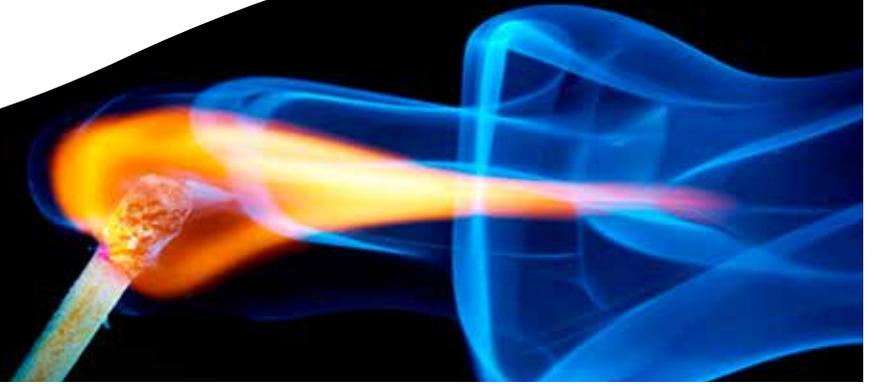




# MDI



## Resource meeting #6

### The life of a disciple: spiritual disciplines!

**Meeting time:** 1 hour and 15 minutes

**Participants:** Anyone participating in a Missional Discipleship Group (MDG)

**Purpose:** To hear stories of transformation and to further resource participants.

#### Agenda

**A. Listen:** What is God doing in our Missional Discipleship Groups? —35 minutes

- Scripture reading
- Prayer
- Accountability

**B. Resourcing:** The life of a disciple: spiritual disciplines! —35 minutes

#### Background

Often times, we as Christians erroneously think that an effective disciple of Jesus is someone who commits to memory selected portions of the Bible, or even someone who knows sound doctrine well. This is why, in many contexts, to disciple the believer usually means to put in place a systematic teaching of the Bible. However, acquiring an excellent teaching curriculum, the use of exceptional physical church facilities, having a brilliant Bible teacher, and labeling all of this "discipleship," does not make it discipleship!

In short, to give a person the right information is never enough. Moreover, *information* without *transformation* could be a lethal combination for any believer. Fifty-two sermons a year do not make anyone a better, more fruitful disciple. Not if the words that are heard are never put into practice in everyday life.

According to Mike Breen who wrote the book, *Building a Discipling Culture*, a disciple of Jesus is "a person who learns to be like Jesus and learns to do what Jesus could do." Discipleship, then, is the process through which we help to build both character (being) and competency (doing) in the life of the disciple.

A disciple's character and competency are both important and they should be intentionally cultivated. This is accomplished to a great extent by building sound *spiritual disciplines* into the life of the disciple. These disciplines provide robust spiritual legs where any disciple can stand firm and grow into the image of Christ. The Missional Discipleship Groups are an important tool that might help develop at least three basic spiritual disciplines in the disciple: *reading of Scripture, accountability, and prayer.*

In Acts 2:41-42, we find that “those who accepted his message were baptized, and about 3,000 were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to *the apostles’ teaching [Scripture] and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread [accountability], and to prayer.*”

### Three reasons why this question is important

- 1. Scripture reading:** What the apostle Luke called here “the apostles’ teaching” is what would eventually be known as the New Testament. It is important to note here that the early believers devoted themselves to read, understand, and put into practice the counsel of the first apostles. The spiritual discipline here, then, is the regular reading of Scripture with the clear intention of not only understanding its meaning, but also finding its relevance for daily living.
- 2. Accountability:** Fellowship (*Koinonia*, in Greek) doesn’t just mean spending time together for two hours during the weekend. It really means to apply the many “*to each other/one another*” commands found in the New Testament to our daily relationships. Activating the “*to each other/one another*” commands in a regular and disciplined fashion, we learn to give an account of the faithfulness of our own discipleship after Jesus to others. After all, discipleship is only effective when lived out in relationship with other apprentices of Jesus.
- 3. Prayer:** Prayer is a basic spiritual discipline. Without it, it is virtually impossible to follow Jesus in life. To read the Bible (*God’s word*) on a regular basis is important for the believer; however, to listen to the voice of Jesus (*the word made flesh!*) is vital! The practice of prayer as a spiritual discipline could be the difference between a fruitful, effective disciple of Jesus and a capricious, immature consumer.

**C. Prayer:** Pray that we all engage in a healthy rhythm of spiritual disciplines this week. —5 minutes