

Evangelism or Discipleship? Participant Booklet

Introduction:

- Evangelism and discipleship are terms sometimes used interchangeably.
- Some congregations and individuals favor discipleship, but hesitate about evangelism.
- Confusion about what is evangelism and what is discipleship may create a paralysis in making ministry decisions.

How do we distinguish one term from the other?

I. Evangelism may be defined in terms of programs.

A. Evangelism is then described by the actions of believers who _____ to see the world saved.

1. "Here's how we do evangelism."
2. Evangelism cannot, however, be adequately _____ by how a local congregation engages unsaved persons.
3. Sometimes evangelism is besmirched as "confrontational."
 - a. No one likes, however, to be confronted or to confront.
 - b. Evangelism is understandably abandoned—the casualty of fear.

B. At other times, evangelism is _____ defined.

1. For example, when Christians say to unsaved people, "you ought" or "you should," they are not being evangelistic.
2. They are probably _____ as a prophet announcing the will of God.
3. Evangelism, on the other hand, is identified by telling good news.
4. Evangelism _____ loves non-Christians with the purpose of inviting them into Christian discipleship in response to God's initiative to forgive and to transform.

II. Discipling is a term that _____ a variety of usages and definitions.

A. Some employ discipling as a catchall or a blanket term.

1. All the ministries of a local church _____ discipling.
One minister said, "Everything we do from the cradle to funerals is discipling."
2. Discipling, in this sense, is equivalent to the word ministry.

B. Discipling also _____ for the word evangelism—a Christian who invites an unsaved person to accept Christ as savior is said to be discipling.

C. Church people describe discipling as _____ with pre-Christians before they make a decision to follow Jesus.

D. Others would insist discipling is the _____ of the unbeliever to serve God--when an unbeliever becomes a believer, a Christian has effectively disciplined that person.

E. But in the minds of some Christians the follow-up process is called discipling.

1. Differences of opinion _____ as to length of time.
2. Follow-up can last for a few weeks (usually until certain Bible lessons are completed), months, a year, or 3 years (because Jesus took that length of time with His disciples).

F. Others maintain discipling (the follow-up process) is _____ when certain milestones are reached.

1. Discipling is _____ when a person joins the church.
2. When the new believer leads someone else to Christ, this signals “mission accomplished” for the discipler.

G. Still others argue, “Discipling lasts a lifetime. Christians must never stop growing.”

1. In this case, discipling is synonymous with _____ or sanctification.
2. These popular questions reflect this definition: “Who are you discipling and who’s discipling you?”

H. Training people in personal evangelism is thought to be discipling, too.

1. Matthew 28:19-20 gives support to this concept.
2. Teaching Christians how to _____ evangelize unbelievers constituted much of Jesus’ ministry to His disciples.

I. Developing people to be leaders in the church is also called discipling.

1. Pastors develop programs to _____ the ability of the laity to administer and to coordinate various ministries of the local church.
2. Teaching leadership principles illustrate discipling as leadership development.

III. The ways the church uses the terms evangelizing and discipling hold the potential for confusion.

- We are left _____ of what to do or how to proceed.
- We long for people who need God to respond to Him.
- And we want to become His _____ in the process.
- How do we _____ these tensions?

A. Since the Gospel of Matthew quotes Jesus, “Make disciples” (Matthew 28:20), perhaps we can _____ its contents as to how we might do that.

1. The immediate scriptural context _____ insight into disciple-making.
2. The church is to take the initiative by going.
3. Clearly discipling does not just happen; followers of Jesus are to go into the world to make disciples.
4. The church is also to _____ so people who are not followers may know how to become followers.
5. Jesus told the church to _____ these new followers—to immerse them into the fellowship of believers.
6. So an accurate analysis of discipling includes taking the _____ (going), teaching and baptizing.

B. The larger context of the book of Mathew gives additional insights into discipling—the way Jesus disciplined the Twelve.

1. Jesus' relationship with His disciples _____ character.
 - a. Christ's method and message always _____ on people.
 - b. He helped the Twelve understand themselves and what they were to do.
 - c. He _____ positive character qualities in His followers.
 - d. He called for them to change the way they thought and acted.
2. Jesus taught kingdom-content to His disciples.
 - a. His teaching and preaching _____ often to the Kingdom of God.
 - b. He told stories _____ the role and rule of God.
 - c. The Kingdom was to become a priority, "Seek first the kingdom."
 - d. Explanation and _____ took a majority of time in Jesus' teaching.
 - e. If His disciples were not asking questions, He was making _____ of them.
3. Jesus taught His disciples through relational experiences.
 - a. He made sure the Twelve were party to His encounters with unbelievers.
 - b. Jesus _____ the disciples both to the world and to ineffective religiosity.
 - c. Jesus did not _____ His disciples from the cancerous church leaders of His day.
 - d. In a worship event, a time of intimacy, Jesus informed His followers of His impending death.
 - e. He _____ them for ensuing fall out.
 - f. They reaffirmed their loyalty to Him.
4. Jesus transferred leadership to His followers.
 - a. Early in His ministry to the disciples He told them harvesters were few.
 - b. With the first assignment Jesus gave, He _____ power to achieve it.
 - c. After their heady success, Jesus tempered their thinking—calling them from pride to humility.
 - d. Jesus continued to _____ responsibilities to these fledgling leaders.
 - e. Jesus' last words reminded them of the _____ they were to accomplish—make disciples.

C. Before the discipleship process began we see Jesus evangelizing.

1. Jesus called disciples.
 - a. When Jesus _____ men to follow Him, He spoke an accompanying promise. "Come, follow me and I will send you out to fish for people" (Matt. 4:19).

- b. He _____ another invitation with a promise, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).
- 2. Jesus taught, healed and evangelized (Matt. 4:23).
 - a. Evangelism _____ other actions.
 - b. Letting people in on God’s Good News was incomplete without a foundation in learning and the meeting of needs in healing.
- 3. Jesus _____ the people who followed Him.
 - a. He saw the crowds as harassed and helpless without a shepherd (Matthew 9:35-47).
 - b. To these confused and leaderless people, He _____ Good News into their lives.
- 4. Jesus made a specific effort to _____ to the poor.
 - a. When _____ to John the Baptist’s question about Jesus’ identity, Jesus cited His actions of healing and of raising people to new life.
 - b. He then said, “. . . the good news is proclaimed to the poor” (Matt. 11:5).
- 5. Jesus stood up for people.
 - a. After Jesus called Matthew to follow Him, religious leaders, guests in Matthew’s home, _____ why Jesus ate with tax collectors.
 - b. Jesus stood up for Matthew, saying, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matt. 9:12-13).
- D. Out of these activities, i.e. teaching, healing, ministry to the poor, showing mercy and standing for justice, Jesus announced good news.
- E. Evangelism affected unbelievers because holiness and love were first evident.

Small Group Discussion

1. How does your congregation define evangelism?
2. How does your congregation define discipleship? (Hint: The programs of the local congregation will probably be based on an accepted definition of discipleship and of evangelism.)
3. What would improve your congregation’s ministry of evangelism and discipleship?

Action Planning/Reporting

1. Meet with congregational leaders to re-teach this material.
2. Settle on definitions of evangelism and discipleship and agree to implement them.
3. Shape evangelism and discipleship ministries that will capture the imagination of your congregation and will effectively develop disciples.
4. Place these new or modified ministries on the calendar with the names of those leading those ministries.