



COLLABORATIVE DISCIPLESHIP

2 Cultivate

How to Make Disciples

1 Connect

Summary Christ commanded His followers to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:18–20). The process of making disciples starts with telling someone about Jesus and continues with a lifetime of growth commonly referred to as discipleship. We also describe discipleship as “helping others grow in faith and fruitfulness.” There are several principles and practices that will help others grow after coming to know Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:4–9.

“For when one says, ‘I follow Paul,’ and another, ‘I follow Apollos,’ are you not mere human beings? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.”

Disciples belong to God, not to us.

First Corinthians 3:9 tells us that we belong to God. We are “God’s field” and “God’s building.” When it comes to making disciples, people sometimes use language that sounds possessive, like “my disciples” or “their disciples.” Knowing that every disciple of Jesus Christ belongs to God encourages us to have healthier relationships with those we help disciple. It also reminds us that God is more committed to their growth and well being than we are.

God causes His disciples to grow, we do not.

In 1 Corinthians 3:6, Paul tells us that God makes seed grow, and verse seven says “only God” makes things grow. In this context Paul is referring to those who have come to faith in Christ. God alone has the power and authority to grow His field and build His building. We should be careful not to believe that we are the ones who cause others to grow.

Disciples follow Jesus, not us.

Even Paul didn’t want Christians to follow him, but rather to follow his example as stated in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ.” We don’t want to be leaders with many followers; we want to be servants who help many follow Christ. We disciple others because we want something for them, not because we want something from them.

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In your own experience of being disciplined, what are the things that helped you grow the most?

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

How does God's role and our role in making disciples influence how you view discipleship?

How do you understand the challenge of making disciples?

What are some of your attitudes and beliefs about discipleship that need to change?

In your own words, how would you describe the process of making disciples?

We do have a critical role in making disciples.

If disciples belong to God and He is the only one who creates real growth, then what's our role? According to 1 Corinthians 3:5 and 9 we are "*servants*" and "*co-workers in God's service.*" In other words, we collaborate with God to make disciples. The Holy Spirit does the disciple-making and gets the credit, but He allows us to join Him in the work of making disciples.

It's important to note that God often uses multiple believers to contribute to His work in someone's life. Verse six says that Paul planted and Apollos watered. This planting and watering metaphor is stated three times in this short passage. As we share the Gospel and help believers follow Christ, we do so along with others who have joined God in His work. We collaborate with fellow members of the Body of Christ to make disciples of all nations.

We won't be the only ones involved in the process of helping others grow, but as servants we can make sure disciples get the practical help they need. Together we help create a healthy environment for growth to happen.

—We empower disciples.

One of the best things we can do is to give control and responsibility to those we disciple. Consider allowing the group to decide which lessons you will go through, who will facilitate each lesson, and plan outreaches together. The more ownership and responsibility disciples have, the more involved and invested they will become.

Think of yourself as a fellow disciple who needs to learn and grow just as much as anyone else in the group. This will take some of the pressure off you as well. Like Paul, we should think of ourselves as farmers creating an environment for growth, rather than spiritual superiors who have all the answers and make all the decisions. Just like farmers, we can't be passive or lazy. Farmers work very hard to help their crops flourish. It's difficult work and it can get messy, but it's all worth it when the harvest comes in.

How you serve and empower those you disciple will be up to you. What discipleship will look like will depend on the maturity of the group, your experience, and other factors you observe.

Discuss

Honestly, what do you think of the idea of empowering those you disciple?

What are the best things you can do to empower them?

What do you need to take responsibility for to ensure the group doesn't lose focus or get off track?

—We make sure disciples are connected.

Life is all about relationships, and so is discipleship. We start by meeting and getting to know those we are seeking to disciple. Then, we invite them into a small, collaborative community of disciples who will spend time growing together. Once this group of disciples is established, we do whatever we can to help those in the group know and love one another. We also want to make sure they are connected to the campus Christian movement and to a local church.

Building healthy relationships will involve more than just discipleship and ministry times. It will also involve bonding over shared experiences and conversations: having a meal together, watching a movie, serving together, meeting for coffee, studying together, going on a trip, attending an event, and playing games.

Connecting disciples through social media can help them stay connected in between your face-to-face times. You can use a secret facebook group to post resources, lessons, events, photos, videos. You can also make polls, share prayer requests, and a lot more.

Discuss What do you think are the best ways to help disciples connect with one another?

—We help disciples grow in truth and grace.

Understanding truth and experiencing grace are both needed in order to grow in Christ.

There are a variety of ways a group of disciples can grow together in truth and grace:

- Meet to go over the **Collaborative Discipleship** lessons.
- Make use of **Collaborative Discipleship's** in depth resources.
- Have individual and corporate times of prayer and reading God's Word.
- When needed, seek the help of a Cru staff member, volunteer or mature believer. Use any means available to make sure the group gets the wisdom and help they need to grow.

Discuss What are some other ways to help disciples grow in truth and grace?

—We help disciples immerse themselves in experiences that will grow their faith.

Within Cru, your church and the Christian community are many significant opportunities for spiritual growth. Also consider organizing your own opportunities for ministry and growth:

- Take steps of faith to love others outside your group.
- Help group members serve the local campus Christian movement and their church.
- Participate in immersive experiences to grow through outreaches, conferences, retreats, missions, etc.
- Have the group break into pairs and spend time communicating their faith with others.

Discuss What are some opportunities coming up that could help others grow in faith and fruitfulness?

—We help disciples make disciples.

There are several ways to help disciples make disciples. One thing is to challenge and encourage them to invite others into a collaborative discipleship group. They can also be provided with evangelism and discipleship tools that are easy to use and transferable.

Here are some of the specifics:

- Have them facilitate Collaborative Discipleship lessons.
- Make sure they understand the power of spiritual multiplication.
- Ask them to make a list of people whom they would like to see come to know Jesus.
- Ask those who join your Collaborative Discipleship group to make a list of people they could invite to a group they will start.
- Encourage them to regularly pray for the people on their two lists.

Watch [Kelvin: A Spiritual Multiplication Story](#) (Go to vimeo.com and search for "Kelvin spiritual multiplication story.")

Discuss

What did you think of the video?

Do you agree with Kelvin? Is spiritual multiplication simple?

What do you think about the Collaborative Discipleship approach to making disciples?

—We make sure disciples are prayed for often.

The most significant thing we can do is to pray for one another every day. Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 1:11, "...we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith."

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In fact, prayer is so important that we should even ask those who have a passion to pray to pray for us and for those we've invited into discipleship. Colossians 4:12 says, "*Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.*"

Here are some things we can pray for those in our discipleship groups:

- That their beliefs and values would be firmly grounded in the truth of God's Word.
- That they would be motivated by the incredible love of God.
- That they would learn to depend on God for their every need.
- That they would learn to forgive and live at peace with everyone.
- That they would grow in humility, faith, hope and love.
- That they would understand their identity in Christ and how God has equipped them for ministry.
- That they would start a healthy group of fellow disciples.
- That they would have a passion to help the lost and forgotten.

Discuss

Which of the six areas will be the easiest for you?

Which one will be the most difficult for you?

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