
What is Discipleship Part VII

© 1987, 2002, *Discipleship Tools* www.discipleshiptools.org

Tips and Techniques for a Successful Discipleship and Mentoring

A good facilitator needs to strive for obedience to the principles of God's Word and practice the spiritual disciplines of Bible study, prayer, fellowship, worship, and stewardship. He must have good relationships with spouse, children, friends, church members, neighbors, co-workers. If he does not, find out why; you do not want toxic people in leadership. Sometimes people are shy and that is OK. In addition, these characteristics are very important: have an attitude of prayer, a sense of humour, listening skills, a willingness to learn and follow, one who influences people for Christ and is sensitive to others, an organizer, one who is responsible, who possesses an attitude of servant leadership, and one who is willing to explore his spiritual gifts and use them (Matt. 20:26; John 3:30).

- The leader or facilitator will honestly express the Fruit of the Spirit (1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:22-23) so everyone can better experience authentic care from one another!
- The leader or facilitator will have a high view of Scripture and accept a solid biblical statement of faith and sign it (2 Tim. 3:16)!
- The leader or facilitator will come prepared, be on time, keep people on the subject, and realize one cannot lead others where one has not been before!
- The leader or facilitator will understand and apply the passage to their own life first before asking of it from others.
- The leader or facilitator will provide the atmosphere of a safe place to ask questions, and be encouraging, loving, caring, and vulnerable.
- The leader/facilitator's main purpose is to get the conversation going and provide the teaching points and or exegetical message.
- The leader or facilitator will introduce the subject or text of the Bible and give any background information. (This can be delegated for smaller groups.)
- The leader or facilitator will then engage the group in dialogue to keep the interaction going without dominating the conversations, unless it is a large group study.
- The leader or facilitator for smaller groups will ask questions and help people respond to the passage or subject for a better understanding of the Bible.
- The leader or facilitator or teacher for large groups can do this a bit during the message for stimulation, and for larger groups this can take place in the small groups, then those leaders can do that.
- The leader or facilitator will seek to challenge the people to think on a deeper level to discover the precept, learn what it means, how to be a changed person because of it, and then how to apply it to life. He will demonstrate excitement, when people are growing, by giving affirmation.
- The leader or facilitator will inspire by example that we are people in the process of a spiritual journey and growth; no one has arrived yet. He will share life stories, help others discover and apply God's Word, discuss the precepts, encourage—but not force—everyone to participate by asking “what do you think; anyone else?” realizing that there are many times when there can be more than one good answer or perspective to any good question, and be open to the leading of the Spirit.

- The leader or facilitator needs to be willing to drop the subject of the week to address a current stress or crises with a member and be open to the leading of the Spirit (this mainly applies to smaller groups).
- The leader or facilitator will keep confidences and insist others do the same.
- The leader or facilitator will not be afraid to discuss significant issues about real life or the struggles to personally apply Biblical principles.
- The leader or facilitator will value people's time by starting and ending on time.
- The leader or facilitator will be flexible, sensitive, and open to changes and receive feedback and suggestions from other people as long as it does not compromise the integrity of the Bible.
- The leader or facilitator will be interested in the people there and be enthusiastic about the Bible and Study.
- The leader or facilitator will encourage people to give their comments or ideas.
- The leader or facilitator will realize fallen sinful humans are in the group and thus people will not get along with everyone else; there will be at times personality clashes, disagreements and conflict. Seek to carefully listen and allow each person's views, ideas to be vented in the parameters of love encourage everyone to respect and learn from one another!
- The leader or facilitator will be aware of setbacks, flakiness of people and not allow discouragement to reign.
- The leader or facilitator will endeavor to not let certain people dominate or control the discussion or force their opinions on others. In the Fruit of the Spirit, ask them to slow down, show your appreciation for their insights, and say *lets hear from some others*. If they continue have a loving talk with them afterwards or at another time. If they are belligerent and refuse to respect the leaders and the leaders are operating in the Fruit, then the quarrelsome person needs to be asked to leave until they can behave.
- The leader or facilitator will realize that sometimes you will not finish the study, you can ask to resume it the following meeting or just move to the next one. It is best to have a set pace for the study, so you are not bogged down being rushed or spending too much time on any one question or passage.
- The leader or facilitator will try to avoid going off subject unless led by the Spirit to do so and not too often. Also help others in the group to stay focused and if people roam away, in kindness bring them back to the topic and passage. Asking questions helps people stay focused.
- The leader or facilitator will in love point out misunderstanding from people's faulty or heretical positions, there are essentials and there are things we can agree to disagree with.
- The leader or facilitator will laugh and have fun, and plan social outings and get-togethers outside of the Small Group!
- The leader or facilitator keeps his people in prayer during the week!

We have to be aware that we are led and embowered by Jesus and can do nothing apart from Him (John 15:5). Facilitating takes work and time and not everyone will be able to do it every time. However, a growth in this direction is essential to growing a healthy, interactive group. Remember, any good Small Group that is "Christian" will have the Bible at its core! And, also spend time in prayer for each member and concerns of the church and world.