

Discipleship Training

By Pastor Joe Li



Biblical Foundation

Before His Ascension after the Resurrection, Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission. "Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28: 18-20).

This Great Commission is not a selective commission; instead, it is a directive for His people to become spiritually reproductive followers of Christ. In order to achieve this mission, the participation of the disciples is crucial. Participation

includes taking an active part in humble servanthood, gospel preaching and bible teaching. The above are some aspects of discipleship training.

"Disciples" in Greek is **MATHETES**, meaning students. So, the root of this word brings out the teacher-student relationship. There are numerous examples of such relationships in the Bible: Jesus and His 12 disciples, Paul and Timothy from the New Testament, Moses and Joshua, and Elijah and Elisha from the Old Testament. These examples demonstrate how leaders with deeper spiritual experiences can lead and train disciples who are less seasoned than themselves, with the aim of preparing newer followers to accomplish the Great Commission given by the Lord.

In the same manner, the process of discipleship training involves having more mature disciples lead and build up new believers through sharing their life experiences, knowledge and love. Therefore, Christ's followers should not only strive for personal spiritual growth, but also mentoring new believers. In so doing, a next generation of disciples will be "reproduced" exponentially, thus continuing the cycle of effective discipleship. As Timothy puts it, "and the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

The Importance of Discipleship Training To The Disciples

The life cycle of a butterfly undergoes the stages of eggs, pupae, cocoon, and caterpillar before metamorphosing into a beautiful butterfly. Humans also matures through the stages of childhood, adolescence to adulthood. Spiritual maturity requires a similar process of metamorphosis. As the Bible states, "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" (1 Peter 2:2), and "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13); and, "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to

put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:22-24). Therefore, spiritual maturity with the "whole measure of the fullness of Christ" can only be attained through ample nurturing, renewal and spiritual mentorship.

In order to achieve this aim, we need to have a systematic discipleship-training program which is geared to individual needs and differing stages of spiritual maturity (from the initial stage of searching for the Truth to a more advanced stage of spiritual deepening) to guide the disciples towards the right direction or goal. As a result, the body of Christ will launch into continual growth and renewal, utilizing various spiritual gifts to live up to the teaching of Christ in order to impact the lives of others. Conversely, without a systematic

discipleship training strategy, followers will remain "infants", being "tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming" (Ephesians 4:14).

The Importance of Discipleship Training To The Church

As the church grows in number, the work of discipleship training becomes more imminent. According to Numbers 11: 14-17, Moses said "I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you are going to treat me, put me to death right now - if I have found favor in your eyes - and do not let me face my own ruin." Then, "The LORD said to Moses: "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the

people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone." Moses then facilitated a "team" to help him lead the Israelites. Likewise, today's church is faced with the same burden of a lack of spiritual leaders shouldering the responsibility of discipleship training. Although there are some mature spiritual leaders willing to serve, the number is inadequate against the magnitude of the Great Commission. We need to pass the torch, for Christ Jesus says, "and this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14).

Easter Weekend Services



Good Friday Services April 10, 2009

Join us for any of our Good Friday services. A special combined service with our Knight Street, Fraser Lands, and North Burnaby congregations for each of our language groups.

English Service 10:00 am @ Fraser Lands Sanctuary
Guest speaker: Dr. Ross Hastings

Cantonese Service 10:00 am @ Knight Street Sanctuary
Mandarin Service 10:00 am @ Fraser Lands Chapel

Easter Sunday Services on April 12, 2009

Knight Street

Cantonese 8:00 am
English 9:15 am
Mandarin 9:15 am
Cantonese 11:00 am

Fraser Lands

Cantonese 9:15 am
Mandarin 9:15 am
English 11:00 am

North Burnaby

Mandarin 11:00 am



VCAC Baptism Celebration

Sunday April 12

Rejoice and celebrate with our brothers and sisters who will be getting baptized.

English Congregations
3:00 pm @ Fraser Lands

Cantonese & Mandarin Congregations
7:30 pm @ Fraser Lands