. 28:20 – Disciples teach unto obedience. Assumes that those doing the teaching are themselves obedient.
2. Diagnostic:

- a. Do you apply what you learn? Does your relationship with the Lord transform the way you live?

**vi. Imitate Jesus in Word**

1. Proclaim the gospel
  - a. Matthew 4:17 – “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”
  - b. Mark 1:14-15 - Message: Repent and believe the gospel!
2. Speech “seasoned” – gracious, discerning, encouraging, admonishing, intentional
  - a. Matt. 5:13 – Disciples are the “salt of the earth”
  - b. Matt. 12:34 – Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.
  - c. Col. 4:6 – “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”

**vii. Imitate Jesus in deed**

1. Spiritually
  - a. Jesus’ personal devotion
    - i. Matt. 14:23 – Jesus went up on the mountain by himself to pray
    - ii. Matt. 26:36-46 – Jesus prays at Gethsemane
  - b. Jesus’ concern for the spiritual growth of others, particularly his disciples (an even more so for Peter, James, and John)
    - i. Matthew 6 – taught them how and what to pray, as well as how to fast
    - ii. Matthew 13 – Jesus teaches in parables for the spiritual benefit of the disciples.
2. Physically
  - a. Matt. 4:24; 8:14-20; 9:9-13; 11:1-6 – Jesus’ special emphasis on the poor/disenfranchised
  - b. Matt. 7:12 – Instruction in Sermon on the Mount (so whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them).
  - c. Matt. 25:31-46 – Instruction to crowds/disciples. Disciples, by nature, care for those in need. Those who don’t are not disciples.
3. Emotionally

- a. Matt. 11:25-30 – Jesus is our rest. This has an emotional benefit.
- b. Mark 5:21-34 – Jesus was compassionate toward the woman he heals
- 4. Result: Multiplication.
  - a. Jesus was a multiplier! We Jesus ascended into heaven, he left behind disciples who were prepared to continue his mission
  - b. Matt. 28:18-20 – Great Commission was an appropriate end to Jesus’ ministry since the disciples were prepared to be commissioned.
  - c. Matt. 7:17 – Healthy trees bear good fruit, and that fruit includes multiplication.
- 5. Diagnostic for parts xi and xii:
  - a. Are you living an intentional, fruitful life (check out Matt. 7:17 and Gal. 5)?
  - b. Do you reprioritize your life in order to imitate Jesus in word and in deed (tough for American Christians)
  - c. Are you a multiplier?

**viii. Count the Costs**

- 1. Matthew 8:18-22 – “Let the dead bury their own dead”
- 2. Matthew 10:16-25 – “I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.”
- 3. Diagnostic:
  - a. Does your relationship with the Lord cost you something? Have you reprioritized your life?

**III. Our Core Values (City Values)**

- a. Our core values describe a community of people with an ethos in line with what it means to be disciples
  - i. They are a “distillation” of the kinds of principles we find in the Gospels and throughout the rest of the Bible
  - ii. You will discuss this in your groups

## **City Planning – Week 4 Discussion**

### **“Being Disciples”**

**Passage: Really all of Matthew, but focus on Matthew 28:18-20**

**[18] And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

#### **Questions:**

1. Before tonight’s discussion, what were your ideas about what it means to “be a disciple?” Has your understanding of “being a disciple” changed at all based on tonight’s discussion?
2. What components of “being a disciple” do you do well? How does this advance the gospel in the City of Gainesville?
3. What components of “being a disciple” do you struggle with? How does this hinder the advancement of the gospel in the City of Gainesville?
4. In areas where you are struggling as a disciple, how do you go about changing?
5. As you’ve spent time with or simply observed Christians and churches in action, what components of “being a disciple” are emphasized? What components are deemphasized?
6. Are there elements of “being a disciple” that City Church, corporately, should pay special attention to?
7. What are our core values, and what relationship is there between them and the components of being a disciple?

# “The Rocking Chair”

## City Planning – Week 4 (Being Disciples)

### Sermons:

- Check out The Gospel Coalition’s topical archive of sermons on discipleship
  - <http://thegospelcoalition.org/resources/category/sermons/a/topic/Discipleship>

### Video:

- Principles for Whole Life Discipleship (John Stott)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vs64yiwOulc>

### Articles:

- “Give Up Your Weak Definition of ‘Disciple’” – (John Starke)
  - <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2012/10/24/give-up-your-weak-definition-of-disciple-2/>
- “The Concept of Discipleship in the New Testament” (Hans Kvalbein)
  - [http://s3.amazonaws.com/tgc-documents/journal-issues/13.2\\_Kvalbein.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/tgc-documents/journal-issues/13.2_Kvalbein.pdf)

### Books:

- The Cost of Discipleship (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)
- The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship (Dallas Willard)

### For Your Consideration:

- How has the church defined “disciple” throughout church history?