

What methods do you believe to be most effective in growing the Kingdom of God in our day? What is the best way for you to grow spiritually? Large outreach events or rallies? Dynamic outside speakers? Moving music? In these two passages on the front, we see Paul giving examples of his strategy for growing the Kingdom of God. These are even more significant, because he wrote these toward the end of his life – this was his last chance to make a difference.

And what did Paul advocate? Simply this: **Christians meeting with other Christians, one on one**, training and encouraging each other to grow in faith and godliness. Studying, praying, laughing and crying together. That is what makes a church. It is also exactly the way Jesus came to change the world – not by displays of grand, worldly power, but by pouring His life into twelve simple men. Quiet discipleship suits the Incarnation of our Lord perfectly. We change the world, not by grand designs, but one person at a time, giving God all the glory.

So it is our belief that what worked best in the first century works best today, because it is God’s plan to grow His Kingdom in His way. Therefore, we encourage every Christian at Grace Covenant to pursue making a quiet, lasting impact on the Kingdom by intentionally pursuing one or two deep, Christ-centered relationships, focused on mutual growth and encouragement in our Christian walks.

At the same time, we recognize and want to encourage the Christian freedom each of us has to grow at the pace which God has set out for us, not some outside program or ill-assigned mentor. Therefore, it is our prayer that these discipling friendships will arise naturally as the Holy Spirit works across our church.

Nevertheless, some guidance is helpful. **Formally, we provide three discipleship training classes:** the Inquirers Class, a Discipleship Seminar, and the Summer Theology Leader’s class (see the GCPC Ministry Structure pamphlet for more details).

**Informally, this is what we strongly encourage:** First, every officer and leader at Grace Covenant purpose to pursue one or two of deep relationships with other Christians. Second, that those folks along with other growing believers would then also begin to disciple others. It goes without saying that these should be with someone of the same gender, so that as in Paul’s instructions, men disciple men and women

disciple women. We suggest that one friendship be with a peer, for mutual encouragement, and that one be with someone outside of your natural comfort zone or affinity – perhaps a young graduate student, or an international, or someone from a different social background. Someone you can pour your life into, even if they end up moving away from Blacksburg in a year or two. (That is how the Kingdom grows!)

These then are more than the kind of relationships which you can develop on Sunday morning or even in a Home Fellowship Group – though they can certainly start there. Intentional, discipling friendships take regular, one-on-one time over coffee or lunch, or by taking walks together. And while it can certainly involve shared hobbies or recreation, these times should also include an intentional time of spiritual growth together – perhaps by studying a portion of Scripture or a good Christian book together. Or you could simply talk about your lives, seeking God’s wisdom and praying together. We suggest meeting at least twice a month if at all possible.

Well, where to start? How to begin? **First, pray** for God to lead you to the right person or two. None of this will be useful unless the Holy Spirit himself blesses our efforts. **Second, pick a time and place**, and just get going. Study or do something that is mutually agreeable. **Third, there are several discipleship resources** we can recommend, such as *The Walk* by Steve Smallman, or *Life on Life* by Randy Pope.

**Fourth, below are the sample questions** below as ways to help direct a conversation towards deeper, spiritual matters. No one should try to ask or answer all these questions in any one given meeting. Rather, pick two or three to go over each time (maybe the same ones!), and discuss and pray over these. And whatever you do together, in word or deed do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus. If you do that, you will be sure to help one another grow in God’s grace!

### Sample Discipleship Questions:

#### *The Word*

- **What has God been teaching you through His Word?**
  - **What changes to your life has this made?**
  - **What areas of your life have come into conflict with God’s Word?**
  - **Are you willing to change? Why/Why not?**

- What has God's word taught you about the Gospel?
- How have you been encouraged through His Word?

#### *Prayer*

- Who/What has God placed on your heart to pray for?
- In what ways have you seen God answer your prayers?
- In what ways have you opened your heart to God in prayer?
- How have you praised God through prayer?

#### *Relationships*

- How have you loved/not loved your neighbors? Coworkers?
- Have you been able to express love to those around you?
- How have you encouraged your spouse? Your children?
  - How have you built them up in Christ?
  - What have you done to enhance your relationship with your spouse? Children?
- In what ways have you discouraged them? Why? How does the Gospel help you change this?

#### *Service*

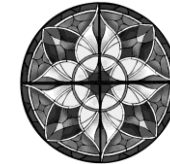
- How have you used your gifts recently?
- Whom are you serving?
- How are you serving the church?

#### *Godly Character*

- What do you do to keep the Lord's Day holy?
- Have you given 100% effort in your job and home responsibilities?
- Has your thought life been pure?
- How have you been tempted and how did you respond?
- Are there some particular sins in your life that you are unwilling or unable to give up?
- Are you resting on Christ alone, or do you continue to earn favor with God? What are the results? What does the Gospel teach us?
- Read Psalm 19:14. How does your speech compare to this?
- Read Matthew 6:19-21. How do you view your possessions in light of this passage? Is anything in your life an idol?
- Read Ephesians 5:15-16. How well do you manage your time? Why?
- Read Philippians 4:8. What things do you spend time thinking about? What influences your character?

# Discipleship at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church

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*You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*

~ II Timothy 2:1-2 ~

*Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands so that no one will malign the word of God.*

~ Titus 2:3-4 ~