

## Life Groups 101– 3 initial studies

### **Session 1 – The two basic questions of discipleship: Matthew 28:18-20**

The 2 basic questions of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-21) as outworking of RBC's overall vision 'real disciples, making new disciples'.

#### Observation – What does the passage say?

- i) In pairs look at the passage and circle/underline/write out the separate sections of what Jesus says.
- ii) Which words in the passage do you find particularly inspiring? What follow up questions (i.e. what do you feel inspired to do/ask in response? E.g. Jesus says 'Go', which is inspiring, but raises the question – 'go where?')

#### Interpretation – What does the passage mean?

- iii) Which words in the passage do you find confusing or challenging? Share together your understanding of the different elements of the passage (e.g. how would you define disciple? Would you know how to baptise someone yourself? Did you realise that is something all believers are commissioned to do?)
- iv) Jesus says 'teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you'; 2's or 3's write down as many of Jesus' commands as you can (feel free to refer to your bible as you do) in 5 minutes.

#### Application – What does the passage mean for me?

- v) It has been said that you can summarise discipleship into two main questions: (1) am I being a disciple? (2) is anyone close enough to notice (and be disciplined by me)? What parts of this passage apply to those questions?
- vi) Those two questions are 'closed' (i.e. they can only be answered 'yes' or 'no'. What do you think of the following 'open' questions? (1) What are you and Jesus working on together right now? (2) Who is Jesus calling you to love without strings and, when the time is appropriate, invite to learn about being a disciple? Can you come up with better alternatives?
- vii) Whether you use the above questions, or have come up with better ones as a group, write those questions down and spend 5-10minutes in prayer and reflection asking God for direction on how too apply those questions to yourself. – *If there is time, feedback to the group what you wrote (leader, make notes) these questions are good to come back to daily as individuals and to ask each other whenever you see one another outside the group. It will also be appropriate to come back to them in group time on occasion.*

**End Note:** Depending on where Jesus is calling you to go/who he is calling you to love will begin to define the nature of your Life Group (Life Group should be structured to support your discipleship & mission – you care pastorally for those you are shoulder to shoulder with, walking together where Jesus is calling you to go). Broadly there are two kinds of mission: mission to your geographical neighbours and mission to a non-geographical network. The group can be structured to support either mission.

Close with Prayer

## **Session 2 – The 5 skill sets of every member ministry: Ephesians 4:11-16**

Understanding yourself and your life group in relation to the 5-fold ministry can create a sense of team/every member ministry and allow people to grow in the skill set they feel naturally drawn to without feeling guilty for not being someone else.

**Reflection:** ask people to share with one another their answers to the 2 discipleship questions ‘what are you and Jesus working on?’; ‘Who is Jesus calling you to love?’ – ask them how that has been going this week in 2’s or 3’s.

Someone read the passage out loud

**Observation – What does the passage say?**

- i) Take 5 minutes to re-read the passage summarise meaning of passage in your own words.
- ii) What are the 5 ‘ministries’ in the 5 fold?
- iii) What is the purpose/are the purposes of the 5 fold? (cf. verse 12, 13 and 15). Ask people to think about this by themselves for two minutes, share in pairs for a couple of minutes then feedback to the whole group (*This is a technique called ‘Think, Pair, Share’ which allows space for introverts and internal processors to join the feedback and conversation*).

**Interpretation – What does the passage mean?**

- iv) Write the 5 ‘ministries’ on A3/flipchart paper – what do people think each of the 5 words mean (write it down) under each heading, use bible references if any come to mind or share experiences or thoughts without reference, discuss what you think the distinctions might be.
- v) Is it possible for someone to be more than one of them? Does the passage indicate that you might be able to be trained in one or more of them? Where does it say that? How might that work?

**Application – What does the passage mean for me?**

- vi) Read through handout – how does this fit with what you have written down? Is there anything you found helpful from the handout? Disagreed with? Need more clarity on? Can you think of bible verses that relate to the issues raised?
- vii) One at a time say which you think most describes you: if more than one, that’s okay – God will take us through learning many of them (or all) in our life, but there will probably be one or two which more ‘naturally’ describe where your strengths lie.

**Prayer**

Pray into people’s identity, affirming them as a child of God, loved and called by God, saved by grace etc. speaking the gracious promises of the Gospel over their life and asking God to increase His Presence with them and their confidence in who he has created them to be.

*Feel free to do this however you feel is most appropriate (in 2-3’s; going round the room praying one at a time; praying ‘for the person on your left’; having one person sit in the middle at a time and everyone pray for them, then changing person etc.)*

### **Session 3 – The 3 dimensions of the Christian Life: Read Mark 12:30-31**

Imbalance in the dimensions of the Christian life can lead us to walk off the path of discipleship – this isn't a comment on salvation, but not living as Jesus did means we stop looking like Jesus, which means we never live distinctively enough to provoke questions or interest about God from those around us.

Reflection: ask people to share with one another their answers to the 2 discipleship questions 'what are you and Jesus working on?'; 'Who is Jesus calling you to love?' – ask them how that has been going this week in 2's or 3's.

Observation – What does the passage say?

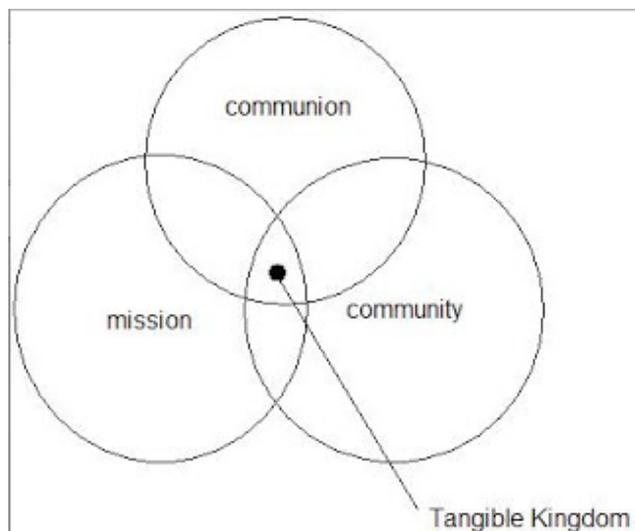
- i) What do you understand the word 'love' to mean?
- ii) Share an experience of how you have felt loved?
- iii) What different kinds of 'neighbour' are there? How did Jesus answer the question 'who is my neighbour?' and what did Jesus mean?

Interpretation – What does the passage mean?

- iv) When you want to show love to: friends, work colleagues, spouse, children – how do you do it?
- v) When you want to show love to God how do you do it?

Application – What does the passage mean for me?

GROUP EXERCISE: On post it notes write down all the different things you've done in home groups/small groups etc over the years and put them on a piece of flip chart paper (paper should have 3 circles on that are ignored for the time being).



Explain the 3 circles then rearrange the post its into the relevant circles.

**Communion** is about times when we engage with God (prayer, communion, bible study, Sabbath rest, spiritual disciplines, self care (e.g. exercise etc. when on your own)).

**Community** is about anything you do whilst with each other (the aim is doing things together with people who don't know Jesus also joining in), this includes sharing friends, sharing food, sharing life, sharing hobbies (e.g. exercise when with people)

**Mission** includes: Benevolent action, spontaneous blessing, sacrificial giving, sending of leaders, serving the poor/needly.

v) Where are most of the post its situated? What might that tell us about the balance of the way we have done groups in the past?

vi) Which areas are lacking focus? What might we do to rectify the imbalance? (it might be that 'mission' is lacking but that its not possible to do that together, or on a night when you meet – so take time to discuss if 'mission' can be done outside of the evening meeting – who would want to get involved in what? (get feedback and stories every week at the beginning of your group time together).

#### Prayer

Close in prayer either in relation to the topic discussed and/or sharing pastoral needs from within the group (and praying for those in the group who couldn't make it, asking God to belss them and listening for God on direction for how to love them).

*Feel free to do this however you feel is most appropriate (in 2-3's; going round the room praying one at a time; praying 'for the person on your left'; having one person sit in the middle at a time and everyone pray for them, then changing person etc.)*