



# COLLABORATIVE DISCIPLESHIP

## 2 Cultivate

### How to Develop Our Gifts and Talents

## 1 Connect

**Summary** It's important that we become excellent stewards of everything God gives us, whether that be money, time, influence, spiritual gifts or talents. There are five practical ways to grow in the gifts and abilities God has given us. They are known as **The Five Es** (Exposure, Education, Environment, Experience, Evaluation).

**Brainstorm** Take a moment and let each person identify an area in which they want to grow. This could be a spiritual gift, a talent, an ability, or a way to lead others.

**Read** Once each of you all has that area in mind, read through **The Five Es** below and answer the questions.

#### Exposure

Be exposed to people who have experience and abilities in the areas in which you wish to grow. Make sure you can see a living, breathing person who does excellent work in that area. As you observe this person, you will pick up on traits and principles which make that person good at what they do.

#### Discuss

- Who is someone you know who is really great at the thing in which you wish to grow?
- How might you be able to “shadow” them or watch them do what they do well?
- If appropriate, when will you approach them and ask for their help?

#### Education

Education is where you intentionally take time to learn a certain topic. You might sit down and listen to how someone does something. You may also want to read a book on the subject or take a class. Whatever the topic, be sure to be an active learner.

#### Discuss

- Are there books, articles or videos by those who are nationally or internationally recognized experts in this area?
- Is there a class, seminar, lesson, or training you can take on the subject?

#### Environment

You need a place where you can grow in your gifts and ask any question without being made to feel stupid. You need an environment where you can learn without fear of failure. A good environment can also be a place where people involved in your area of interest work or hang out. Internships can be great ways to be in the right environment.

*As you look back on your time as a Christian, what has helped you grow the most in your ability to do ministry?*

## 3 Care

*Since we last met, what happened as a result of expressing Christ's love to others?*

*How can you, or we, express Christ's love to others this week?*

Here are a few ideas:

**Pray** God would meet their deepest needs.

**Help** meet a felt need they have.

**Encourage** them with a text, note or verbally.

**Give** them a thoughtful gift or buy them coffee.

**Invite** them to do something fun or meaningful.

**Listen** to their story.

**Explore** their thoughts on the gospel.

**Discuss**

- What sort of environment would help you grow in this area the most?
- Where do people who are good in your area of interest hang out or work?

**Experience**

Nothing beats experience and good old trial and error. After being exposed to something, you should try it yourself. You probably won't be great at it right away, but you'll never get better if you don't gain experience. You need plenty of opportunities to try, fail, learn from mistakes, and grow.

**Discuss**

- What are some simple ways to practice your gift or talent?
- Is there a job, internship or volunteer position where you can use your gift or talent?
- How can you use your gift or talent more often, even on a daily basis?

**Evaluation**

If you are really going to grow in a particular area, you must receive evaluation. You need to receive helpful, honest feedback from someone you trust and respect. Hopefully this will be done in a kind and encouraging manner. Without evaluation, you'll miss out on opportunities for growth.

**Discuss**

- Who do you know who can give you helpful feedback?
- Which of your friends can you ask to give you an honest evaluation?

**Brainstorm** Knowing that most people won't give you unsolicited feedback unless asked to do so, brainstorm (together) a few good ways to ask for feedback characterized by grace and truth.

**Discuss**

- Which of **The Five Es** will be the easiest for you to do?
- Which of **The Five Es** will be the most difficult for you to do?
- Which of **The Five Es** do you think will help you the most?
- How can we encourage each other to take the steps needed to grow in our gifts and talents?

**Pray** In light of what we've discussed, how can we pray for each other right now?