

The Key To Our Church's Future 2 Timothy

Part 3 - Discipleship: Learning Your Role And Fulfilling It

Introduction:

1. Discipleship is the key to our church's future. Why?
2. First we learned that discipleship is God's way of passing along our faith.
3. Last week, we learned that discipleship is God's way of growing new Christians.
4. This week, let's look at a third reason.

First, because discipleship is God's way of passing our faith along

Second, because discipleship is God's way of growing new Christians

Third, because discipleship is God's way of distributing the work of the ministry

1. What do I mean by this?
 - The work of the ministry is a term used in Ephesians 4:12. This is simply referring to all things that must be done, and should be done, by a local church.
2. It has often been said that, in the local church, 20% of the people do 80% of the work. Why is this so often very true?
 - Many times we are quick to blame the 80% who are inactive (we may think they are spiritually lazy, uninterested, and content to be pew sitters).
 - I don't believe it is always their fault. The reason may be because the 20% do not teach anyone else how to do the work! They might be insecure and possessive of "their" ministries. The pride in us loves to feel indispensable.
3. You could argue that Paul's most effective years were the years he was locked up in a Roman prison. This is because Paul had learned how to multiply his influence through people like Timothy, Silas, Titus, Luke, and other coworkers that he had invested himself in.
 - Paul knew he was not indispensable. 2 Timothy 2:9
4. So, even though Paul is in prison when he writes this letter, his ministry is still active through the people he disciplined (1:6, 1:13, 2:2, 3:10, 3:14, 4:1-2, 5-6, 9-13). Notice how he was working through others.
5. If something happened to you and you were rendered inactive for the next two months, do you have someone that you have trained who is ready to step in and fill that void (a Timothy)?
 - You say, "If I do that, they may do it better than me. They may end up taking my job."
 - There are teachers who don't want to train an assistant teacher because they are afraid people may like the assistant's teaching better, or that the assistant may end up leaving the class and seeding a new class and taking some of "my" class members.

- **Question:** So is it all about you, or is it all about the cause of Jesus Christ? This kind of attitude can easily prevail in church work and is the reason why 20% of the people do 80% of the work. The 20% like it that way and therefore fail to inspire, encourage, enlist, and train the 80%.
 - We are involved in a cause that is bigger than any of us. We cannot afford to have this attitude.
6. Let's look at Ephesians 4:11-12 and see God's plan for the church.
 - God gives pastors to perfect (mature) the saints. Why? So they, in turn, can do the work of the ministry, and the body (the church) can be edified.
 - How many are to be engaged in service? Verse 16 says the "*whole body*."
 - The picture here is of a body working together, with every person exercising his or her gifts. It's a total team effort.
 7. In many churches, the pastor is expected to do it all (every committee meeting, every social event, every hospital visit, surgery, nursing home, etc.). When that happens, two things most likely occur – the pastor burns out, and the people rust out!
 - The people sit around and become sponges and spectators. This is not God's plan.
 8. As pastors, our job is not to **do** everything in the church, but rather to train and equip you to use your gifts to serve the Lord through the local church.
 - I could head up the ushers, deliver food to the sick, visit, work the bus route, teach all the BI classes, run the sound board, lock and unlock all the doors, clean the buildings, teach the children's classes, etc. But why?
 - There are people here that can do all those things better than me! A football coach doesn't throw, catch, block, run, kick, and punt. He teaches and equips others to do those things effectively.
 9. Our ministry strategy here at CrossRoads is built upon four foundational principles from Romans 12:1-8:
 - Every believer is a minister.
 - Every ministry is important.
 - We are dependent upon each other in ministry. We're a team!
 - Your ministry is an expression of how God has gifted and enabled you to serve.
 10. When this happens, it means more ministers working. Therefore people are better cared for, those who are ministering will be fulfilled and productive, and the body will grow and build itself. That is the picture we get here in Ephesians 4:16.
 11. Discipleship is so crucial in any church because Christians must learn, grow, and be trained to fulfill this role in the body of Christ.
 - You have a role! There is something God wants you to do.
 - As you grow in Christ, grow in His Word, and become a disciple of Jesus Christ, you realize that being a disciple of Jesus Christ means serving.
 - You cannot be like Christ if you aren't serving.

In Conclusion:

1. What kind of difference could be made if Christians sought not only to be disciples, but to encourage other Christians to be disciples?
 - Teachers would not just prepare lessons, but prepare others to teach also so that more people could be reached.
 - LIFE leaders would not just focus on growing their own people, but on growing up leaders.
 - Those who are effective at witnessing to others would not just focus on reaching the lost, but on training others to reach the lost. You get the idea!
2. If this would happen, God's work would move forward exponentially. The work of the ministry would be distributed throughout the entire body.