

C Change

Small group discipleship resources for the 21st Century



Worksheet 1: The Call to Discipleship

discipleship - following Jesus

As Jesus influenced, encouraged, shaped and loved his followers, they discovered the values and standards of the Reign of God in their midst.

They themselves became filled with the love and the passion of Jesus as they served with him to bring in God's new order. This set Jesus, and his disciples, on a collision course with the powers of the time.

Even when Jesus emphasised the cost of discipleship with "lose your life to find it", "put your hand to the plough and don't look back", his disciples grew in stature. They were learning the difference between "cheap grace" and "costly grace".

So what does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus today? Following Jesus, as always, starts as a life-changing experience with the living Christ who calls us to hand our lives over to him. It is in this act of surrender, repentance and trust in him, that we discover Christ's personal love for us, which was given so freely through his death and resurrection.

(John U'Ren)



This sheet is part of a series on discipleship in the 21st century. It is offered by the National Assembly as a discussion starter for small groups, in congregations, faith communities or other settings. It may also be used for personal reflection. Low resolution copies of this sheet can be downloaded free of charge from the Assembly website or high quality print versions can be purchased from MediaCom for a small fee to cover printing costs.

Carol's story

Carol lived in a housing department house with her disabled daughter.

The carer's pension was her form of support. She quietly began to visit a local dementia unit with about sixty patients. Many had been "forgotten" by their relatives.



Carol began to conduct brief worship services and organised a friendship club. Then she persuaded the manager to run a bus to take some of the people to Sunday worship in her local congregation.

At first she was a little embarrassed when people cheered and clapped at the conclusion of the songs, and some got up to dance.

But the members of the congregation assured her that they enriched the worship. One member of the congregation then volunteered to lead a craft group. Soon deep friendships developed.

(Rob Bos)

“Following Jesus radically in a world of violence, weapons of war, racism, fractured relationships and economic injustice presents a tough challenge. Going against the cultural norms, and not being seduced by the greed, selfishness, apathy and injustice of the day means that we are in the ‘discipleship resistance movement’ with Jesus.”
(John U’Ren)

try these....

1. Thomas Bandy encourages people to a ministry of “lurking with intent”.

He invites a group of people to visit a shopping centre to simply observe what is happening and listen to the conversations.

After a while the group returns to a home to share what they have learned. Then follows a time of prayer for the people observed.

The purpose? To become attuned to the lives of people in the community in order to know how to connect our lives with theirs. The discipleship call here is to listen, to reflect, to engage and to relate out of faith perspective.

2. Where are the neediest people in your neighbourhood?

Why not befriend them? There is no need to think up a grand program to help them. They will know what they need.

(Maybe later, after you have come to know them, you may be able to support them as they take steps to meet their own needs.)

(Ian Price)

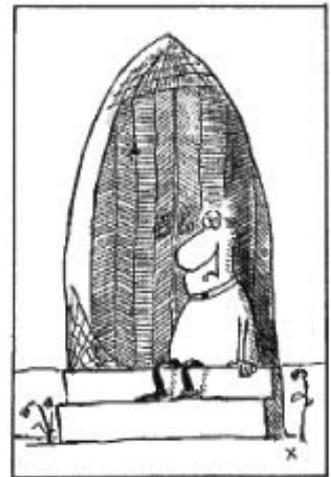
Prayer

I see a passing crowd,
a parade of lives,
unknown (yet known)
strangers (yet so familiar)
others (yet truly me in other
guise).

Teach me the paths of
discipleship,
God in human form.

Teach me to follow Christ
into all the world,
for the sake of the Gospel.
Amen

(Ian Price)



REV. TAYLOR WOULD OFTEN RELIVE THAT FATEFUL “COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT” SERMON IN WHICH HE OMITTED TO MENTION COMING BACK TO CHURCH!

“As you press on for justice, be sure to move with dignity and discipline, using only the weapon of love. Let no man pull you so low as to hate him. Always avoid violence.”

(Martin Luther King)

reflections...

- John U’Ren says: “Following Jesus, as always, starts as a life-changing experience with the living Christ who calls us to hand our lives over to him.” In your experience, is this a pious hope or an experienced reality?
- How do you see prayer in relation to action in the local community? Is one more important than the other? Which do you emphasise?
- How do you see evangelism in relation to welfare and justice? Is one more important than the other? Which do you emphasise?