



COLLABORATIVE DISCIPLESHIP

2 Cultivate

How and Who to Invite into Discipleship

1 Connect

Summary Choosing the right people for discipleship is crucial—for you, for them and for God’s kingdom. A disciple must love the real Jesus, be trustworthy and be able to teach others. Finding committed disciples who will disciple others will result in a great impact on the world.

Understand the power of spiritual multiplication.

We won’t find the words spiritual multiplication in our Bibles, but we do find the concept:

- Jesus multiplied his life through twelve apostles and many more disciples.
- He also commanded His disciples to make disciples of all nations.
- Paul encouraged his disciples, including Timothy, to teach those who would teach others. All three of these are examples of spiritual multiplication.

In order to multiply ourselves spiritually and see the type of exponential growth that can truly impact our communities and the entire world, we each need to disciple at least two people with the expectation that they will go on to disciple at least two others. Imagine what would happen if each disciple multiplied his or her life into three others:

- The 1st generation would be $1 \times 3 = 3$
- The 2nd generation would be $3 \times 3 = 9$
- The 4th generation would be $27 \times 3 = 81$
- The 7th generation would be $729 \times 3 = 2,187$
- The 9th generation would be $6,561 \times 3 = 19,683$

In just nine generations almost 20,000 people could become disciples! In just eleven more generations over a billion could be discipled. That’s the power of spiritual multiplication!

Discuss

Do you really believe God could use you to someday make disciples of thousands, even millions, of people?

Disciple people together.

In order for God to use us to see lives and communities changed by the good news of Jesus Christ, we must teach and train more than one disciple at a time. A great way to do this is by gathering people together in small groups of three to five. You’ll want a large enough group to have good interaction, yet small enough for each disciple to be fully engaged.

When you want to buy something, how do you determine which brand and model to buy and where you will buy it?

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.

Here are some of the benefits of group discipleship:

- A group that includes you and three or five others allows members to be divided into pairs for training and outreach. Jesus always sent people out to minister in pairs.
- It allows disciples to take turns teaching lessons.
- Disciples can speak into one another's lives, rather than depending solely upon one leader to do this.
- Disciples grow in character as they resolve conflict with other group members.
- It takes pressure off of introverted leaders and group members.
- It builds community.
- It models how most people throughout church history have interacted with the Bible and issues of faith. (Before the mid 1400s, only the very wealthy and educated could own a Bible and read on their own.)
- One person can impact more people in a group.
- It's an efficient use of time.

Be wise about whom you disciple.

Luke 6:12 tells us that before Jesus selected who would be his disciples, he spent the night in prayer: *“One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles.”*

The Gospels don't reveal what Jesus said in most of His prayers, but James 1:5–6 tells us that we can ask God for wisdom: *“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.”* We all need wisdom as we decide who to invite into a discipleship group. Know your limits. You can't disciple everyone. Be realistic about how much time and energy you have to give.

Pray Take a few minutes to pray for wisdom right now.

Discuss

Who is God putting on your heart to invite into a collaborative discipleship group?

Invite people you trust and who can disciple others.

2 Timothy 2:2 is a verse often used to describe discipleship. Let's take a closer look at this verse. Paul said, *“the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”*

- Timothy is instructed to teach what Paul taught through his authority as an apostle. This tells us what is taught. Today this means we help people understand the Bible.
- Timothy is also instructed to teach trustworthy people who are able to teach others. This tells us both who can be disciplined and who can disciple others. These broad requirements are the same for us today—people we trust and who are able to teach others biblical truth.

Here are a few additional things to consider:

- When you observe a potential discipleship group member's life and faith, does he or she appear to know and love Jesus?
- Does this person want to see others come to know Christ and grow in their faith?
- Don't show favoritism. Don't choose to disciple someone based on their wealth, social status, etc.
- Don't discount someone who is socially awkward, as long as they are able to teach others. It's easier to teach social skills than it is to impart a sincere faith in God and love for others. Remember, God uses the weak and gives grace to the humble.

- Because disciples need to feel free to talk about sensitive topics, it's best for men and women to have separate discipleship groups.

Discuss

In your own words, what kind of person do you want to invite to disciple?

Be clear about what you're inviting people to do.

Sit down with each potential disciple to discuss expectations. You'll want to be sure you are on the same page. Some of those you invite may not want to be disciplined, and that's okay. You can continue to invite others.

Make sure they want to be a part of the larger movement, whether that is Cru, a church or another Christian group. Don't do this alone, but stay connected to a larger movement whose leadership seeks to help you succeed. A willingness to listen to and respect authority is healthy and demonstrates humility.

Go over the definition of discipleship within Cru to make sure that they want this definition to be true of them:

The goal of discipleship within Cru is to foster a caring community passionate about connecting people to Jesus Christ who:

- **experience spiritual growth through meaningful relationships.**
- **engage in significant opportunities to help others grow in faith and fruitfulness.**
- **express the gospel resulting in changed lives and communities.**

Lay out a realistic time commitment. Factor in time that will be spent in things such as:

- The weekly discipleship group meetings they attend with you.
- The weekly discipleship group meetings when they start their own group.
- Weekly meetings or fellowship times with Cru.
- Outreaches, retreats and conferences.
- Time spent learning through books, articles, videos, etc.

Consider keeping the weekly time commitment to seven hours per week or less. One hour per day is reasonable. Also, make sure they have time to minister to people in their daily lives (coworkers, family, friends), and make sure they are involved in a healthy church.

Be clear about other expectations. These could include:

- That there are other growth opportunities available, like Cru conferences and retreats. They should also know the financial costs involved in such opportunities.
- That ministry, facilitating small group discipleship meetings and helping broken people can be hard work.

Discuss

What do you think of these expectations? What questions or concerns do you have about them?

What other details do you think might be necessary to go over with them?

Brainstorm Make a list of potential disciples and talk through the list. Who are at least three you could challenge to discipleship? When will you do this?

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