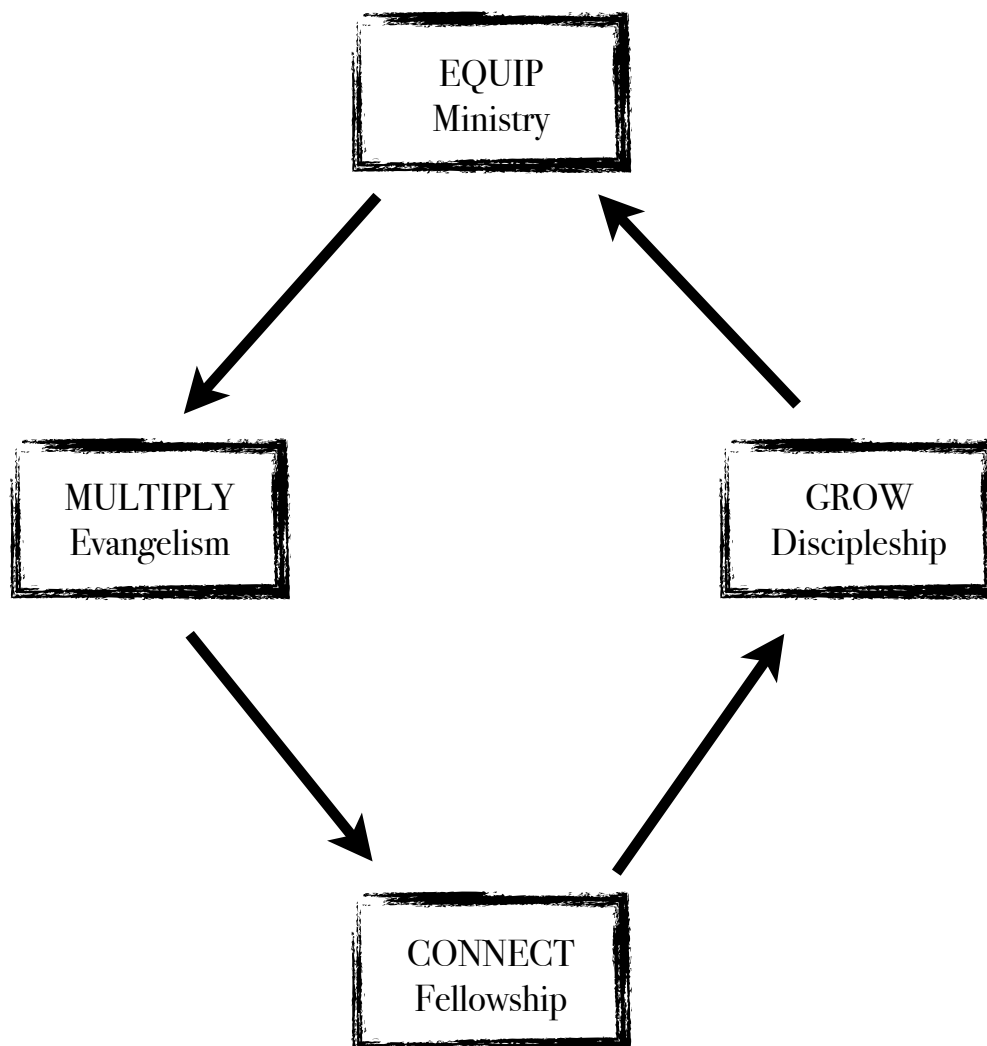

Discipleship Guide & Curriculum

Christian Chapel

Prosper, TX

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1. Connect (Fellowship) - Becoming Connected to Jesus Christ, the local church, and to other believers

2. Grow (Discipleship) - Growing In Relationship and Knowledge of God and His Word and Continual Personal Transformation

3. Equip (Ministry) - Prepare To Serve God In Many Areas; Help Others Connect & Grow; Identify Your Gift

4. Multiply (Evangelism) - Training and Releasing Maturing, Servant Leaders

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Connect (Fellowship) - Becoming Connected to Jesus Christ, the local church, and to other believers

Session 2:

What So Important About The Local Church?

At a time when there's more Bible teaching than you could ever consume available through radio, television, and the Internet, why should it matter where and how you're taking in God's truth? What's wrong with virtual, web-based congregations for the digital-age church? Why can't your iPod be your worship leader, your tablet be your pastor, and your friends your fellowship and accountability?

The New Testament repeatedly emphasizes the importance of local assemblies. In fact, it was the pattern of Paul's ministry to establish local congregations in the cities where he preached the gospel.

Hebrews 10:24-25 commands every believer to be a part of such a local body and reveals why this is necessary.

“And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

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It is only in the local body to which one is committed that there can be the level of intimacy that is required for carefully stimulating fellow believers “to love and good deeds.” And it is only in this setting that we can encourage one another faithfully and biblically.

The New Testament also teaches that every believer is to be under the protection and nurture of the leadership of the local church. These godly men can shepherd the believer by encouraging, admonishing, and teaching. Hebrews 13:7 and 17 help us to understand that God has graciously granted accountability to us through godly leadership.

Furthermore, when Paul gave Timothy special instructions about the public meetings, he said, “Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching” (1 Timothy 4:13). Part of the emphasis in public worship includes these three things: hearing the Word, being called to obedience and action through exhortation, and teaching. It is only in the context of the local assembly that these things can most effectively take place.

Acts 2:42 shows us what the early church did when they met together: “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” They learned God’s Word and the implications of it in their lives, they joined to carry out acts of love and service to one another, they commemorated the Lord’s death and resurrection through the breaking of bread, and they prayed. Of course, we can do these things individually, but God has called us into His Body—the church is the local representation of that worldwide Body—and we should gladly minister and be ministered to among God’s people.

Active involvement in your local church is imperative to living a life without compromise. It is only through the ministry of the local church that a believer can receive the kind of teaching, accountability, and encouragement that is necessary for him to stand firm in his convictions. God has ordained that the church provide the kind of environment where an uncompromising life can thrive and His people can grow spiritually.

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The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40)

“And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.’”

The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore 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; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.’”

From this, we get The Five Purposes of the Local Church:

Worship – “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind...” First and foremost, the purpose of local Church is to offer the faithful’s best to God out of love and in thanksgiving through its public worship, most notably the Divine Liturgy.

Evangelism – “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” The purpose of the local Church is to share the Good News of Christ’s work to those who do not believe.

Fellowship – “...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” The purpose of the local Church is to incorporate new believers into the life of Body of Christ through baptism

Discipleship – “...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...” The purpose of the local Church is to develop its members so that their individual spiritual lives are constantly deepening and increasing.

Ministry – “You shall love your neighbor as yourself...” The purpose of the local Church is to bring the love of Christ to those lost and hurting in the local and global communities.