

Discipleship & Church

Discipleship is central to the Christian life because it is the process by which believers grow in their faith, become more like Jesus, and fulfil the Great Commission. In the New Testament, discipleship is not optional—it is the expected response to salvation and the means through which God's kingdom expands on earth.

1) Why Discipleship Is So Important:

Jesus Commanded It

Matthew 28:19–20 – “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...”

Jesus' final command was not to merely make converts, but disciples—followers who obey His teachings and help others do the same.

It Leads to Transformation

Romans 12:2 – “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

Discipleship involves spiritual growth and character formation, aligning a believer's life with the mind and ways of Christ.

It's Evidence of True Faith

John 8:31 – “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.”

Abiding in Jesus' teachings is the mark of true discipleship and indicates a real, living faith.

It Multiplies the Kingdom

Discipleship reproduces: disciples make more disciples. Paul modelled this in *2 Timothy 2:2*, teaching Timothy to entrust truth to faithful men who could teach others.

It Honours Jesus as Lord

Luke 6:46 – “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?”

Following Jesus as Lord means obeying Him, not just believing in Him. Discipleship is the lived-out expression of that obedience.

2) How People Examine Themselves on Their Discipleship (According to the New Testament):

Examine the Fruit of Their Lives

Matthew 7:16–20 – “You will know them by their fruits.”

A disciple bears fruit—love, obedience, righteousness, and the ability to influence others for Christ (see also *Galatians 5:22–23*).

Test Their Faith and Obedience

2 Corinthians 13:5 – “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.”

This call is to self-scrutiny: are we following Jesus daily, obeying His Word, and yielding to the Holy Spirit?

Check for Love as a Mark of Discipleship

John 13:35 – “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Love, especially within the body of Christ, is a clear indicator of genuine discipleship.

Evaluate Their Cross-Bearing and Self-Denial

Luke 9:23 – “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

A disciple dies to self. Daily self-denial and willingness to endure difficulty for Christ’s sake is a key measure.

Assess Spiritual Maturity and Teaching Others

Hebrews 5:12–14 – The expectation is that believers should grow enough to teach others.

Stagnation is a sign of spiritual immaturity.

Maturity includes rightly handling God’s Word, discipling others, and showing wisdom in life.

3) Church Attendance and Volunteering

Church attendance and volunteering are not the whole of discipleship, but they are **essential expressions** of it. In the New Testament, being part of a local body and actively serving are deeply connected to what it means to follow Jesus.

Church Attendance: A Biblical Expectation for Discipleship

Hebrews 10:24–25 – “*Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...*”

Attending church is how disciples grow together, encourage one another, receive teaching, and practice mutual care. It’s not just a habit—it’s part of spiritual discipline and obedience.

Acts 2:42–47 – Early believers “*continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*”

The first disciples gathered regularly. Discipleship is both personal and **communal**—you can’t fully grow in Christ in isolation.

Ephesians 4:11–16 – The church equips saints for the work of ministry, helping believers mature in the faith.

Discipleship requires teaching, correction, encouragement, and accountability—things best cultivated in regular church life.

2. Volunteering: Serving as a Mark of a True Disciple

Mark 10:45 – “*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...*”

Volunteering is how a disciple imitates Christ. True discipleship leads to **humble service**, not passive consumption.

Romans 12:4–8 – Paul teaches that every believer has a role in the Body of Christ and should use their gifts for the benefit of others.

Serving is not optional—it’s part of your identity as a disciple.

James 2:17–18 – Faith without works is dead.

Volunteering—whether in teaching, hospitality, outreach, or administration—is faith in action.

Galatians 5:13 – “*Through love serve one another.*”

Loving service is a fruit of a Spirit-led life, and volunteering provides the context for that fruit to grow.

In Summary:

Discipleship is the path of ongoing transformation, obedience, and purpose in the Christian life. To examine one's discipleship is to ask: Am I growing in Christlikeness? Am I obeying His commands? Am I loving others well? Am I helping others grow in Christ?

Church attendance and volunteering are **not legalistic duties**, but **discipleship disciplines**—real, relational ways to: Grow in the Word, Receive pastoral care, Serve the body of Christ, Model Christlike humility, Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)

If a person claims to follow Jesus but avoids the church or never serves others, they should seriously examine their discipleship. **The New Testament knows nothing of a disciple who is disengaged from the local body.**

Discipleship Devotional: "Following Jesus in Community and Service"

Scripture Reading:

"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together... but exhorting one another..."

— *Hebrews 10:24–25 (NKJV)*

Reflection:

Being a disciple of Jesus is more than private faith; it's a public walk. Jesus didn't call isolated followers—He called a people. His plan for discipleship always involved community (*the Church*) and activity (*serving others*).

Jesus said, "*Follow Me*," and He walked into towns, sat with people, healed the hurting, and taught in gatherings. Likewise, we grow through Word, worship, fellowship, and works. Church attendance roots us in truth, and volunteering expresses our faith in love.

Discipleship Self-Examination Checklist

1. Church Involvement

- ☐ Do I attend church regularly and faithfully (not just when convenient)?
- ☐ Do I come with a heart to worship, learn, and encourage others?
- ☐ Am I accountable to a pastor or spiritual leader?
- ☐ Do I contribute to the spiritual unity and health of the church body?

Reflection Verse: “*They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship...*” — *Acts 2:42*

2. Spiritual Growth and Obedience

- ☐ Am I spending regular time in the Bible and prayer?

- ☐ Am I growing in Christlike character (Galatians 5:22–23)?
- ☐ Am I obeying Jesus’ teachings in my daily decisions?

Reflection Verse: *“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.” — John 8:31*

3. Serving Others (Volunteering)

- ☐ Am I using my spiritual gifts or time to serve in my church?
- ☐ Do I serve with joy and humility, not out of obligation?
- ☐ Do I look for ways to meet needs or show kindness in practical ways?

Reflection Verse: *“Through love, serve one another.” — Galatians 5:13*

4. Fruit and Fellowship

- ☐ Is my life bearing spiritual fruit that blesses others?
- ☐ Do I show genuine love, especially toward other believers?
- ☐ Am I helping others grow in their faith, or mentoring someone?

Reflection Verse: *“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” — John 13:35*

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank You for calling me to be Your disciple. Help me to walk faithfully—not alone, but in the community You’ve placed me in. Give me a servant’s heart, a teachable spirit, and a love that reflects You. Show me where I can grow, where I can serve, and how I can honour You in my church and beyond. In Your name, Amen.