

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP SEMINAR

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Topic:
“The Challenges of Christian Discipleship”

Lessons

- Lesson #1: Understanding the Church’s Mission
- Lesson #2: Understanding the Disciple Making Process
- Lesson #3: Developing the Needed People and Ministries
- Lesson #4: Making the Class Meeting the Centerpiece
- Lesson #5: Avoiding Distractions



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Dr. Darryl B. Starnes, Sr., Facilitator
“The Challenges of Christian Discipleship”
Lesson #1: Understanding the Church’s Mission



Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20

Proposition: The first great challenge of Christian Discipleship is that of understanding the God-given mission of the church and communicating it faithfully to His people.

I. Understanding the Consequences of Confusion about the Mission of the Church (The Mover)

- A. Counterproductive activities: doing the opposite of what is needed
- B. Divided efforts: pulling in different directions
- C. Wasted energy, time, and resources
- D. Inactivity and apathy
- E. Discouragement
- F. _____
- G. _____

II. Clarifying the Mission of the Church: Making Christian Disciples (Matthew 28:18-20)

- A. **Evangelism** [the proclamation of the gospel] is the first step in Christian discipleship. (Mark 16:15,16)
- B. **Baptism** [initiation & assimilation into the Church] is the next step in Christian discipleship. (Mt. 28:19)
- C. **Teaching** [training converts to obey Christ] is the crucial step in Christian discipleship. (Mt. 28:20)

III. Developing a Mission Statement for the Church

- A. Each local church should develop a mission statement.
 - 1. The Great Commission should inform this mission statement. (Mt. 28:18-20)
 - 2. The A.M.E. Zion Church’s mission statement should also inform it. (*Discipline* [2000], pp. 12-13)
 - 3. A Special Committee chaired by the pastor should prayerfully devise this mission statement.
 - 4. The congregation should have the opportunity to revise and finally adopt the mission statement.
- B. The mission statement should be kept before the church through church bulletins, newsletters, etc.
- C. The mission statement should impact the organization of the local church.
 - 1. The relevance of auxiliaries should be determined by their role in fulfilling the church’s mission.
 - 2. The selection of leaders/workers should be made in the light of their commitment to the mission.
- D. The mission statement should guide the vision, objectives, goals and plans of the local church.
- E. The mission statement should be the primary standard by which each year’s work is evaluated.



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Lesson #2: Understanding the Disciple Making Process



Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20

Proposition: The second great challenge of Christian Discipleship is that of understanding the disciple making process and implementing it in the local church.

I. We must understand the roles of the pastor, the people, and the disciple-making process.

- A. The pastor should be devoted to the following:
 - 1. The ministry of the word and prayer (Acts 6:1-7)
 - 2. The training and deployment of leaders (2 Tim. 2:2) [disciple makers]
 - 3. The equipping of the saints (Eph. 4:11-12)
 - 4. The management of the ministry (1 Pet. 5:1-5)
- B. The people should be devoted to the following: (Eph. 4:11-16)
 - 1. Works of ministry
 - 2. Spiritual growth
 - 3. Pastoral care
 - 4. Church growth
- C. The disciple-making process produces dynamic witnesses for Christ.
 - 1. Mature disciples
 - 2. Responsible disciples
 - 3. Reproducing disciples.

II. We must understand the priesthood of all believers (1 Pet. 2:9,10)

- A. As priests we have the authority to pray: to go to God on behalf of people.
- B. As priests we have the responsibility to evangelize: to go to people on behalf of God.
- C. As priests we have the privilege to testify: to share with people how we became God's people

III. We must have a genuine commitment to multiplication, not just reproduction.

- A. Reproduction: making disciples
- B. Multiplication: Training disciple makers

IV. We must use the small group as the primary means of disciple making.

- A. It provides an environment where peers can help us keep our commitments.
- B. It provides an environment where we will be accountable and responsible.
 - 1. How is our prayer life?
 - 2. How is our study of God's word?
 - 3. What are our areas of struggle?
 - 4. What are our areas of victory?
 - 5. How is our personal witness? [word, deed, or sign]
 - 6. How is our personal ministry?
- C. It provides an environment where we can be trained to do outreach ministry.

- D. It provides an environment where we can do pastoral care.



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Lesson #3: Developing the Needed People and Ministries



Proposition: The third great challenge of Christian discipleship is that of developing the people and ministries needed to fulfill this God-given mission.

I. Developing Christian Disciples in the Church

- A. Receiving on probation only those who give satisfactory evidence of their desire to be saved.
- B. Receiving into full connection only those who give satisfactory evidence of saving faith in Christ.
- C. Keeping in good standing only those who evidence a commitment to the disciple making process.
- D. Electing to leadership only those who evidence a commitment to making Christian disciples.
- E. Licensing as preachers only those who evidence an ability to communicate the plan of salvation.
- F. Ordaining to the ministry only those who evidence a commitment to making Christian disciples.
- G. Appointing as pastors only those who evidence the commitment & ability to train disciple makers.

II. Developing a Dynamic Prayer Ministry in the Church

- A. Prayer is God’s secret weapon for sending laborers into His harvest. [Luke 10:2]
- B. Prayer is God’s secret weapon for deepening the church’s commitment to its mission. [Acts 1:14]
- C. Prayer is God’s secret weapon for giving His people boldness in evangelism. [Acts 4:29-31]
- D. Prayer is God’s secret weapon for bringing people to a saving knowledge of Christ. [1 Tim. 2:1-4]

III. Developing an Aggressive Evangelistic Thrust in the Church

- A. The Local Board of Evangelism must lead the church in its evangelistic thrust.
 - 1. The Board may consist of the ministers, exhorters, and members that have a gift or interest in evangelism.
 - 2. The Board should have a chairperson, whose duty it is to preside over its meetings.
 - 3. The Board should have a local Director of Evangelism, whose duty it is to direct the program of evangelism.
 - 4. The Board, in concert with Christian Education should provide evangelism training for both clergy and laity.
 - 5. The Board should plan and coordinate the church’s evangelistic services and special outreach projects.
- B. The Outreach Ministries of the church must take the gospel beyond the walls of the church.
 - 1. These Outreach Ministries should be organized according to the needs of the community.
 - 2. These Outreach Ministries should be organized according to the gifts, talents, and resources of the church.
 - 3. These Outreach Ministries should be organized to create opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

IV. Developing a Nurturing Environment in the Church. (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:41)

- A. A mission-minded congregation should initiates converts into the church through a baptism of love
 - 1. The congregation should show love to all that come to Christ, regardless of age, class, or color.
 - 2. The congregation should welcome all that seek salvation, regardless of their sins or shortcomings.
- B. A faithful class leader and functioning class should nurture converts to maturity in Christ.
 - 1. They should aid in the *spiritual growth and faith development* of their members.
 - 2. They should support and provide for their members in *times of crisis or need*.
 - 3. They should help their members to *discover, develop, and use their spiritual gifts*.
 - 4. They should help their members to *find their ministries* in the church.
 - 5. They should teach their members how to *study God’s word*.
 - 6. They should teach their members how to *develop a meaningful prayer life*.
 - 7. They should teach their members how to *be accountable to one another*.
 - 8. They should teach their members how to *share their faith with others*.

9. Class leaders must teach their members how to *obey the commands of Christ*.



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Lesson #4: Making the Class Meeting the Centerpiece



Scripture Lesson: Luke 6:12-16; Acts 2:41-47

Proposition: The fourth great challenge of Christian Discipleship is that of making small group discipleship (the class meeting) the centerpiece of life in the local church.

I. The Class Meeting is the place where disciples are made.

- A. It is a place where a Leader and members can help us be sure about our salvation.
- B. It is a place where a Leader and members can bond with us and assimilate us into the church.
- C. It is a place where a Leader and members can teach us to obey all that Christ has commanded.

II. The Class Meeting is a small group ministry.

- A. Classes should consist of no less than five and no more than twenty members.
- B. Classes with more than twenty should be divided into two or more classes.
- C. Classes should be small to insure that all persons participate in the meeting. (No spectators)

III. The Class Meeting is a weekly meeting.

- A. Classes should meet at least once a week.
- B. It is the most important meeting in the church.

IV. The Class Meeting is a behavioral mode of ministry.

- A. The primary focus of the class meeting is not cognitive, affective, training, or rehabilitative.
- B. The primary focus of the class meeting is behavioral.
 - 1. Learning to avoid evil [overcoming habits, laying aside weights and sins, pursuing holiness]
 - 2. Learning to do good [loving people, serving others, working in the church, sharing one's faith]
 - 3. Learning to attend the means of grace [private devotions, Sunday School, church, prayer, etc]

V. The Class Meeting is a gathering of the family within the family.

- A. The local church or society is the larger family.
- B. The class is the smaller family where there is a closer fellowship.

VI. The Class Meeting is the point of entry and exclusion for church membership.

- A. Faithful attendance to the class meeting should be necessary in order to be received into full connection.
- B. Faithful attendance to the class meeting should be necessary in order to remain in good standing.

VII. The Class Meeting is circle of care and concern.

- A. The Class Leader and members should give encouragement in times of sickness, crisis, tragedy, and sorrow.
- B. The Class Leader and members should give support in times of scarcity, need, and leanness.

VIII. The Class Meeting is a disciple making entity.

- A. It is the same disciple making entity employed by the Lord, Jesus Christ.

- B. It is the same disciple making entity employed by John Wesley.
- C. It is the same disciple making entity employed by the faithful churches of this present age.



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Lesson #5: Avoiding Distractions



Proposition: The fifth great challenge of Christian Discipleship is that of avoiding the distractions that often cause the church to lose sight of its mission.

I. Personal Ambition [Philippian 2:3]

- A. Putting our personal agendas before the mission of the church
- B. Promoting our own kingdoms rather than the Redeemer’s kingdom

II. Worldly Preoccupations [Mark 4:18-19]

- A. The Cares of this World
- B. The Deceitfulness of Riches
- C. The Desire for Pleasure

III. Religious Persecution [Matthew 5:10-12]

- A. Insults
- B. False Accusations
- C. Ostracizing
- D. Oppression
- E. Abuse

IV. The Prosperity of the Wicked [Psalm 37:1-11]

- A. Fretting
- B. Envy
- C. Discouragement
- D. Anger

V. Personal Loyalties and Factions [1 Corinthians 1:10-13]

- A. Contentions, schisms, and dissension
- B. More loyalty to human leaders than to Christ

VI. Man-made Traditions [Mark 7:1-9]

- A. Laying aside the commands of God
- B. Holding to the traditions of men

VII. Misplaced Priorities [Matthew 23:1-15]

- A. Stressing positions of leadership more than practicing what we preach [1-4]
- B. Stressing religious appearances, places of prominence, and titles more than ministry [5-12]
- C. Stressing personal status more than personal salvation [13]
- D. Stressing things (buildings, money, etc.) more than people [14]
- E. Stressing membership more than discipleship [15]

