

Retreat based on Discipleship

Leader's opening remarks:

Welcome:

Arrange in small groups:

Logistics of day:

Etc:

Today we are going to talk about Discipleship. Before we talk about how to be a disciple, we better quickly say what it is! Basically a disciple is someone who follows someone else. I hope it is obvious that we follow Jesus. Why and how to follow is what we are going to talk about today.

Accepting Jesus brings with it forgiveness and heaven, but it is also more than the future. We can participate *now* in life with God, we don't have to wait til heaven. We can join with him in what he's doing right now on earth.

That life with Jesus now is what we call discipleship.

We will be hearing some short talks and have some discussion and prayer time in your small group about what you hear.

The talks will be witness talks from the speaker out of their own life. They won't be theological teachings. None of the speakers knew whether they would speak at this retreat until our team meeting last night. They "volunteered," so to speak, because they have a story to share with you -- their struggle to walk with Christ in their environment as it applies to their topic and where they are in their own journey.

When they have finished speaking, there will be time for discussion in small groups. I ask that the discussions be very subjective....and share with the others in your group how you feel about what they said. How does it hit you in your attempt to walk with Jesus in prison? Then you will have about 10 minutes to talk and pray with your prayer partner. I know this freaks some of you out... but I asked that you do this and see what happens no matter if it makes you uncomfortable. This is the safest place to be inside the fence. These are the safest people to be with... I hope!

We'll give you ample opportunities for breaks, so please wait for the time that is planned into the schedule to go to the bathroom. Thanks...

Pray to start the day.



Talk #1 (10-15 minutes)

Discipleship

The overall theme for our retreat is that our purpose is to be Disciples. So the first question that I should ask is what does it mean to be a disciple? Jesus tells us to make disciples in Matthew 28:

“go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20).

This raises a fundamental question, though — what does it actually mean to be a “disciple” of Jesus? If we are going to make disciples, we need to know what it is to be one, right?

The standard definition of “disciple” is someone who adheres to the teachings of another. It is a follower or a learner. It refers to someone who takes up the ways of someone else. Applied to Jesus, a disciple is someone who learns from him to live like him. You might say disciples of Jesus are to become like Jesus. The verse from Matthew says we are “to observe all that I have commanded you.”

So to be a disciple, we are to be like Jesus and do what he says to do. Sounds simple right? Taking that one step further, does being a disciple mean to worship Jesus exclusively...and put him first? As Jesus told the woman at the well, the Father is seeking true worshipers — not fake worshipers, but true worshipers — those who worship him in spirit and truth (John 4:23–24). Which means, if we follow Jesus, we must worship Him.

This is the fundamental because it is more important than anything else we are or do. But... nothing will irritate our society more than being an exclusive worshiper of Jesus. Lots of people are cool with Jesus (at least their notion of him), and even following the “ways” of Jesus, when it leaves out the exclusivity part. Jesus the Moral Teacher, the Nice Guy, the Judge-Not-Lest-You-Be-Judged Motivational Speaker — *that* Jesus is everybody’s homeboy. But that is not the real Jesus. That’s a manmade figure — a far cry from the portrait Jesus gives of himself.

To follow Jesus, to be his disciple, doesn’t mean just being nice and acting better. It means to worship him and him alone.

- 1. Tell part of your story about coming to realize that following Jesus means not following or worshipping anyone, or anything else. When and how did that happen for you?*
- 2. How has that changed your life?*
- 3. How has becoming a disciple been tough and how do you move through those hard times?*

Discussion Questions

1. What things do you worship other than Jesus?
2. How should we live our lives to worship Him only? Why is that hard?

Talk #2 (10-15 minutes)

Disciples Understand the Importance of Living a Christian Life

Remember that our purpose is to be disciples for Christ, and that through his power, day by day, we can grow to become that disciple. We are incapable of living this life by ourselves, so we must lean on God's power to help us overcome our fears. The two scriptures are Matthew 6:33-34 which emphasizes living one day at a time. And the other is Luke 14:25-35, which emphasizes that Christ expects this from us; there is no halfway plan for disciples.

³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. – Matthew 6:33-34

Use your testimony to show the spiritual disciplines you use every day to allow God to grow you into a better disciple (prayer, Bible study, emphasis on small groups would be good, since the heart of Kairos is Prayer and Share). Your personal spiritual formation should model how your weakness is overcome by God's power through your growth in him.

²⁵ Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ²⁶ “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

Discussion Questions.

1. What does it mean to you to pick up your cross and follow Jesus?
 2. How has that made you a better Disciple or closer to Him?
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Talk #3 (10-15 minutes)

Discipleship Means to Obey God

Remember the first scripture we read to you?

“go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20).

Did you catch the ‘teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you’ ?

It seems like Jesus is telling us that part of being a Disciple is to observe all that I have commanded you... or put another way... do what I told you to do.

How do you do that?

First, you have to know what he has told us to do... You can't obey if you don't know what you are supposed to obey, right? Maybe we need to talk about where you find what He says. The first stop is the Bible, and a good place to start would be the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John since they are the record of what Jesus did and said while he was here on earth.

Take a verse (or more than one) that tells something Jesus said to do and tell how you have applied it to your life and what happened as a result of being obedient. (i.e. Do not judge, see that no one misleads you, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, love your enemies, etc.)

Discussion Questions

1. Why is obedience a ‘bad’ word to us? Does it make you uncomfortable?
2. What are the benefits of obedience (to Jesus or others)?

Talk #4 (10-15 minutes)

Discipleship Means to Serve Others

Part of being a disciple is to show others Christ's love through service to and for them. Serving those we love is easy, but serving those we are called to love through their hate is difficult. Jesus washed the feet of Judas even though he knew that Judas was going to turn on him.

John shows another picture of the Jesus we're to model, and this time *he* is kneeling before his disciples to wash their feet ([John 13:5](#)). I know, it doesn't sound right, especially when we think of Jesus as the object of our exclusive praise. It didn't sound right to Peter either, until Jesus said, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me" ([John 13:8](#)). But Jesus is a servant. He came to earth not to be served, but to serve.

And as a servant, Jesus says of his disciples, to his disciples, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you" ([John 13:14-15](#)). So we are to serve others.

Just after he washed the twelve disciple's feet, he said "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" ([John 13:34](#)). In fact, it is this love that disciples have for one another that identifies us as disciples of Jesus to a watching world.

To be a disciple of Jesus means to serve like him. It means to serve, going low in acts of love, even when it's an inconvenience, and even when it might bring you grief. Serving folks really is a backwards way of doing things in prison. Figure out how to do that anyway!

Describe a time where your service to others went unappreciated, but your heart was full because of Christ's appreciation.

Describe a time when someone served you and how hard it was to receive it... and why it was so good at the same time.

This talk is important because it is through their service to those in the facility that eyes and heads will be turned to appreciate God's power. Praising God through our service is the greatest praise we may give.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think serving other's means for you?
 2. How can you serve your family on the outside better?
 3. Can you give without expecting anything in return while in prison?
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Talk #5 (5-12 minutes)

Disciples Create Disciples

John gives us another helpful picture of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. This time it comes in the commission of Jesus, when he says to his disciples, “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” ([John 20:21](#)). This means that Jesus’s disciples are on a mission. It means, that we are missionaries, that we are empowered to step into the world to make a difference.

To be a disciple of Jesus means to point people to him. Billy Graham was famous for making someone else famous. We need to live our lives making Jesus famous. We need to make Him more important than us. It means, in other words, that we gladly seek more worshipers to be on the journey with us. All this is just to say that a disciple of Jesus makes disciples of Jesus.

Please understand the importance of “purchasing” the right to speak into the lives of others; it is really hard to talk truth with folks that we have no relationship with. Why should they even listen? We “purchase” capital to earn this right by being there for them, and by living with them in community, through both the good times and the bad. Once we have developed a relationship with someone, we have to continue to develop that relationship to the point of being able to help them grow into a disciple themselves. We are to love others into the kingdom of God. Remember how loved you felt on the Kairos weekend? Make people that live around you feel like that!

Tell how you earned the right to speak into the lives of a person and what happened as a result. (or if someone earned the right to speak into your life and what happened.) Remember that Jesus has earned the right to speak into our lives by giving his life to us on the Cross.

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask

the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”
– **Matthew 9:35-38**

Discussion Questions

1. Who spoke into your life that eventually led you to Jesus?
2. Do you have people that have come along side of you that you would listen to anything they said to you and take it to heart instead of being mad?
3. What are the benefits of having folks like that in your life?
4. That is what Prayer and Share is supposed to be like, by the way.

Discussion Questions Talk 1

1. What things do you worship other than Jesus?
2. How should we live our lives to worship Him only? Why is that hard?

Discussion Questions Talk 2

1. What does it mean to you to pick up your cross and follow Jesus?
2. How has that made you a better Disciple or closer to Him?

Discussion Questions Talk 3

1. Why is obedience a 'bad' word to us? Does it make you uncomfortable?
2. What are the benefits of obedience (to Jesus or others)?

Discussion Questions Talk 4

1. What do you think serving other's means for you?
2. How can you serve your family on the outside better?
3. Can you give without expecting anything in return while in prison?

Discussion Questions Talk 5

1. Who spoke into your life that eventually led you to Jesus?
2. Do you have people that have come along side of you that you would listen to anything they said to you and take it to heart instead of being mad?
3. What are the benefits of having folks like that in your life?
4. That is what Prayer and Share is supposed to be like, by the way, so talk about Prayer and Share.