

“Why is Mentoring Important to the Mission of the Local Church?”

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The question is legitimate, “Why should we be investing ourselves in the lives of other people?” The idea of investing in others is present across any context. The trades call it an apprenticeship. Teachers have students, parents have children, and the church has disciples. In attempting to explain the concept of discipleship one writer provides us with the following thought.

Discipline is derived from a Latin word which meant *to learn*. Hence also the origin of the English word *disciple* which meant *one who learns*.

Today, “discipline, or disciplinary action,” is very often defined as “an act of punishment,” and as such it very often has a negative connotation. But originally “a discipline” meant *a branch of knowledge*, and from that, a system of conduct.

It is in light of this that the leadership of WBC believes every believer is a disciple. As such every disciple finds themselves in various relationships and within various roles. Some of those roles exist outside the context of direct local church ministry while others find themselves serving directly and fully within the context of the local church. Within the specific context of local church ministry some believe that God would have them give their entire lives to serving God by serving His church. This service or ministry is “a discipline.” It is “a branch of knowledge” that results in “a system of conduct.” It can also express itself in the areas of church planter, pastor/teacher.

The leadership believes the ministry of pastor/teacher and/or church planter is best learned in the context of local church ministry under the direction of local church leadership.

When examining God’s design for His church the intent is not implosion. The promise is for Him to “build” His church. The church of Jesus Christ is an organism that is alive and growing. His church is an exploding entity. It is always to be engaged in the reproduction of itself in the lives of others and in various cultures. The culture can be defined geographically or generational.

Because this is true the leadership of local churches is to be actively and intentionally engaged in the role of mentor/protégé, teacher/student, and pastor/intern.

Not only is the pattern of duplication biblical, it is equally the quickest way to see people reached for Christ. **No one can reach everyone, but many have the greater chance of reaching more.** This is our goal and our passion.

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The church exists to shout the supremacy of God in all things by finding, celebrating, and declaring that He is enough in this life and the life to come through the systematic study of Scripture and to share this message with every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. Our mission is only possible of being fulfilled through the mentoring of the next generation of church planters.

By embracing the disciple model and investing ourselves in the lives of others we have a greater chance of duplicating our core values locally, nationally, and globally. It is my passion that the supremacy of God and the joy of who Jesus is, what He has done, and who His people are in Him will be found, celebrated, and declared among every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. And it is to this end that I give myself and the ministries of this fellowship.

What does this demand of us? As pastors/teachers, we must be committed to teaching the Word as clearly, consistently, and continually as possible. Local churches have never been or will ever be Sunday only ministries. Discipleship can only be done in the context of relationships. We must be committed to investing time in the lives of those who will carry forth the mission of God and thus carry out the mission of the church.

This demands of us a commitment to loving without condition, accepting without requirement, forgiving without limit, and serving without reward. We must be united in this. Greater patience and a tolerance toward others must prevail. We must be committed to celebrating the tremendous diversity within our unified fellowship. Our passion for the world through mentoring can only be sustained through consistent, regular, and sacrificial giving. It will, by its very nature, force us outside our comfort zone.

Yet this is the mission of Christ and the mission of His church. We have the promise of God's power and presence to sustain us in this pursuit. The process of mentoring begins the moment someone enters our fellowship regardless of age. From the cradle to the grave we are committed to shout the supremacy of God in all things and to enable others to joy in the absolute sufficiency and satisfaction of who Jesus Christ is.

God has risen up and continues to rise up those whose hearts are knit together in this singular pursuit. How can we be involved? First, pray for God's ministry in and through the local church. Second, pray for the leadership. Third, be involved. No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. Finally, continue to give financially. God's call is for His people to give. It is as the pieces of ministry come together that we exist as the body of Christ in the community. May He grant to us a great joy in the sacrifices that await us.