

**TITLE: The Disciple's Church**

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**Book 7**

# THE DISCIPLE'S CHURCH

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## PREFACE

Welcome to the discipleship / leadership series. These little booklets were designed to give basic information concerning various topics about our Christian faith in Christ Jesus.

The purpose of this series is to stimulate thought and to foster a clearer understanding of discipleship and servant leadership. These booklets can be used as a discussion tool for personal study, family devotion, youth meetings or in cell groups. Our hope is that this information will stir the readers and encourage them to go deeper into personal research and study.

Our desire is that these booklets will be a blessing to the reader and a tool that can be shared with others as a gift of encouragement.

Please feel free to mail or e-mail us for more copies or to just write to us with any feedback concerning the content of these studies. We hope you enjoy this offering of knowledge and experience. We pray that Christ will draw you into an ever deeper personal relationship with Himself as you study.

Your servants in Christ,

Rev. Dr. James and Hkaw Win Humphries

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*Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the **church** that day—about 3,000 in all. All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' **teaching**, and to **fellowship**, and to sharing in meals (including the **Lord's Supper**), and to **prayer**. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met **together** in one place and **shared** everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and **shared** the money with those in need. They **worshiped** together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the **Lord's Supper**, and **shared** their meals with great joy and generosity all the while **praising** God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their **fellowship** those who were being saved.*

*Acts 2:41-47 (NLT)*

## **Introduction:**

The first day we became a disciple of Christ was also the first day we became part of His body the church. The two go hand in hand. He is the head and we are His body. We become connected as brothers and sisters in the Lord. We are a family that has one common goal and that is to proclaim and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ in all that we say and do. We are His children and through the ministry of the church which was birthed by the Holy Spirit He cares for us and meets the needs that we face each day. His church is our place of sanctuary and peace. It is a place where we can be built up and encouraged. It is the place that God has created for us to grow and mature in so that we can produce fruit

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that will last. It is a place where we should be able to experience a little bit of God's heaven here on earth. This is what we have been called to be part of Christ's body His church.

## FOCUS AND TARGET FOR TEACHER & STUDENTS

**TEACHER:** The hope of this step is to help the disciples see the uniqueness and importance of the church in his life and to show that the church is a many faceted living organism with a specific purpose for its existence. To equip and produce fruit that will last.

**STUDENT:** That the student may understand the importance of the local church for their growth and maturity. Also, to show that the church is made up of a variety of people and gifts and that it is a living organism with a clear goal for its existence. It is local in meeting the needs but is also connected together internationally by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel to a lost world.

## DEFINITION AND SYNONYMS:

Understanding the meaning of words is the heart to understanding Scripture. Words are the bridge that can help us to understand more about ourselves and about God and His Word the Bible. Please take time to meditate and reflect on the broad and narrow view of each word as defined, along with its synonyms.

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**Church:** called out ones; belonging to the Lord; the Body of Christ. *Synonyms:* assembly, gathering.

**Body:** the main part of something; the trunk or main mass of an organism. *Synonyms:* figure, form, shape, association, collection, company, corporation.

## SCRIPTURE:

For this chapter, study this portion of Scripture. It is the key to a good biblical foundation and it is the next step to help you as a disciple to mature in Christ. Please look up and read it in its entirety. Take into account the author who wrote it, who it was written to and the context in which it relates to the other verses and chapters around it.

**Acts 2:41-47** (NLT) Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the **church** that day—about 3,000 in all. All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' **teaching**, and to **fellowship**, and to sharing in meals (including the **Lord's Supper**), and to **prayer**. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met **together** in one place and **shared** everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and **shared** the money with those in need. They **worshiped** together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the **Lord's Supper**, and **shared** their meals with great joy and generosity all the while **praising** God and enjoying the

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goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their **fellowship** those who were being saved.

## STUDY:

Christ breathed forth the church as His body so that it may minister to its members and to reach out and give hope and encouragement to a lost world. Christ describes the church as a body, bride and building. The reason for these word pictures is to help the disciple to understand how we are all connected together as a unit. There are individual pieces but all the pieces have a relationship to each other. Christ is the head of the body and the body shows us the difference and the uniqueness of how we all come together and minister to each other. Plus we also have a purpose to fulfill as a group of believers also. This discipleship step is to get us clearly connected to who Christ is and how with our gifts can minister and build up each other. When Christ ascended on high the church came alive and the Father sent the Holy Spirit to anoint and empower the disciples for service.

## BIBLICAL EXAMPLE:

The Bible is full of illustrations showing what God wants us to understand about the importance of Scripture for the disciple. Take time to look up in the Scripture these biographies and reflect on how God called these people to be His vessels for service. Notice how God calls everyday people to Himself and others in His Kingdom.

**Peter:** His heart and desire was to ground the church in truth and doctrine. He knew that the church can only be as

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strong as what they believed in and what they understood about who Christ is. He knew that we as individual and we as a church were on a journey of growing and learning. There would be a maturing process that would have to take place. In his later life he wanted people to know the true of the grace of God. (I Peter 5:12). He used a lot of word pictures to show that we are a spiritual house and are a chosen generation of Christ. He also warns the church of coming challenges and problems both from within and without.

**James:** His words to the church were ones of humility and prayer. James knew that the disciple and the church would undergo hardships and trials but he wanted his readers to remain true to Christ. To serve with all their hearts and have faith that God knows all their needs. He taught the disciple and the church about being listeners and doers, not to show favouritism, that we need to control the use of our tongue, and that we watch out concerning worldliness. All important truths that if heeded will make the church strong and a powerful testimony for Christ Jesus.

**John:** His heart was one of love. To get the church to know Christ's love but also to flow and walk in the love of Christ each day. He knew that the disciple was to be an extension of Christ's love to a lost world and that the only way that people would see and understand who Christ is would be through the disciple and the church. He wanted the disciple to be complete and whole in Christ's love because when we live in His love there is much joy. Christ was total love and

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John wanted the light of that love of Christ to shine out through every disciple. The church was to be a lighthouse of faith, hope and love.

**Paul:** His burden for the church was to see it established in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The disciple would understand grace righteousness and that they would to be clothed in Christ in all that they say and do. He knew that the church would only be strong if it would remain and walk in the power and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. He also taught that it must work together in unity and harmony through the gifts that God would give to the disciples. His hope was that we would understand that Christ is the head and we are His body. We are to be His ambassadors to a lost world and to be Christ's ministers of reconciliation.

All these people had a big heart for the church and clearly understood how Christ through the Holy Spirit, would spread the Gospel throughout the world. The church is the channel that God has chosen to limit Himself to work and walk through. This is His Way, this is His Truth and this is how He extends Life to us and to others (John 14:6).

## OBJECT LESSON:

**Body:** the body is the best picture of how the disciples of Christ works and grows in Christ. It is made up of many members and each member large or small has a valuable part and function to play. Unity and harmony between the parts gives it strength and stability to exist and work. If we try to live outside of the body we

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will find ourselves lifeless and without power. All the parts working together are what gives the body life.

## TRANSITION:

**The next part will focus on seven key points that the disciple of Christ needs to know if he or she hopes to grow and mature in Christ. The end goal is that they will produce fruit that will last.**

## *POINT ONE: FOCUSES ON TEACHING*

**LEAD-IN:** The church, as it comes together in a place does so for the purpose of training, nurturing and equipping of the various members. The book of Acts gives us numerous accounts of how the apostles would see a church birth forth in a place and then would stay six months to a year or more grounding it, equipping it and establishing it as a functioning body of believers.

## DEFINITION AND SYNONYMS:

**Teaching:** a system or thing used as an example to follow or imitate; ***Synonyms:*** type, version, style, mould, template, framework, pattern, design, guide, blueprint, paradigm, sample, example.

**Instruction:** a direction or order; detailed information telling how something should be done, operated, or assembled. ***Synonyms:*** teaching, coaching, tutoring, education, schooling, tutelage, lessons, classes, lectures,

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training, drill, drilling, discipline, preparation, grounding, priming, direction, guidance, information, enlightenment, edification, educator, tutor, instructor.

**Understanding:** the ability to understand or think; intelligence, the power of apprehension; the power of abstract thought. *Synonyms:* intelligence, comprehension, conclusion, perception, to apprehend, grasp, figure out, identify, follow, master, learn, discern, be instructed in, see the light.

**Training:** to coach in or accustom to some mode of behaviour or performance; to make proficient with specialized instruction or practice; to focus or direct. *Synonyms:* to teach, coach, tutor, school, educate, practice, prepare.

**Equipping:** to supply with resources, fit out, to provide for; to provide with what is necessary, useful or appropriate. *Synonyms:* provide, furnish, supply, issue, arm, endow.

## KEY SCRIPTURE:

**Acts 11:25-26** Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the **church** and **taught** a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called “Christians.”

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## CONTEXT:

- Peter explains his actions and vision that he had and why he went into uncircumcised Gentile homes.
- He tells that as he spoke and the power of the Holy Spirit came upon them and he remembers how Jesus taught that this would happen.
- We are also given account that due to the persecution of the church, the gospel was going forth and more churches where now springing up throughout the land.
- The church of Antioch receives Barnabas who was sent out by the church in Jerusalem.
- Many people were coming to the Lord Jesus in Antioch.
- Barnabas saw the need to train the new disciples and the best person he thought for the job would be Saul. (Paul)

## INSIGHTS:

The definition of the word church means, "called out ones". We are to be people who have been called to come out of the world and live for Christ. To move from just focusing on the earth but to become kingdom orientated as Christ's Disciple. The church was created as a channel to help the disciple to grow and mature in Christ. We need each other and we need help from each other to become fully equipped for service.

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The reason that the churches grew and became strong was because the apostle took time to train them in the word of God. Plus they appointed leadership that would give direction and discipline to the local believers. The ministry of discipleship is training people in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is much to learn and understand but it takes people that God has raised up to equip us for the ministry that Christ has for us.

Instruction must come in a way that people will understand. The Jewish people would reason together which was the polite way of saying they would argue it out until they had an answer or solution. Training people takes a lot of time and instruction. Not all people learn the same way so one has to equip the different believers through a variety of methods. We also as a church need to be better connected to what one of the purposes for the sending of the Holy Spirit is to teach and guide both the disciple and to guide the church.

It is important to see that these early new believers saw the need to devote themselves to instruction, they were hungry for more understanding about God and His word. They received Peter's message and then were obedient unto baptism. They committed and devoted themselves to be taught more about the ways of Christ. Christ Himself was a master teacher and a model for all the disciples to follow. Teaching is the key to equipping of others for service.

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## RELEVANCE:

Like all trades and profession there is the formal time of learning in the classroom but we also need the time of doing an internship program as it were in real life situation. We cannot be as James says just a hearer of the Word but we must be doers also (*James 1:19*). Another important point is as you teach others you also become a learner from the time you spend helping others. The Word of God becomes more established in one's own life. We have all got something to give and to teach others with. Seek God in prayer and He will show you someone and He will lead you to how you should minister to them. Teaching does not have to be profound, it only has to be simple and clear and shared from a heart of love. With that in mind it will find good soil to be planted in and you will begin to see fruit for Jesus Christ.

## REFLECTION:

What am I doing to get more of the Word of God into my heart and life? Am I teaching others and using my gifting to help strengthen the Body of Christ?

## RELATED SCRIPTURES FOR THE LESSON:

**Acts 8:30-32** so Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you **understand** what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.

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**Acts 15:35** but Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, and there, with many others, they **taught** and proclaimed the word of the Lord.

**Acts 18:25** He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and **taught** accurately the things concerning Jesus, ...

**Ephesians 4:12** The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and **teachers**, to **equip** the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

**Ephesians 4:21** ... or surely you have heard about him and were **taught** in him, as truth is in Jesus.

**Ephesians 4:22-24** you were **taught** to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

**Colossians 2:6-7** ... as you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were **taught**, abounding in thanksgiving.

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**II Thessalonians 2:15** so then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were **taught** by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter.

**I Timothy 3:15** ... but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the **church** of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

**I Corinthians 14:12** So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek to abound for the **edification** of the **church**.

## RELATED RESEARCH FOR THE LESSON:

**Church Body of Christ:**

**Difference between, wisdom, knowledge and understanding:**

## *POINT TWO: FOCUSES ON FELLOWSHIP*

**LEAD-IN:** The church was also birthed forth for the purpose of fellowship. The disciple needs to be grounded and walking in fellowship with other believers. We are not to be an island unto our selves. There is no room for individualism in the body of Christ. We are to work and minister as a team. We are now part of a new family that will spend all eternity together. God has many reasons why we should come together in fellowship, like the saying, that “iron sharpens iron”. Another would be to help and encourage each

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other in our walk with Christ. Fellowship is how we become mature and strong in Christ. It also helps us to grow in areas with each other that we would never face or understand alone. Fellowship is the heart of what the church is to be. We have fellowship with Christ and with each other and this is what will make a true body for Christ to flow through. We are His vessels of grace and mercy.

## DEFINITION AND SYNONYMS:

**Fellowship:** friendly association, especially with people who share one's interests; a group of people meeting to pursue a shared interest or aim. *Synonyms:* companionship, companionability, sociability, comradeship, friendship, mutual support, mutual respect, mutual liking, intimacy, association, closeness, togetherness, solidarity.

**Friendship:** the state of being friends; one that seeks the society or welfare of another whom he holds in affection; respect or esteem for one whose companionship and personality are pleasurable. *Synonyms:* close relationship, attachment, association, bond, tie, link, union, companionship, fellowship, rapport, understanding, harmony, unity, intimacy.

## KEY SCRIPTURE:

**Acts 2:42** All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to **fellowship**, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

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## CONTEXT:

- Jesus speaks to the disciple and commissions them to go forth and then He is taken up into heaven.
- They were told to go and pray and wait until they had received from the Father, the power of the Holy Spirit.
- They choose another Apostle to replace Judas. The one who is selected is Matthias.
- The Holy Spirit comes on the people in the upper room while they were praying.
- The fire of God comes down and people could hear messages in their own languages.
- Peter addresses the crowd and explains to them from Scripture what was now happening and this was all because of what Jesus Christ did and said would happen.
- Peter encouraged the people to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.

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## INSIGHTS:

There seemed to be a real hunger for fellowship. They were all rejoicing over the blessing of God and because they had experienced what it meant to be delivered from sin and now come into a personal relationship with Christ. They wanted to meet together as often as they could. This verse tells us that they went to the temple, (larger group fellowship) and they also meet in the homes (cell group or small group fellowship or cell group or Bible study groups) for more personal intimate fellowship with each other and Christ. The home group is where they also celebrated the Lord's Supper.

Fellowship was the place that they met with Christ corporately in worship and praise. It was also the place where evangelism took place because we see more people being added to the church daily. People feel freer in small groups and can ask questions and learn more without fear of saying or doing something wrong. It is also a place where they will feel more open to share their hearts with others and pray. These home fellowships must also have been a strong place for building friendships with one another as disciples. Home fellowship is where needs can be shared and prayed about with each other.

Fellowship is also a place where people's gifting can be at work ministering to the rest of the body. It is also a place where leadership can be formed and instruction can be give. It also is the place where correction and discipline can be shared in love to help the young or old disciple to become stronger in Christ. Fellowship is where fruit can be nurtured and matured for God's glory.

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## RELEVANCE:

Fellowship can have as part of its roots the word relationship. Relation is a word that can be broken down into three other words. The first is the word “relate” this means that there must be time of communication. Talking and learning from one another. The second word is “relation”. We are all part of a family, and because of the work of Christ we all become brothers and sisters. We are told that we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. The third word is the word “Ship”. We are all in it together and hopefully all pulling together to head for the same common goal and that is an eternal life with Jesus Christ. Fellowship is to be the heart of every local church and when it is, this church will experience what the early church experience and that was amazing growth in Christ.

## REFLECTION:

Where am I getting my fellowship time? Do I meet with people both in larger groups and in smaller home fellowship groups? Am I growing and maturing because of my fellowship time with other believers?

## RELATED SCRIPTURES FOR THE LESSON:

**I Corinthians 1:9** God is faithful; by him you were called into the **fellowship** of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**I Corinthians 11:18** For, in the first place, when you come together as a **church**, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it.

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**Galatians 2:9** ... and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of **fellowship**, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

**I John 1:1-4** We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have **fellowship** with us; and truly our **fellowship** is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

**I John 1:5-7** This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have **fellowship** with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have **fellowship with one another**, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

## RELATED RESEARCH FOR THE LESSON:

**Define what is the basis for true fellowship:**

**Difference between friendship and fellowship:**

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## ***POINT THREE: FOCUSES ON COMMUNION***

**LEAD-IN:** Communion is what brings the disciple into a deeper fellowship with Jesus Christ. It personalizes for us what He did for us on the cross. It causes us to remember and reflect on the covenants and promises that Christ has made to every disciple. It also brings us together to examine ourselves and to look at what we are doing with our faith and commitment to Christ.

### **DEFINITION AND SYNONYMS:**

**Communion** an act or situation involving sharing; possession in common; joint ownership; fellowship of members in a church. *Synonyms:* fellowship, kinship, friendship, togetherness, harmony, understanding, connection, communication.

**Remember:** have in or be able to bring to one's mind an awareness of (someone or something that one has seen, known, or experienced in the past) *Synonyms:* recall, call to mind, recollect, think of, put a name to, reminisce about, think back to, look back on, cast one's mind back to, summon up, commemorate, pay tribute to, honour, salute, celebrate, pay homage to, memorialize, keep alive the memory of.

### **KEY SCRIPTURE:**

**Acts 2:46** They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the **Lord's Supper**, and shared their

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meals with great joy and generosity all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people.

## CONTEXT:

- Jesus speaks to the disciple and commissions them to go forth and then He is taken up into heaven.
- They were told to go and pray and wait until they had received from the Father the power of the Holy Spirit.
- They choose another Apostle to replace Judas. The one who is selected is Matthias.
- The Holy Spirit comes on the people in the upper room while they were praying.
- The fire of God comes down and people could hear messages in their own languages.
- Peter addresses the crowd and explains to them from Scripture what was now happening and this was all because of who Jesus Christ done and said would happen.
- Peter encouraged the people to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.

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## INSIGHTS:

Communion is also known as a “Love Feast” or celebration. It is to remind us of Christ's victory over death and for the disciples, His deliverance from the curse of the Law. We are not just to focus on Christ's death but we should rejoice over the victory that Christ had over sin and death. He now gives to us this grace / righteousness full of hope and power.

Communion can be broken down into at least twelve areas.

### *Time of communication:*

It is a time of talking with God and Him talking with us. It is also a time where we can share our hearts with each other. As we talk and share we will know how to pray and help each other. Communication is something that we have to work at. We cannot always wait for people to speak to us first but we should go to them and start a conversation. It is also a time where we get things right with one another. Sometime a person will not know that they have offended you unless you humble yourself and in love go and speak to them. James tells us that we are to be slow to speak and quick to hear, because he wants the disciple to make sure they understand what they heard before they reply with an answer or a statement about something (James 1:19). The way we communicate will either tear people down or will build them up in the faith. Much of the church today is hurting so much because the

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disciples are not being very wise on how they speak. Much of our speech is of a gossip nature which the Bible calls sin.

*2 Timothy 2:16*

## ***Time of companionship:***

Friendship and companionship are being built during the time of communion. Fellowship builds stronger relations with each other and with God. The coming together brings the family of Christ together. It is a time of testifying and sharing our heart with each other. It is a time of getting to know each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. We all need relationship with others and it is those relationships that help us to grow stronger in Christ. Plus we are told that if two or three work and pull together the burden becomes light.

*John 15: 13-15*

## ***Time of confession:***

It is a time of communicating struggles and sin. It is a time to confess where possible, one to another and specifically before God. It brings us to a place of getting our house in order because Paul tell us that the way we deal with sin will have a direct bearing on our health and life with Christ. He also tells us that we need to go to one another and correct things before we have communion with God and with each other. It is time to clean the slate of sin, to be washed and start off fresh.

*Psalms 32:5*

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## *Time of commitment:*

It is time to reflect on the commitment that we have made to Christ. We invited Christ into our hearts to be our Lord and Saviour. How are we living that commitment out for Christ as He has called us and showed us to do? When we committed to Christ, we were committing ourselves to His teaching and will for our lives. It is no longer I that liveth but Christ that lives in me. We are saying not my will be done but they will be done. We are committing to be good examples and stewards of the Gospel message. We are committing to Him to be our Lord and Saviour in all areas of our lives.

*Psalm 37:5, Proverbs 16:3*

## *Time of remembering our covenant:*

Communion is also a time of reflecting on the covenants that we have committed to with Christ. We have made agreements with God and they are signed and sealed with His blood. They are binding from the point of both sides. The Bible is full of everlasting covenants that are made between God and His people. The rainbow reminds us after a storm of God's promises not to destroy the earth again by a flood. But the key covenant is the one Christ made with His blood for those who believe, to have everlasting life with Him and to reign with Him in His Kingdom. The covenant moves us from death back to life. We were dead in trespasses and sin and now because of Christ covenant we can now have, if we chose, everlasting

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life. Every time we take the cup and drink it we are remembering the covenant that is made between us.

We are now under the law of Grace and Christ. We are now bond to the full Gospel of Jesus Christ. He reminds the disciples that it is “an agreement now made between us.” The Holy Spirit is also sent as a guarantor of this covenant between man and God.

*Hebrew 9:15*

## ***Time for teaching and training:***

We are now under the law of Grace and Christ has boiled all the laws down to two, love God with all our hearts and to love our neighbour as our selves (Mark 12:31). We are also bound to the full Gospel of Jesus Christ. He reminds the disciples that it is “an agreement now made between us.” The Holy Spirit is also sent as a guarantor of this covenant between man and God and that He teaches us and comforts us (John 14:26). Communion was also a family event where young people and children could come and see. They then could ask questions about what was going on and what it all meant. Just like in the times of old they would pile rocks for a memorial of what God had done, to remind them and so that they would be able to teach others from that memorial about God. Communion is our memorial and testimony and teaching time to share about God's love and mercy.

*Joshua 4:5-6*

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## *Time of obedience:*

We are told that we should have communion often until Jesus returns to receive His church. Communion service is what makes all people equal no matter of their culture race or nationality. It is a time when the poor, the rich and the needy when all become part of the same family, as brothers and sisters. We should not forsake the gathering or coming together as Christ's disciples. This is what helps us to grow and mature as a body of believers. Christ has set the example of obedience, now we are to follow it.

*1 Peter 1:2*

## *Time of ministry:*

Communion is also a time that the local church body can minister to each other through the gifts and talents that God has given. We can encourage and speak into each other's lives but it also can be times were we can plan ways of helping each other and those around us. It is a good time to take up a love offering for the poor and then take it out and in the love of Christ, minister to the needy. It is also when we can corporately worship and pray together to God. We can take this time to serve each other and to put each other first ahead of ourselves.

*2 Corinthians 5:18-21*

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## *Time of worship:*

During our time of meeting together we also need to spend time worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ. Giving thanks through songs and hymns. We are gathering to lift up our heart in praise and thanksgiving for what He has done for us. He did what we could never do. He brought back hope to the hopeless. He is to be our center of focus and we need to worship and praise Him for all His love and goodness to us, especially for coming and giving us a way of escape from bondage and death. When we can see all that He has done for us, our hearts will want to praise Him.

*Psalm 95:6, Hebrew 10:1*

## *Time of prayer:*

Communion is also a time to come together in prayer, both in corporate prayer, one for another and as individuals. We are told if two or more come together and agree together on earth God will hear us. We are to pray for God's direction not only for our own lives but for the church that we are a part of. God wants to hear from us but He also wants to direct us, give us wisdom and hear the struggles that we are facing in our daily life. Prayer brings us into a deeper fellowship with Him and others. Jesus' heart and example was a life of prayer and fasting. The more we pray the more wisdom and understanding we get. This will help us in living out our lives here on earth. Also the more we humble ourselves in prayer the more He will lift us up. Prayer is also to open up our spiritual eyes. Christ

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prayed at least three times during the communion with the disciples. Once was over the bread and the second over the cup. Why? For at least two reasons, one so that the emblems would be blessed by God and secondly that the disciples would see, hear and understand what Jesus was trying to show them and teach them.

*1 Corinthians 7:5, Philipians 4:6*

## ***Time of equality:***

We are all brothers and sisters in the Lord. Communion is to make us and show us that we are all equal in the eyes of God, healthy or sick, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, man or women. Communion is to make all things in common for all the disciples of Christ. Those who have should give and to those who do not have. Those who are weak are to be helped by those who are strong. Those who are struggling or sick can be prayed for by the other members of the body.

*2 Corinthians 8:13-15*

## ***Time of warning:***

Paul also warns the church in I Corinthians how they should act and behave during the communion service. It was to be a “love feast” a time of celebrating who and what Jesus Christ has done for us. But if communion was not done for the proper purpose the results could affect our health and life. They needed to get things in order in their own life first before taking of communion. Communion is

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like giving an offering, if we do not give it with the right heart attitude we will not receive a blessing from God. He states that we will be judged on how we partake of communion. What is your heart like? Examine oneself carefully, you could be bringing judgment on yourself. We are to eat at home first and we are to also show respect and have good manners toward each other. We need to respect and serve each other because Christ is dwelling in each of our hearts, so that whatever we do to each other we are doing it unto HIM.

*Acts 20:28-32*

All these point should help us to see that Christ is the head of His body the Church and we are His friend and are servants willing to do His will. We fellowship and live our lives in and around Christ. We live because of His resurrection power flowing through our hearts.

## **RELEVANCE:**

Communion is a time where many of the heart needs of the disciple can be met. We are called to come to a place of remembrance and reflection. That Christ has done something for us that is so magnificent and freeing. It shows to us again His broken body and shed blood. But it also tells us that the grave had no victory and that Christ rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father interceding on behalf of us. It also should cause us to remember that this “Emanuel”, “God with us”, is also dwelling right in our hearts. He has sent the Holy Spirit to us so that we can be taught and learn how to walk and stand in Christ but

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also to have the power to overcome the things of this world. Communion shows that Satan is a defeated enemy. He has no power over those who have Christ in their lives as Lord and Saviour.

## REFLECTION:

What is my heart focusing on when I participate in the communion time? Is it truly the LORD'S supper? What do the breaking of bread and the cup picture for me as His disciple? Do I have any un-confessed sin that needs to be dealt with?

## RELATED SCRIPTURES FOR THE LESSON:

**Matthew 26:26-30** While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of **bread**, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my **blood** of the **covenant**, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

**Mark 14:22-25** While they were eating, he took a loaf of **bread**, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, "This is my **blood** of the **covenant**, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I

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will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

**Luke 22:14-20** Then the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, ”I have eagerly desired to eat this **Passover** with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, ”Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Then he took a loaf of **bread**, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ”This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in **remembrance** of me.” And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ”This cup that is poured out for you is the new **covenant** in my **blood**.”

**I Corinthians 11:17-34** Now in the following **instructions** I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, to begin with when you come together as a **church**, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you. When you come together, it is not really to eat the **Lord's supper**. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the **church** of God

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and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you! For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in **remembrance** of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you **come together**, it will not be for your condemnation. About the other things I will give **instructions** when I come.

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**I Corinthians 13:13** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the **communion** of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

**Ephesians 1:22** And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the **church**, ...

## RELATED RESEARCH FOR THE LESSON:

**Research the Jewish Passover Supper:**

**Study the importance of the Blood and Bread in the Old Testament:**

## ***POINT FOUR: FOCUSES ON PRAYER***

**LEAD-IN:** The early disciples knew the importance of prayer. They knew this was the way that you communicated with God and could hear from Him on things that we are seeking wisdom and faith for. The disciples knew the power of prayer and that prayer changes things both for the disciple but also for those people around them and for the events that they faced. Jesus Himself taught the disciple the importance of prayer and modeled it through His life and actions.

## **DEFINITION AND SYNONYMS:**

**Communication:** the act or action of imparting or transmitting and receiving; access between persons or

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place; interchange of thoughts or opinions. *Synonyms:* transmission, conveyance, disclosure, broadcast, connection, dialogue, talk, conversation.

***Prayer:*** a supplication or expression addressed to God; an earnest request or wish. *Synonyms:* communication, devotion, invocation, litany, supplication, appeal, petition, plea, request.

## KEY SCRIPTURE:

**Acts 12:5** while Peter was kept in prison, the **church prayed** fervently to God for him.

## CONTEXT:

- Peter explains his actions and dreams and why he went into uncircumcised Gentile homes.
- He tells that as he spoke, the power of the Holy Spirit came upon them and he remembered how Jesus taught that this would happen.
- We are also given account that in spite of persecution the church had been spreading out through the land.
- The church of Antioch receives Barnabas who was sent out by the church in Jerusalem.

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- Many people were coming to the Lord Jesus in Antioch.
- Barnabas saw the need to train the new disciples and the best person he thought for the job would be Saul. (Paul)
- King Herod arrests and imprisons Peter, he already had James and John put to death by the sword. This pleased the Jews.

## INSIGHTS:

The church saw the power of prayer. It brought healing and deliverance. It even opened prison doors to deliver those who were captive. Prayer even raised people from the dead. Prayer was used to commit people for ministry and to set them apart through the laying on of hands for service. Prayer should be the central part of every disciple's walk and life. We need to hear from God daily. Prayer was also the very heart of Jesus Himself with His Father who is in heaven. Prayer is God’s way to call us and direct us for our daily service in Him. Prayer also seemed to have the formal and informal side to it. Time where it was very specific and thought out but other time when it was very spontaneous.

The church itself, we are told, was to be known as a “house of prayer”, where people came together to communicate and meet with God ( Matthew 21:13). The church would be a place where

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people prayed and fasted for others for healing or deliverance or just for knowing the will of God.

In response to a question from the disciple the Lord Himself taught the disciples a prayer that is used to this very day. I do not think that it was taught so much that we say it over and over again but it was to be a template that we could use for our prayer life.

The Lord's prayer has at least seven key points that we should know and use in our prayer life each day. They are as follows:

## *Our Father:*

Our prayer should always start out by focusing on the Father. He also needs to be “our Father” which turns prayer into a personal relationship with Him. We are to respect and honour His name. Jesus always had the Father on His mind. We see throughout the Gospel a lot of teaching concerning the Father. When we asked how shall we know the Father, Jesus responded that if you know me you will know the Father. In John 14 we are told of the abiding relation that we are to have with the Father. In John 15 Jesus tells us the Father is the vine dresser. We learn, that it is the Father who has sent the Son and that it was also the Father who would send the Holy Spirit to teach us and empower us. We are also to be thinking about His kingdom and not the kingdom of this world. In the book of Matthew his focus was twofold. One was about the Kingly Messiah

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and second was on the Kingdom of God that was coming through Christ here to earth.

## *Our Father's Will:*

We are to pray that His will be done. God has a plan and will, and has already mapped it out in heaven for our lives. It is important that we as disciples get in step with that plan here on earth. The biggest battleground that we face is the battleground of the wills. Will it be my will or His will? Do I have faith that His will is the right way and truth for my life? Salvation is dying to our will and now living for Him. The reason we struggle so much in this area is because we do not understand what it means to have Christ as Lord and Saviour and because our will still fights us on all fronts. If we understand we would see that our will is to be put to death. We are now a new creation. We have now the heart of God in us. We are now His servants and stewards. Paul tell us that we are to die daily and if we do not die then our will, will try to take over and we will become world-centered instead of God-centered. We also will try to live in our righteousness, which we are told is like filthy rages or we can put on Christ's grace / righteousness and become joint heirs with Jesus.

## *Our Father Bread:*

One of the basic needs that people have is for bread. We need bread for physical food but we also need spiritual food that feeds our spiritual man. This part of the prayer

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most likely reflects back to when God gave them bread from heaven (manna). It will also remind them of the shew bread in the tabernacle, which represented God's presence. Jesus would also stand up and proclaim that "I Am the Bread of Life". Christ is bread and water for the needy soul (John 6:35 & 48). For the disciple it will cause him to think of communion where Jesus broke the bread as a symbol of His broken body for us.

## *Our Fathers Forgiveness:*

When it comes to forgiveness there are two areas that we need to think about. One is our forgiveness of sin between us and the Father and the other is our forgiveness between each other. We still carry within us a fallen nature that still has the capacity to sin against God and toward each other. We need to keep our slates clean and our minds and heart covered by the blood of Christ. We are to forgive one another as Christ forgives us. Jesus gave and forgave so that we could give and forgive others. Unforgiveness brings a wall between people and destroys unity and harmony in the church body.

## *Our Father Leading:*

As a Shepherd our Father will lead us and guide us through each day of our lives. We need to seek His leading and direction because this is what will keep us from falling into temptation. Temptation is all around us and the goal of Satan is to make us stumble and fall. Satan is the accuser of

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the brethren. He tempted Adam and Eve causing all mankind to have a sin nature. He used the same temptation of Christ and you can be sure He will use it on you as Christ's disciple also. Christ gives us the tools we need to get through our personal struggle, We will face many battles within heart and mind. He will lead us but we must chose to follow.

## *Our Father Deliver:*

The enemy wants us to lose hope and give up, that is why we also pray that we will be delivered from evil. These are the actions that we do, that are not godly or upright, thoughts of our minds and the actions of our lives. But we also need to be delivered from the direct attacks of the evil one. He seeks to destroy, divided, tear down and kill if at all possible. We face many voices each day and we need God's help to walk through it all. Christ delivers us from the strongholds of Satan, from the sin that bind. Even the gates of Hades cannot withstand the power of the Father who can deliver us Matt 16:18. Before we were a child of God, we were a child of the ruler of this world, the one who keeps people in bondages and death. The Father came by the blood of Christ to deliver us from all the enemies' strongholds.

## *Our Father Power & Glory:*

The Father is not asking us to walk in our strength and ability but to walk in His strength and ability. Jesus

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said, I will ask my Father to send the Holy Spirit who will teach and guide you in all things. He will not glorify Himself but He will bring glory to the Father. We need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit daily. We need to learn how to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ says that if that same resurrection power that raised Him from the dead must also dwell in us. This is so we can glorify and praise God through the testimony that we have in Him. It is no longer I that liveth but it is Christ that liveth in me.

He ends this prayer by saying, “forever, Amen”. That there is no time limit to God; He has no beginning or end to who He is. This is how we and those who come after us should come to the Lord in prayer. The word “Amen” which means, “Let it be so Lord” brings it all to a final climax.

Please use these seven points to help you in your prayer life. Ask the Lord for wisdom on what they mean and how you can pray for yourself and others. Christ wants to be prayer partner with every disciple. We just have to have the faith to let Him guide us in our life of prayer.

## **RELEVANCE:**

Prayer is a very powerful tool in the hands of the disciple. Christ tells us that if two or three come together on something it will be done in heaven (Matthew 18:19). We are also encouraged to bind and loosen things in heaven and on earth (Matthew 16:19). Prayer breaks the cords that bind. Prayer is the key to setting the

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captive free. Learn about others' prayer life and take time to experience different ways of praying. One should also keep a prayer journal so one can see the hand of God giving direction and in answering prayer. A Prayer Journal builds faith and strength and empowers the disciple to go deeper in their relationship with Christ. We are also to pray daily for the filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives (Ephesians 5:18). The Holy Spirit is our counsellor, teacher, and comforter and helps us to walk through those times of trouble in our lives.

## REFLECTION:

What can I do to help me deepen my prayer life in Christ? What is hindering my prayer life and what can I do to change that? How can I pray for others? Do I see and experience and express answers to prayer to others?

## RELATED SCRIPTURES FOR THE LESSON:

**I Kings 8:27-30** ... Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built! Regard your servant's **prayer** and his plea, O LORD my God, heeding the cry and the **prayer** that your servant **prays** to you today; that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you said, 'My name shall be there,' that you may heed the **prayer** that your servant **prays** toward this place. Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they **pray** toward this place; O hear in heaven your dwelling place; heed and forgive.

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**I Chronicles 7:14-15** if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, **pray**, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the **prayer** that is made in this place.

**Matthew 21:13** He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of **prayer**'; but you are making it a den of robbers."

**Romans 12:11-13** Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in **prayer**. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

**Ephesians 6:18-20** Pray in the Spirit at all times in every **prayer** and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. **Pray** also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. **Pray** that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

**Philippians 4:6-7** do not worry about anything, but in everything by **prayer** and **supplication** with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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**Colossians 4:2-4** devote yourselves to **prayer**, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. At the same time **pray** for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should.

**James 5:14-18** Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them **pray** over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The **prayer** of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and **pray** for one another, so that you may be healed. The **prayer** of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he **prayed** fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he **prayed** again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

## RELATED RESEARCH FOR THE LESSON:

**Different kinds of Prayers:**

**The purpose of Prayer and Fasting:**

**Bible testimonies of Prayer:**

**King David's Prayers, book of Psalms:**

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## ***POINT FIVE: FOCUSES ON WORSHIP***

**LEAD-IN:** When the disciple has become changed from the inside out, their hearts are now Christ's home. Their minds are becoming filled with new thoughts and action and from their mouth they now speak praises to our God. When one gets to know Jesus Christ personally you just want to worship Him. We are told the church went down to the temple to worship God daily. They could not keep it bottled up inside. Something magnificent had happened inside of them. They were filled with God's glory and their actions were one of joy and generosity.

### **DEFINITION AND SYNONYMS:**

**Worship:** the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity. *Synonyms:* reverence, revering, worshipping, veneration, adoration, adoring, devotion, praise, thanksgiving, praising, praying to, glorification, glorifying, glory, exaltation, exalting, extolment, extolling, homage, respect, honour, honouring, esteem.

**Praise:** express warm approval or admiration of; the expression of approval or admiration for someone or something. *Synonyms:* worship, glorify, honour, exalt, adore, pay tribute to, pay homage to, give thanks to, venerate, reverence, hallow, bless.

### **KEY SCRIPTURE:**

**Acts 2:46-47** They **worshipped** together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared

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their meals with great joy and generosity all the while **praising** God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people.

## CONTEXT:

- Jesus speaks to the disciples and commissions them to go forth and then He is taken up into heaven.
- They were told to go and pray and wait until they had received from the Father the power of the Holy Spirit.
- They choose another Apostle to replace Judas. The one who is selected is Matthias.
- The Holy Spirit comes on the people in the upper room while they were praying.
- The fire of God comes down and people could hear messages in their own languages.
- Peter addresses the crowd and explains to them from Scripture what was now happening and this was all because of what Jesus Christ had done and said would happen.
- Peter encouraged the people to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.

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## INSIGHTS:

When people are full of worship and praise this becomes a testimony that begins to attract others to come and see and once they see and hear they also desire Christ. It also seems true that the deeper you enter into worship and praise the more your heart desires to worship and praise. The relationship begins to breathe forth love that most people thought was not possible. When people see and understand what Christ freely did for them out of love they just want to worship and praise Him with all that they have (cymbals, dance, harps, psalms, hymns etc) (Psalm 150; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) .

Worship is expressed in many ways both through the individual and when we meet together as a church. The old way, has lost its appeal, it was one of death and destruction but when we confess our faith in Christ and follow through with the waters of baptism things begin to change. Satan desires to fill us with guilt and condemnation but Christ fills us with life and freedom and for some of us we just want to shout out about God's love and grace from the rooftops.

Praise and worship can be expressed through testimony or songs and hymns. It can come by lifting hands or clapping or by being reverent and quiet or during a time of shedding tears. Our lives are to be a sweet smelling incense to the Lord ( II Corinthians 2:14-15). The joy of the Lord is to be our strength. We know that greater is He that lives in us than he that lives in the world (I John 4:4).

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King David was a great man of worship and praise. He knew how to come before the throne of God and pour out praise of adoration to His Creator. The creation of the Psalms is rooted in the vision of how he saw his God. Everywhere he looked he saw the majesty of God and he could not help but worship and praise God for just simply being with Him and giving Him life.

## **RELEVANCE:**

If the heart is one that truly seeks after God it will also be a heart that will want to give worship and praise to God in all its forms. Jesus tells us that if we are committed to Him out of our hearts will come living water (John 7:38). Jesus said it not what goes into the mouth that we need to be worried about but it is what comes out of the mouth that will show who we belong to (Matthew 15:11 & 18). In the end times the book of Revelation basically boils down to “whom will we worship”. Satan will try to get us to worship him and his way but we need to remember that his way lead to death and destruction. Other people will just be worshippers of themselves. Christ leads us to a heart that is full of grace, mercy and joy. The way I view God will be the basis for how I worship and praise Him. The church is to be a worship center where we can express who we are in Christ. The disciples desired to come together and worship God.

## **REFLECTION:**

How am I worshipping God and from what kind of a heart is this praise coming from? True worship comes from a living

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heart that is full of Jesus, all other is just religion, which one do I have?

## RELATED SCRIPTURES FOR THE LESSON:

**Deuteronomy 10:20-21** You shall fear the LORD your God; him alone you shall **worship**; to him you shall hold fast, and by his name you shall swear. He is your **praise**; he is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things that your own eyes have seen.

**Psalms 95:6** come, let us **worship** and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

**Romans 12:1** I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual **worship**.

**Ephesians 1:11-14** In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the **praise** of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the **praise** of his glory.

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**Ephesians 3:21** ... to Him *be* the glory in the **church** and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

**Hebrews 9:14** How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to **worship** the living God!

**Hebrews 12:28-29** Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable **worship** with reverence and awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

**Revelation 22:3** nothing accursed will be found there anymore. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will **worship** him;

## RELATED RESEARCH FOR THE LESSON:

**List different ways that one can worship God:**

**Research how worship was done in the Old Testament:**

## *POINT SIX: FOCUSES ON GIVING*

**LEAD-IN:** The church is a place that receives God's tithes and offerings, it was to be a place of giving. The early church finance was used to build people not buildings. The needs of the people both local and in other churches was of utmost importance. This is why later in the book of Acts we have the apostle selecting

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deacons that could go out and administer these finances to the needy. They worked under the direction of the local elders. Giving was also another way to show God's love and concern for others. It gives testimony that the church of Jesus Christ cares. But one must be aware that giving is more than finance it is also giving of one's time and life for the help and service of others.

## DEFINITION AND SYNONYMS:

**Sharing:** have a portion of (something) with another or others; use, occupy, or enjoy (something) jointly with another or others; participate in, take part in, play a part in, have a role in, be involved in, contribute to, have a hand in, have something to do with, *Synonyms:* divide up, allocate, ration out, give out, distribute, dispense, hand out, dish out, deal out, dole out, parcel out, measure out.

**Giving:** bestow (love, affection, or other emotional support); freely devote, set aside, or sacrifice for a purpose; carry out or perform (a specified action). *Synonyms:* provide with, supply with, furnish with, hand, let someone have, offer, award, grant, bestow, confer; donate, contribute, put up, hand over, turn over, give up, relinquish, devote, dedicate, set aside.

## KEY SCRIPTURE:

**Acts 2: 44-45** And all the believers met together in one place and **shared** everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and **shared** the money with those in need.

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## CONTEXT:

- Jesus speaks to the disciple and commissions them to go forth and then He is taken up into heaven.
- They were told to go and pray and wait until they had received from the Father the power of the Holy Spirit.
- They choose another Apostle to replace Judas. The one who is selected is Matthias.
- The Holy Spirit comes on the people in the upper room while they were praying.
- The fire of God comes down and people could hear messages in their own languages.
- Peter addresses the crowd and explains to them from Scripture what was now happening and this was all because of what Jesus Christ had done and said would happen.
- Peter encouraged the people to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.

## INSIGHTS:

When the spirit of God moves on the church people desire to give and help where they can. God gave His only son for us so that we could have life and freedom so we to also need to give so others can have life and freedom. The tithe to the church was an

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Old Testament teaching that helped bring finance to the church but God wanted us to give all. We no longer own it but we are just stewards of what He has entrusted us with.

In the early church the believers trusted God and God's leadership to use wisely what had been entrusted to them whether it was finance or people's lives. The heart of God is one of giving and He looks for a joyful heart which desires to give all to Him. The key was not the gift but the attitude and sacrifice of the giver. We need to trust that God knows our every need even before we ask it.

Paul was blessed when different churches would give out of a heart that wanted to bless the ministry that he was doing. Giving needed to be part of the everyday ministry of the disciple and the church. We often miss out on so many blessing because we do not sow of our lives and finances into God's Kingdom. We are told to lay up treasure in heaven not here on earth (Matthew 6:19). For the disciple of Christ in North America this seems to be the hardest thing for one to give their full hearts to. We like to hold back and hope that others will do it even when the Holy Spirit is speaking directly to us.

The church also gave of their leaders and teachers to go out and help others. It seems that the church saw itself in a bigger picture because they were willing to send people as missionaries or teachers to other locations and places. They moved people around as they saw the need and were lead by the Holy Spirit and they ministered to others in need both in finance and personnel. They

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also sent their best when it came to sending people. The church was sharing their blessing to others.

## RELEVANCE:

Many have said the giving is directly attached to blessing. Paul called it sowing and reaping. If we sow sparingly we will also reap sparingly (I Corinthians 9:60). We must seek God and plant generously where He tells us to sow, the needy are all around us and if we all get involved, the church would see revival and begin to grow. The church needs to reach out into the community and show that they care about what is happening to the people that live around the church. We are His hands and feet and we must use His time and money to build His kingdom.

## REFLECTION:

How have I sown into other people's lives this week? Do I give of my time and money sparingly and grudging or do I give it with joy?

## RELATED SCRIPTURES FOR THE LESSON:

**Acts 11:27** Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

**Acts 13:1** Now there were at Antioch, in the **church** that was *there*, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

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**Acts 20:35** ... an all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, 'It is more blessed to **give** than to receive.' ”

**Romans 12:11-13** Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. **Contribute** to the **needs** of the saints; extend **hospitality** to strangers.

**Romans 12:20-21** No, “if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, **give** them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**II Corinthians 9:7-8** Each of you must **give** as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful **giver**. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may **share** abundantly in every good work.

**Galatians 2:10** They asked only one thing, that we **remember the poor**, which was actually what I was eager to do.

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## RELATED RESEARCH FOR THE LESSON:

**Jesus teaching and parables on Giving:**

**What kinds of things should the church be investing in:**

**Giving to the poor and needy:**

## ***POINT SEVEN: FOCUSES ON SERVICE***

**LEAD-IN:** The day of Pentecost was so important because it was the day that the disciples of Christ were praying and obeying God's command to wait until the Holy Spirit would come. Christ sent the Holy Spirit with one main purpose and that was to empower the disciples of Christ for the work of service. Our sinful nature is one of self serving but when the Holy Spirit comes into our life we become Christ's servants. We need power and strength of God so that we can serve one another.

## **DEFINITION AND SYNONYMS:**

**Service:** the action of helping or doing work for someone; be ready to assist someone whenever possible. *Synonyms:* act of assistance, good turn, favour, kindness, helping hand, help, aid, offices, ministrations, assist, benefit, be helpful, be of assistance, be beneficial, be advantageous, be of benefit, serve, advantage, be useful, be of use, be profitable, profit, be valuable, be of worth, do someone a good turn.

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**Serve:** to be a servant; to offer habitual worship and obedience to; to work through or perform; to wait on, to be used to or answer the needs of. *Synonyms:* work, labour, give a helping hand, assist, be useful, be valuable.

**Servant:** a person bound to do the bidding of a master or superior; one that must work for another and obey him. *Synonyms:* helper, worker, steward, slave, supporter, follower.

**Caring:** displaying kindness and concern for others; the work or practice of looking after those unable to care for themselves, especially the sick and the elderly. *Synonyms:* kind, kind-hearted, warm-hearted, soft-hearted, tender, concerned, attentive, responsible, considerate; affectionate, loving, warm, benevolent, humane, good-natured, gentle, mild, indulgent, sympathetic, understanding, receptive, compassionate, charitable, gracious, long-suffering, patient.

## KEY SCRIPTURE:

**Acts 2:46-47** ... and **shared** their meals with great joy and **generosity** all the while **praising** God and enjoying the **goodwill** of all the people.

## CONTEXT:

- Jesus speaks to the disciple and commissions them to go forth and then He is taken up into heaven.

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- They were told to go and pray and wait until they had received from the Father the power of the Holy Spirit.
- They choose another Apostle to replace Judas. The one who is selected is Matthias.
- The Holy Spirit comes on the people in the upper room while they were praying.
- The fire of God comes down and people could hear messages in their own languages.
- Peter addresses the crowd and explains to them from Scripture what was now happening and this was all because of what Jesus Christ had done and said would happen.
- Peter encouraged the people to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.

## INSIGHTS:

Service has as part of its root, humbleness and humility. The servant desires to see unity and harmony within the body of Christ. The early church had built within it a spirit of sharing and serving one another. For the church of Christ to function as a unit it has to be willing to be caring and serving all other members. The church heart is to be one of service.

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Serving one another also shows that we care for one another. Christ came to serve and to be an example of service. One day the disciples questioned Jesus when they were on a boat during a storm. The disciples were fighting with the storm and Jesus was at the back of the boat asleep and after much fear, one of the disciples woke Christ and said to Him, “Lord don’t you care” (Mark 4:38). Throughout history people have a need to know that someone else cares because without that people lose hope and give up on life.

Church leadership must also see that they are but in place to serve the rest of the members, to give it direction, wisdom and encouragement. To protect it from enemies that would try to tear the church apart and destroy it. Servant leadership is what Jesus modeled and it is what we should model today to a lost world. We are all to serve the Lord with gladness and joy but this will mean coming to the Father and asking Him to fill us with the Holy Spirit each day. (Ephesians 3:7)

The church needs to have a plan of how to serve those who are within and without in a variety of ways. The Gospel of Christ is to go forth to the needy, the poor, the widows and those who are in jail (Matthew 25:31-46). Plus we need to be aware of our neighbours and friends and what they may be going through. Matthew tells us that even if we give a cup of cold water in the name of Jesus it is like we have done it unto Him personally (Mark 9:41).

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## RELEVANCE:

Service and being a servant is what I believe lays treasure in heaven up for the disciples. Christ gave this example to the church. He told us that if we want to be first we must first be last (Mark 9:35). He also said that if we are asked to go one mile we must be willing to go two because in serving in such a way we gain a friend (Matthew 5:41). My life must be one of service for my king. Again we need to remember it is no longer I that live but Christ who lives in me.

## REFLECTION:

How am I serving and helping those around me? Am I willing to give up my wants and needs so that I can have time to serve someone else?

## RELATED SCRIPTURES FOR THE LESSON:

**Matthew 20:26-28** It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your **servant**, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be **served** but to **serve**, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

**Matthew 6:24** No one can **serve** two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot **serve** God and wealth.

**Acts 14:22** ... **strengthening** the souls of the disciples, **encouraging** them to continue in the faith, and *saying*,

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“Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”

**Acts 20:28** “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**, to **shepherd** the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

**Romans 12:11-13** Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, **serve** the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; **extend hospitality** to strangers.

**Ephesians 3:7** ... of this gospel I have become a **servant** according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of **his power**.

**Colossian 3:23-24** Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you **serve** the Lord Christ.

**I Thessalonians 3:11-12** Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for **one another**, and for all people, just as we also **do** for you;

**I Thessalonians 4:9-10** Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to **love one another**; for indeed you do **practice** it toward all the brethren who are in

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all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, ...

**I Thessalonians 5:11** Therefore encourage **one another** and build up **one another**, just as you also are doing.

**I Thessalonians 5:13** ...live in peace with **one another**.

**I Thessalonians 5:15-18** See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for **one another** and for all people. Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

**II Timothy 2:24** ... and the Lord's **servant** must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, patient, ...

**I Peter 4:10** Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, **serve** one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

## RELATED RESEARCH FOR THE LESSON:

**Servant heart from the book of Isaiah:**

**List Christ teaching on servant hood:**

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## CONCLUSION

The church is the body of Christ and it is because of that body we are all connected together as a unit. We are given talents and gifts and the young and the old all have a place of ministry within it. The church is growing and we as leaders need to be aware of where the fields are in the world that are ripe unto harvesting. The moment of harvesting is the same moment that a church is being planted. Again we are to remember that a church by definition is a "called out people" who have become disciples of Jesus Christ. Remember the church is a living organism that is there to teach, to be a place for fellowship and communion. The church is to be a "house of prayer", a place of worship and of giving and finally that we do all we can to serve one another. We as disciple are the church both small and large.

## APPLICATION

We need to see that the disciple and the church as one and the same. We are the church wherever we go. The Bible tells us that if two or three of us come together, we are meeting as part of Christ's body. He is our head and the Holy Spirit is the power and anointing behind the bodies service and ministry. We are called out of the world so that we can go back in as Christ's ambassador; bring a messenger of Good News to all that will hear. We need to take seriously the role of the church in the world today. Christ tells us that no matter what kind of trials we will continue to stand. We are told by Christ that even the gates of hell will not be able to prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). We also need to remember that this church is the bride of Christ and that very soon it will be taken

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up by Christ so that we will all become part of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-10). We have a clear and true hope in Christ Jesus and He is readying His church to have the final victory over sin and hell.

## MEDITATION

A. For further insight and understanding, please study these other supporting scriptures:

**Matthew 16:18**

**Matthew 18:17**

**Acts 8:1-3**

**Acts 13:1**

**Acts 14:22-27**

**Acts 15:3-4, 22**

**Acts 20:28**

**I Corinthians 4:17**

**I Cor. 12:28**

**I Corinthians 14:12** **Ephesians 5:23-32**

**Revelation chapters 2 & 3**

B. **Study Questions:**

1. List some key truths that you have learned from this discipleship step?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What are some actions that you sense the Holy Spirit is challenging you to change in your life?

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3. What word in the definitions have you seen in a new and fresh way?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What is the key truth that you would like to share with someone else?

## MEMORIZATION

***Acts 9:31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.***

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## Prayer

*Dear Lord Jesus,*

*Help me to see the church for what it truly means to you. I know what man has built may not resemble your body and what it should look like, but I pray that you will continue to work through your people. I also pray that you will help connect me with the other members of the body and that I will try to do my best to work with them as they work with me. I also pray that I may be active and part of every aspect of what the church is to this lost world. I pray for revival and an awakening in your church and ask that you will start first with me. I praise you for birthing the church and filling her with your Holy Spirit. I also pray that you will help me to understand my spirit gifts so that I can use it for you in equipping the body for service. Thank you for making your church your bride and that soon you are coming back for us. We love you, worship you and praise you for now an all eternity.*

*Sincerely your servant,*

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## **Project L.A.M.B.S. International**

Making disciples is the call and mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus urged the disciples to follow Him. He laid down before us the teaching and the walk that we need to follow with Jesus as our supreme example. It is imperative for every believer and the church to know that disciples are not born but they are made. For the church to be strong in the last days, we must be about the business of equipping the saints (disciples) for the work of service.

Dr. James Humphries has been ministering for over 40 years, and has experience in a variety of ministries including church planting, children's ministry, street ministry, youth ministry, camp ministry, pastoral work and directing and teaching in schools all over the world. In addition, he has taken part in traveling and ministering in the USA, Mexico, Ukraine, Myanmar, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Thailand and across most of Canada. He completed his B.R.E. and his M.A. from Briercrest, and his Doctorate of Ministry from Providence Theological Seminary in the spring of 1999.

In January 1996, Dr. James Humphries resigned as pastor of a local church with a vision to reach further abroad with the Word of God and to use it to train labourers for Christ (Matthew 9:36-38). He shared this with Dr. David Smith and Dr. Chuck Nichols of Providence Theological Seminary and they greatly encouraged Dr. James Humphries and his wife Irene to develop what God was laying on their hearts.

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In March 1997, they traveled to Jamaica where they met several pastors who were very concerned about the need for training and disciplining their young people as leaders in their churches. Dr. James Humphries and Irene did not know this would be the starting point to an international ministry of discipleship training around the world known as Project L.A.M.B.S. International.

To date, Project L.A.M.B.S. has ministered in Canada, Myanmar, Ukraine, Africa, Jamaica, Mexico, Israel, Thailand, Japan, Dominican Republic, Naga Land and China. We offer over 30 different courses. Our graduates number over 1000, and are serving worldwide. Out of this group of graduates, we have equipped and trained directors, teachers and pastors who in turn are carrying out II Timothy 2:1-2 to an even larger group of people.

In 2002 it was discovered that Irene had cancer again. God gave Irene another three years and because of that she was still able to travel and teach in many different countries. Shortly after what was to be her last trip, Irene was hospitalized in February, 2005. A few weeks later she went home to be with her Lord and Saviour on March 9.

My second wife Hkaw Win was raised and trained mostly in the land of Myanmar. She has earned B.th, University Degree and a master of Divinity Degree in Myanmar. In April 2007 she finished a second Master's Degree at Providence Theological

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Seminary in Christian Education. After July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 she headed back to Myanmar to head up the Christian Education Department for the Myitkyina Kachin Baptist Association and oversaw various ministries to 62 churches. After her four-year term was completed, she has been traveling and working as an interpreter and doing translations concerning various kinds of discipleship books and materials.

Over the last ten years we have lived in the countries of Myanmar and Thailand preparing a variety of resources in the Burmese (Myanmar) and Kachin Languages. To date we have published over 20 different kinds of books. Our goal is to equip and establish people as Disciples of Christ. Please pray for God's leading and wisdom. Our walk with Christ has taken us down many challenging pathways but we have seen the faithfulness of our Lord and Savior in every area. His grace has been sufficient.

Founder and Director,

Dr. James and Hkaw Win Humphries

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## Discipleship / Leadership Booklets

1. My Call with Christ
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3. Abiding in the Vine
4. Knowledge, Wisdom and Understanding
5. Scripture: The Disciples' Anchor
6. Baptism: The Disciples' Testimony
7. The Disciples' Church
8. Servant Leadership
9. Teacher / Learner, Learner / Teacher
10. Being Wise Builders
11. Shepherds of God's Sheep
12. End Times
13. Relationship Pilgrimage
14. Christ's Disciple
15. Disciple's Prayer Life
16. Communion
17. Ambassadors for Christ
18. Full Armour of God
19. Good News for Challenging and Changing Times
20. Christ our Mediator
21. Jesus our Deliverer
22. Mission and Missionaries
23. Passing the Torch
24. Full Gospel Discipleship
25. Five Fold Ministry
26. Envisioning Change
27. Individualism VS Community
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29. Igniting Discipleship Equipping
30. Igniting the Gospel
31. Psalm 23
32. Beatitudes

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