

Small Group Session 1.1

What is a Disciple?



Ask a typical church congregation if they consider themselves to be committed Christians and you'll find most of them would not hesitate to say yes. Ask if they considered themselves to be disciples of Jesus and you'll find that far fewer of them are comfortable with this idea. Why is that? In this session we want to rediscover what it means to be a disciple and ask who can become one.

Let God Speak First

Read Psalm 1:1-3 to yourself in silence. Read it several times slowly and gently. Savour each word.

Next choose a word or phrase that stands out to you. Turn it over and over in your mind. As you do this, listen to what God might be saying to you and/or your group.

Make brief notes in your journal outlining anything that God might be saying to you. If you feel able, share these things with the others in your triad.

How did Jesus make disciples?

Read Luke 6:12-16

It is clear that from the start of His ministry Jesus knew that He had only a short time (three years) to deliver a message that needed to be heard by the whole world. He could have spent those three years speaking to as many people as possible. And yet he chose to invest most of his time in a small group of twelve largely uneducated disciples.



Discuss in your group why you think Jesus chose this strategy and why it has been so affective.

Jesus often ate with His disciples.

Look at Mark 2:13-17, and 14: 22-24. Why did Jesus eat with His disciples frequently and why do you think it is a central part of Mathetes?

What is a Disciple?

Discipleship is ...

1. A lifelong **apprenticeship** to Jesus...
2. Lived from within the **Kingdom of God** ...
3. That results in **spiritual transformation** into Christ-likeness

A key question is what does it mean to be an apprentice?

Think of a trade which commonly involves an apprenticeship.

What would it mean practically to be an apprentice in that trade?

In what sense is a disciple an apprentice to Jesus?

What would it mean practically to be an apprentice of Jesus?

Discuss why anyone would want to be an apprentice of Jesus?

In Mathetes we seek to become apprentices of Jesus who learn from Him daily about how to live in His kingdom and how to be gradually transformed into His likeness. We will explore later in Mathetes what it means to live in the King-

dom of God and be spiritually transformed.

Who can be a Disciple?

Jesus required no formal qualifications of His original twelve disciples. He did not ask them to prove themselves to be worthy of being His disciples.

A disciple is not a status reserved for "advanced" Christians. Neither is it an optional extra that you can choose to do if you are keen. In the early church, there was no distinction between being a disciple and being a Christian.

Take a moment in personal reflection to ask yourself the following questions:

Do you think you can be a disciple of Jesus?

Are there any barriers that might prevent you from becoming His disciple?

Make brief notes of your thoughts on these questions in your discipleship journal and then discuss them with the others in your triad.

Before you go ...

Read through *The Daily Disciple* together and discuss the tasks.

Take a few moments to pray for each other. Ask if anyone in the group has something they would like to have prayer for. Keep prayers simple. Don't feel pressured to pray out loud if you are not comfortable with that. God hears prayers that you pray in your mind just as well as those spoken out.

The Daily Disciple

Holy Habits



The purpose of most apprenticeships is to become proficient in a given trade. An important aspect of becoming proficient is developing the right sorts of habits which will enable

you to perform the tasks in question competently. With enough practice these habits become second nature so that you instinctively do the right thing at the right time, almost without thinking about it. It is exactly the same with discipleship. The key here is to develop the right sorts of habits.

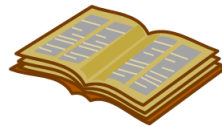
There is no definitive list of habits that go with being a disciple. Everyone faces different challenges in their discipleship journey, and so will need to adopt different habits to press through them. There are, however, some core habits which most people should find helpful. Each stage of Mathetes introduces you to one or two of these core habits, encouraging and helping you to develop these habits yourself. Research shows that it can take anywhere from 18 days up to 254 to establish a habit, depending on the habit and the person trying to establish it. Mathetes is organised so that each of the six stages takes six weeks, which is enough time for you to establish one set of habits before moving on to the next.

There are two simple habits to be formed in this first stage of discipleship training:

- Daily Bible reading
- Regular prayer

Any apprentice should be in regular contact with their master. These two habits are crucial to your apprenticeship to Jesus. Through them He will speak to you and you will speak to Him.

Daily Bible reading



Each Daily Disciple will have a set of 10 short daily readings for you to do from the Bible over a two week period. The idea is that one day a week you will be meeting in your discipleship group or triad where you will be reading the Bible anyway. This leaves you with six days. It is probable that you will attend a regular Sunday church service, where you will also be reading and/or listening to the Bible being read to you. So the readings shown bottom right of this page are for you to do on each of the remaining 10 days over the next two weeks.

Before you do each reading, simply ask God to speak to you, and then listen to Him as you read. The readings should take only a few minutes each day.

Regular prayer

The simplest description of prayer is that it is a two way conversation between you and God. Prayer is listening as well as speaking. You may find it helpful to have a regular time and place to pray. This is



good practice and is to be encouraged. However, this is not the habit we are focussing on here. One problem with having set times of prayer is that it is easy then to unintentionally divide your day in to “God parts” and “non-God” parts. Christians throughout the ages have found it much better to try to integrate your prayer with your daily life. This is an important part of being an apprentice to Jesus, because, as we’ll see later in Mathetes, it is through the ordinary events and challenges of our everyday life that Jesus teaches and changes us.

*Pick something that you normally do several times a day. It could be making a cup of tea, washing up, reading your emails, driving between appointments with clients, photocopying, or checking your Facebook account. Make a note of this activity in your discipleship journal. Whenever you do this activity this week, know that Jesus is with you at that very moment, and do that activity **for Him**, to please Him. You can speak to Him in your heart if you wish, but often the deepest communication is done without words. Know His love for you in that moment, and love Him back.*

Week 1	Week 2
Mark 1:1-8	Mark 2:1-12
Mark 1:9-20	Mark 2:13-22
Mark 1:9-20	Mark 2:23-3:6
Mark 1:21-34	Mark 3:7-19
Mark 1:35-45	Mark 3:20-35