

INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

BIBLE STUDY



DIocese of JAMAICA & THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP
BIBLE STUDIES
FOR LENT 2019

PREPARED AND PRESENTED
BY THE
DIOCESE OF JAMAICA
AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

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The Study of Intentional Discipleship

One of the most significant developments in the Diocese that occurred since the period of Intentional Discipleship, launched a year and a half ago, is the rediscovery that the first call on every baptized individual is to live the Jesus-shaped life. I believe the 2018 Lenten Bible Study on Discipleship, played a large role in energizing that movement and it is hoped that this year's Lenten series will take us further along that path by providing additional opportunities and resources to deepen our knowledge of the Bible as the primary source for discipleship formation.

This year, the series of Bible studies will contemplate Discipleship within the various sectors in which we experience our journey through life. In this regard, the Bible Studies, (which will possibly start on Ash Wednesday) will cover:

- Ash Wednesday - Discipleship: personal readiness
- First Week of Lent - Discipleship in the church
- Second Week of Lent - Discipleship in the workplace
- Third Week of Lent - Discipleship in the home and to spouse/partner
- Fourth Week of Lent - Discipleship to the youth and young adults
- Fifth Week of Lent - Discipleship in the community
- Holy Week - Discipleship to the outsider

Let us be clear, the Bible does not instruct disciples to go out and recruit other disciples merely to increase church membership. Jesus promises no such thing. What He promises is that as we follow Him, allow Him to shape our lives, and live within the community of "Jesus-shaped" persons, the witness of our words, our lives, our being, will draw others to also seek to become His disciples.

Learning how to disciple each other, even those who belong and are known members of the church for a long time, is necessary, since many have grown careless, weary, jaded, and cynical about the faith we now take for granted. It is hoped that this Lenten Bible Study series will strengthen our determination in doing the work of Discipleship. It anticipates that those who commit themselves to these seven sessions of study will be prepared to do the hard work and be ready for the deep personal encounter and changed relationships that these studies offer.

We thank the writers for this year's Lenten series - Mrs Elsie Aarons, Rev. Dwane Blackwood, Rev. Orlando Gayle, The James' Family, Very Rev. Canon Georgia "Grace" Jervis, Very Rev. Canon Collin Reid and Rt. Rev. Robert Thompson. Many thanks too to Fr. Douglas Barnes for his lead role in guiding this important period of Intentional Discipleship and to Dr. Eleanor Henry our Editor in Chief and project coordinator.

I commend this study programme to you and pray that God will bless us abundantly in our reading and study of Scripture during this season of Lent and always.

+Robert Kingston

Rt. Rev. Robert Thompson
Suffragan Bishop of Kingston
Diocese of Jamaica & The Cayman Islands

A Guide to the 2019 Lenten Study on Intentional Discipleship

We have now embarked on the second year of our thrust towards developing and living into the culture of inviting others to a relationship with Jesus Christ. We do this through our lives, our words, actions, and the welcoming space we create. While we broadly refer to this “way” of being as *“Living the Jesus-shaped life,”* it is simply lifestyle evangelism, or Intentional Discipleship. We continue to see Intentional Discipleship as a functional yet flexible relationship, which requires our willingness and ability to meet and *abide* with Jesus in order that we will be changed so deeply that our view and experience of the world also changes.

When we do Intentional Discipleship, we participate in a deliberate and empowering relationship of trust, helping each other to understand and appropriate the grace of God in our lives. A disciple actively imitates both the life and teaching of the master, and Christian disciples believe in and seek in their daily life to follow Jesus. To be a disciple of Jesus means we learn from Him. Guided by scripture and infused by the Holy Spirit, we help others as they too learn from and grow in Him. This translates to us “making disciples.” Every Christian should be helping others become believers by showing them Christ, while assisting other believers to grow and mature. That is disciple-making and the approach to our focused study this year follows this vein.

Our 2018 study focused on preparing ourselves to become disciple makers. How much have we grown since that study? The topics in this study compel us to examine our personal readiness for discipleship, and its related tasks:

- *In the Church*
- *In the Workplace*
- *In the Home: to spouses, partners and (younger) children*
- *To Youth and Young Adults*
- *In the Community*
- *To the “Outsider”*

In the church: *The church, as a faith community, functions as a spiritual parent. Her task is to nurture the ‘children’ whom God gives to her. So, the church is to be the place for God’s children to have encounters with Him.*

In the workplace: It is easy to practise our faith at corporate worship and, thereafter, to behave quite differently in the secular and work environments. This study invites us not to impose our beliefs (doctrine or faith perspectives) on others, but to be consistent in how we practise our faith and to invite others, through our genuine witness, to a relationship with God.

In the Home: to spouses, partners and (younger children): The intention here is to recall the Deuteronomy 11:19 challenge to fix God's word in our hearts and mind...to "Teach them to our children, talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise." This is an opportunity to invite and involve our spouses and younger children to spend time together in prayer for family life, for marriage and for the wisdom needed to rear children.

To Youth and Young Adults: Youth and Young Adults are in the transitional phases of life and faith, so, understanding social justice, right and wrong, their role in society, the influence of social grouping, and commitment are some of the topics of concern to them. Be as practical as possible in addressing these issues as you prepare to encourage commitment and stress the importance or critical nature of their presence in, or absence from the life of the church and their vocation.

In the community: Discipleship to the community requires that we have relationship with our neighbours and other citizens. Look out for and use the opportunities presented to make and facilitate conversations and be always ready to help persons in need, make connections and build reliable and supportive networks.

To the "Outsider": In Holy Week, we are being invited to look again at Jesus' unselfish life-giving sacrifice made for all people, including us, who were or would be "outsiders" at some point or another. We seek to draw the outsider not just into the church but firstly, into the kingdom of God.

Elements of the Study:

The various sections of the study help you to focus your conversations and reflections, but they also present challenges and opportunities for engagement. Let us look at some elements of the study:

Questions for Early Contemplation:

This can be done either before you get to the venue or study group, or at the start of each bible study session. It serves to help you (the group) reflect on how you have been growing and changing into the disciple Christ intends you to be.

Reading the Scripture

Read to learn what was happening in the time, listen to and allow the Holy Spirit to give you a Word for yourself as you prepare to partner in the work of Discipleship. Here are two suggestions:

1. Read the passage from various translations of the Bible. Look and listen for possible differences in what each translation emphasizes.
2. Use the “Pass-the-Read” strategy. This approach involves pre-selected readers. Each will read a verse, or from different translations then say “pass the read to [*name of the next reader*]”. It helps to build community as they learn each other’s names and it’s a good strategy if you are working with children and youth.

Thoughts for Application

This section follows the in-depth look at the topic of the day along with the supporting scripture reading. Scripture is more effective when applied to our contemporary life and this presents the opportunity for us to find something of a charge or challenge in the Word that could propel us to do and be Christ’s representative in the places we are called to function.

Approaches to Prayer

Be practical here. Allow the study and conversations about the selected scripture passage to inform your willingness to partner with God in mission in the world. At prayer, spend time being open to God through the Holy Spirit, for strength and inspiration to become part of a relational, inclusive community characterised by its openness to others, kindness and unconditional love.

Closing Prayer

Invite everyone to pray together. See it as a missionary prayer that each person in the study group is agreeing to, as you go to work in the world.

Finally, as we go through this study continuing our journey as disciples and disciple-makers, we are advancing the culture of inviting others to Christ. Let us see all that we do as ministry. Let us gear our actions, thoughts, motives, plans and affections towards fulfilling the divine call to “go and make disciples”. Let us recognise that everything we do can be reframed to make a significant

evangelizing impact¹ on someone, be it in the home, the workplace, at church or among persons unattached or somewhat attached to us.

I trust we will have a wonderful time of challenge; spiritual awakening and divine missionary engagement.

Rev. Fr. Douglas Barnes +
Head of Education and Youth Department
Diocese of Jamaica & The Cayman Islands

¹ Sherry Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples*, 220

Intentional Discipleship

Lenten Bible Study 2019

Ash Wednesday....

Discipleship: Our personal readiness

Questions for early contemplation (15 mins)

1. What does your daily behaviour tell about who/whose you are?
2. In the last year, what if any changes have you noticed about the way you pray?
3. In what spiritual discipline(s) besides prayer do you regularly engage?

Scripture Reading: (5 mins).

Read the following passages of scripture, (if possible, from the translation called The VOICE)

- ❖ Psalm 63: 1-8
- ❖ Galatians 5: 22-23

Psalm 63 offers some insight into the inner wrestling of one who longs to experience peace with self and God. The psalmist keeps recalling God's goodness, a reminder that it is within the circle of that goodness that true peace is found.

The section of Paul's letter to the Galatian Church (5: 22-23) sets out the characteristics of one who has embraced God's love and, embodying the character of the beloved, becomes a channel through whom God reaches others. Between both extremes however, that is, the *longing* in the Psalm and the *embrace* in Galatians, are spiritual disciplines that must be consistently engaged so that by them, readiness to share (in) God's love is honed.

Commentary on the theme (10mins)

Discipleship begins and ends with God's love

If the truth were to be told, many Anglicans would likely break into a cold sweat at the thought of sharing their faith with or *discipling* others. Often we hear the excuse... '*I don't think I am ready*', which expresses a lack of confidence about or uncertainty regarding the authenticity of our relationship with God.

One of the first things of which a Christian ought to be assured, in preparing or getting ready to assume the role of a disciple, is that the heartbeat of this ministry centres on openness to embracing for one-self, that which one will share with others, which in essence is...God's love.

In his very insightful and challenging book titled *Surrender to Love*, David Benner notes that Christians tend to focus more on obedience than surrender. He highlights the fact that surrender is the "*soil into which obedience sprouts*" and consequently, from which it eventually grows. What he seems at pains to affirm, is that the first order of business for the Christian disciple, that is, you and me, is not slavish adherence to a set of *discipleship do's and don'ts* but rather, a willingness to surrender...to God's love.

Many people balk at the idea of surrender, because of the image of helplessness that it conveys. But then, what better attitude and disposition to have; for only when we acknowledge our helplessness can we truly trust and rely on God's all-sufficient grace. It is the sense of helplessness that pushes us to seek divine enabling rather than rely on mere human ability, as we engage the many and varied aspects of discipleship. In *surrendering* to God's love, Benner implies that we – you and I, experience the inner transformation that creates actual *dwelling space* for and from which God is allowed to work in and through us, to draw others to Himself.

God's Love must be nourished and nurtured

But a word of caution, while readiness for discipleship involves surrendering to God's love, it does not end there; in fact, that is only the beginning. The reality is that in opening our hearts to love, with the intention of sharing it with others, we open ourselves also, to a relationship with God that must be nurtured and nourished, in order to produce fruits of righteousness. It is a love-relationship therefore, that requires the consistent engagement of disciplines that keep us in tune with the lover of our souls, providing uncommon strength and courage (cf. I John 4: 18) to be intentional in our discipleship.

Disciplines nurture our relationship with God

There are many disciplines that facilitate intimacy with God and the wholeness of being, that activate our personal readiness as intentional disciples. Throughout this Lenten season however, I invite you to explore **three (3)** key ones. They are...

1. **Prayer:** (see Psalm 63: 1 cf. & Luke 11: 1–4). Prayer is spending quality time *communing* with, that is, listening to and for God, sharing your hearts with Him; learning to discern His voice as He responds to and provides direction towards the things that bring Him glory.
2. **Solitude:** (see Mark 6: 31 cf. & Matt. 14: 13). The objective of this discipline is getting comfortable about being *alone* with God, where no distractions are allowed to intervene, so that the experience of being embraced in and by God's love is made real. This discipline, like a retreat, is both enlivening and challenging in what it does for us and how it prepares us to engage.
3. **Study:** (see Romans 12: 2). According to Richard J. Foster in the book titled **Celebration of Discipline**, the purpose and goal of the discipline of study is to focus mind and heart in ways that provide enrichment and stimulate spiritual growth. By it, we learn how to discern truth from falsehood and in embracing the former, become better equipped and prepared to lead.

Spiritual *disciplines* must be engaged intentionally and consistently, to produce the best results. When this is done, you will find there is increased longing for God; you will begin to experience the desire to engage other disciplines and...you will know a deep urge to share that which you have experienced and continue to experience of God, with others. No longer will you shy away from the challenges of discipleship; for you will begin to engage them, confident of the fact that...

“The Creator who begun such a great work among you will not stop in mid-design but will keep perfecting you until the day Jesus...our liberating king returns.” (Philippians.1: 6 the Voice)

Questions for group discussion (40mins)

1. Comment on the benefits to be derived from the spiritual disciplines highlighted in the commentary above. Explain how they facilitate personal readiness for discipleship.

2. Identify some ways/times in which you and/or your congregation could intentionally engage the disciplines of *Prayer*, *Solitude* and *Study*.
3. Discuss the possibility (or otherwise) of a reserved individual who seldom speaks, being ready to engage discipleship.

Thoughts for Application (15 mins)

- During the period of Lent, try using 15 minutes of your lunch time, to engage one of the disciplines mentioned. Using a journal, document any impact this discipline had on your sense of readiness as a disciple.
- An obvious but difficult place to share your faith is at home. Choose one member of your family and invite him/her to join you in engaging the discipline of *Prayer* during Lent.

Approaches to Prayer

“Love speaks the language of the soul as it awakens our hunger for relationship and connection” (David Benner). Allow this quote to become the lens through which you view your congregation and/or community; who/what the Spirit is showing you. Allow that which you see to inform your prayers.

Closing Prayer (5 mins)

Good and gracious God, in faith we surrender to Your unconditional love and ask for Your grace to joyfully share it with others. Embolden us, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, so that in word and action, we may show forth the excellence of such love, to the praise of Your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen***

Intentional Discipleship
Lenten Bible Study 2019

Discipleship: Our personal readiness

Notes

Please make a note of what was most impactful for you in this bible study and note also what you have committed to do for your personal spiritual growth during Lent

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Intentional Discipleship

Lenten Bible Study 2019

First Week of Lent

Discipleship in the Church

Questions for early contemplation (15 mins)

1. What are some of the challenges that you foresee as you move forward to discipleship in your Church community?
2. How best can the resources of your Church be used for effective discipleship?
3. Bearing in mind that the Church is the school of discipleship, how is your Church a school that nurtures?

Scripture Reading: (5 mins).

❖ 1 Thessalonians 2: 1-12

Commentary on the theme (10mins)

Discipleship is not so much a programme in the local Church for which persons are invited or encouraged to sign up, but rather, the culture of the Church where every member seeks, in a deliberate way, to assist each other to become more like Christ. Discipleship should ripple through the entire Church.

The Church's motherly, nurturing role as disciple is crucial. Indeed, the Church is the institution of discipleship. "We are enrolled in her school in BAPTISM, educated in her WORD by her pastors and teachers, fed at her table in the weekly COVENANT RENEWAL SERVICE." There is no other way to enter life unless the church as a mother conceives us in her work, gives us birth, nourishes us in her heart and keeps us under her care.

In the text to guide our study, we see St. Paul's intentional and deliberate motive to equip the Thessalonian Church to be solid, faithful disciples so that they

could, in turn, disciple others. He holds up his example as a model for the new believers to follow and invites everyone’s involvement in the process of making other disciples.

Paul’s witness among the Thessalonians was effective (2: 1). It was based on his bold proclamation of the truth of the Gospel (2: 2). The important motive undergirding and inspiring this testimony is that Paul yearned to please God (2: 3–4). It was his desire that others please and glorify God (2: 8–12), and in the process, become active participants in the building of the Kingdom of God. This is the mission of the Church...to disciple for the building of The Kingdom.

This is precisely the point the Very Rev. Canon Professor Martyn Perry made when, speaking on the Role of the Church in discipleship he said, “Discipleship in the Church is towards the building of the Kingdom of God, in families, in communities, and in the workplace.”²

From the 1 Thessalonians 2: 1-12 reading and the commentary, we can identify the character traits below, that are positive and necessary to promote Discipleship.

Courage/boldness	(2: 2)
Humility	(2: 4)
Honesty	(2: 5)
Gentleness	(2: 7)
Sincerity/openness	(2: 8)
Love	(2: 8)
Faithfulness	(2:1 0, 2: 12)

Questions for group discussion (40mins)

1. What will you do to help your Church towards a culture of discipleship?
2. What would you need to change in order to develop this culture?
3. What does the Church need to do, to foster discipline in discipleship?
4. What are the human resources that your Church possesses and how will you use these resources to undertake a deliberate, intentional, sustained discipleship thrust?

² Intentional Discipleship 1st Anniversary Service, St. George’s, Kingston, Jamaica, December 2018

Thoughts for Application (15 mins)

Consider the following:

1. How do you foster a climate of hospitality in your church?
2. How do you, as an individual, help your congregation to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for persons of all ages, gender, ethnicity, abilities, etc.?
3. How can you engage children, youth, and young adults in the life of your Church and value their contributions?
4. How can you provide a worshipping environment that is sensitive, stirring and grounded in sound teaching?

Approaches to Prayer:

Have each person identify one talent she/he has, that could be used in making the church community a more welcoming space for worship, and spiritual growth, and offer those to God

Closing Prayer (5 mins)

O Lord, our God, You have commanded us to be as perfect as You, God are perfect: graft into our hearts, we pray, a continual desire to obey Your will. Lead us and teach us day by day what You would have us to do, and give us courage, strength, gentleness and forbearance to fulfil the same. May we never, for love of ease, decline the path set before us, nor for the fear of shame, turn away from it. We ask these for the honour and glory of Jesus Christ our Saviour. ***Amen.***

Intentional Discipleship
Lenten Bible Study 2019
Discipleship in the church

Notes

Please make a note of what was most impactful for you in this bible study and note what part you will play in fostering discipleship in your church.

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Intentional Discipleship

Lenten Bible Study 2019

Second Week of Lent

Discipleship in the Workplace

Questions for early contemplation (15 mins)

Last week, we were encouraged to examine our calling as disciples, and to reflect on how we are called to demonstrate our commitment to following Jesus as Lord and Saviour. The practical aspect of ministry begins when we exit the doors of the church, so we should remember that it is through our life's example, that we show what it means to be loyal disciples of Jesus.

This week, we will, therefore, look at "Discipleship in the Workplace" and to this end, we will reflect on:

- How do we maintain our identity and dignity as committed disciples, even in a challenging working environment?
- How do we empower our uncommitted colleagues/co-workers to become more serious in their faith journey as loyal disciples of Jesus?

Indeed, at times, it is not easy to cope with others in the workplace, especially as it sometimes severely tests our faith. As we seek to reflect on the periods of testing and trials that we endure, we can be confident in the eternal hope given in Jesus' resurrection, that we can and will overcome them.

Scripture Reading: (5 mins)

- ❖ Passage: Luke 13: 31–35

Commentary on the theme (10mins)

The passage is very instructive in guiding us to cope with others in the workplace. It is especially effective in helping us to respond to "difficult people" - those who seek to undermine, undervalue, intimidate and abuse others.

Jesus was not afraid of or intimidated by Herod. Rather, Luke 13: 33, confirms that Jesus was anticipating His death, as this is the reason for which He came,

“...It is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.” So, even though Herod wanted to kill Him, He was focused on what He wanted to accomplish, and nothing would deter Him. This further speaks to the reality that Jesus was confident in His own identity, and despite Herod’s attempts to harm Him, He remained assertive and attentive, in order to do the will of His Father, which is to save all humanity.

We are, therefore, being encouraged by this passage that, like Jesus, we should never allow the ‘Herods’ in the workplace to cause us to lose sight of who we are as disciples of Jesus, though they may try to verbally abuse us, disrespect or intimidate us. We must also be careful of those who will try to lure us into corrupt practices. 1 Corinthians 15: 33 reminds us that “Evil company corrupts good habits.” Like Jesus, we must, through God’s guidance and grace, hold our heads high and not allow our integrity to become tainted as committed followers of Jesus.

Also, just as Jesus loved the Jews, even though they wanted Him dead, so it is that we too are being challenged to love everyone with whom we interact in the workplace, in spite of how they treat us. In other words, we must never lower our standards, because as disciples of Jesus, we must live up to the standards that He has set. So, we must maintain our humility, but never allow others to walk over us; we must be firm but polite; we must maintain our composure when others seek to talk down to us without our getting upset or angry. Then, if a response from us is necessary, in a calm, polite and respectful tone, confidently and assertively state what God has placed on our hearts, remembering that we represent Christ.

Just as God loves us, so it is that we too should love them, and through our lifestyle show them what it means to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Questions for group discussion (40mins)

1. Identify four ways in which our call to be disciples of Jesus may be tested in the workplace, and briefly explain what is required of us in order to overcome such challenges.
2. Imagine that you have an aggressive colleague, who talks down to employees resulting in low self-esteem/morale, and one day someone suggests that the matter be discussed with the colleague in question. You volunteer, and before you can set an appointment to see him, he storms into your office and begins to verbally assault you.
 - (a) As a disciple of Jesus, how would you deal with this situation, bearing in mind too that this employee obviously needs help?

(b) Why is it important to maintain our character as disciples of Jesus even as we work with the most difficult and disgusting persons?

3. How can you exercise discipleship in a context where stealing and/or cheating is the norm at that workplace?

Thoughts for Application (15 mins)

Having gone through this week's study, we must resolve to:

- Live up to the standards of God as disciples of Jesus.
- Practise self-control in the workplace as this demonstrates that we know who we are as children of God.
- Share the love that God has given us with others, including those with whom it is difficult to work.
- Remain true to who we are as disciples, when working with others, and do not compromise our values.

Approaches to Prayer:

Recall the person(s) and things, attitudes, motivations, negativity and bureaucracy that make your work life difficult, as well as those who help you along. Offer them to God as you pray for patience and their strength.

Closing Prayer (5 mins)

Dear Lord, help me to be committed in my journey with You as a faithful disciple. Let me never succumb to the pressures in the workplace that can cause me to turn my heart from You, but rather give me the courage to stand up for what is right, to never cower when others seek to be verbally abusive, to always maintain my integrity, and to be an influence of change for those with whom I work, in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

***Intentional Discipleship
Lenten Bible Study 2019
Discipleship in the workplace***

Notes

Please make a note of what was most impactful for you in this bible study and note also how it will help you deal with others in your work environment.

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Intentional Discipleship

Lenten Bible Study 2019

Third Week of Lent

Discipleship in the home, and to spouse and partner

Questions for early contemplation (15 mins)

1. How would you define family and household?
2. As a child, were you given the option of whether or not to go to Church? Do you think children should be given the option? Why or why not?
3. Can children disciple parents? If so, in what ways?
4. How can spouses/partners disciple each other, and other couples?

Scripture Reading: (5 mins).

- ❖ Deuteronomy 6: 4-9
- ❖ Colossians 3: 18-21 / Ephesians 6:1- 4

Commentary on the theme (10mins)

The Bible reading touches on some critical and important themes:

- **Discipleship** – As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to follow Him, learn from Him and live a life that shows Him to everyone we meet.
- **Begin at Home** – A very important place to start discipling others is in the family, at home.

- **Train Up a Child** - A good starting point would be for parents who are Christians (disciples of Christ) to lead their children to a personal relationship with Christ.
- **Christian Foundation** - Laying a strong Christian foundation in the home is crucial, as there are so many world views to which our children are exposed at an early age. These include the influence of the Internet; and the fact that the Bible is no longer the central teaching tool for Religious Education in schools.
- **A Little Child Shall Lead Them** - There have been several cases in which congregations have been born out of Sunday Schools.
- **Family Unity** - The family that prays together stays together. A good family motto is, “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15b). The family should be a circle of strength.
- **Discipling Your Spouse/Partner** - Mutual respect among members of a household is very important. The role of the spouse should be complementary, not competitive.
- **Crises** - When crises arise in the home, we should stick together rather than turn against each other. 1 Peter 1: 6-7 tells us that we may have to suffer grief and all kinds of trials, but these come so that our faith may be proved genuine. The joy of our salvation can help us to get through these trying times.
- **Impact on other Families** - An entire family can actually influence other families by its Christian example.

Questions for group discussion (40mins)

(Use Bible references as a guide, but add your own ideas)

1. What are some things that we can do in today’s situation to disciple our children? *Deuteronomy 6:7-9*
2. What does ‘in the Lord’ mean in Colossians 3: 18 & 20 and Ephesians 6: 1?

3. In the case where one parent is not a Christian, what do you suggest could be a course of action in discipleship?

Thoughts for Application (15 mins)

There are 7 C's that can guide discipleship in the family:

1. **Circle of Love**
2. **Common Goals**
3. **Compromise**
4. **Communication**
5. **Counsel**
6. **Christian Reminders**
7. **Communal Worship at Home**

Approaches to Prayer:

Two things to consider as we pray for families, spouses and young children:

1. Consider having a family Sunday (going to church as a family)
2. Begin a routine or tradition of spending time together in prayer and bible reading...allow your children and spouse to see you in prayer, as well as to lead those prayers sometimes.

Closing Prayer (5 mins)

For Marriage: God our Father, who made men and women to live together in families: We pray that marriage may be held in honour; that husbands and wives may live faithfully together, according to their vows; and that the members of every family may grow in mutual love and understanding, in courtesy and kindness, so that they may bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ; for His Name's sake. Amen.

For Our Homes and Families: Heavenly Father, whose Son Jesus Christ, born of a woman, sanctified childhood and shared the life of an earthly home, bless the homes and families of our nation. Give to parents a true sense of responsibility in the care and training of their children, that our boys and girls may grow up in the fear of Your Name and the fellowship of Your Church, for the glory of Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

(C.P.W.I. Book of Common Prayer, pages 82-83)

Intentional Discipleship
Lenten Bible Study 2019
Discipleship in the home, and to spouse and partner

Notes

Please make a note of what was most impactful for you in this bible study and note also how you will change your approach with family and loved ones.

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Intentional Discipleship Lenten Bible Study 2019 Fourth Week of Lent

Discipleship to youth and young adults

Questions for early contemplation (15 mins)

Review last week's study, and then consider:

1. What is your idea of youth/young adult ministry?
2. How is youth/young adult ministry a critical part of your church?

Scripture Reading: (5 mins).

❖ **Luke 6: 1-11, 40**

The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

Commentary on the theme (10mins)

There is a great hunger among young people in our society for love, acceptance, belonging and purpose. This hunger, in many instances, is being satisfied by secularism and the lust for money. We, as the church, have an opportunity to help our young people to understand that true satisfaction comes only from Christ.

In our ever-changing world, the impact of technology and the media give rise to questions that are at the forefront of the minds of our youth and young adults. Questions about the necessity for religion and the existence of God bombard our youth on a daily basis. The promotion of self is rooted in their minds to the point that we are now living in what could be considered as a “selfie society”, and so the theme of being a good neighbour no longer holds any value.

The scripture reading begins with Jesus facing the wrath of the Pharisees for doing “work” on the Sabbath and moves to Him teaching His disciples about what is expected from them as they sought to execute ministry. Verse 40 helps us to recognize for ourselves, and to allow our young people to understand that the journey of discipleship is one which takes time and effort.

No student is above the teacher, who is Christ, but with teaching and preparation, we can become like Christ. We cannot expect to reach our young people by first approaching them with rules and doctrine. We must, first, build a relationship which comes through our interactions with them and the lives that we ourselves live. We must help them experience joy in Christ by engaging them on their level, by understanding their needs, the difficulties and the fears they face.

In order for this to be effective, the church must be a beacon within the community, a place in which people can be comfortable, share their gifts and talents and feel accepted. This means that the church must be able to demonstrate the love of Christ through its various ministries. Churches often fail to engage young people because of failure to assess their needs.

If there is to be a serious thrust for youth engagement a few steps must be taken. We should:

- Assess the youth and young adult populations within our churches and develop specific ministries for different groups.
- Engage the community, and then select persons from the congregation to spend time with the persons identified to build trust.
- Engage families and establish an acceptance that parents are a part of the ministry.
- Teach core values which hold love at the centre.
- Be a hub for life-changing spiritual experiences.
- Meet our young people where they are, that is, on social media, at schools, workplace, on the streets, and with respect to their dress/fashion, music, language.

As expressed in the passage, Youth and Young Adults operate in unconventional, yet not entirely wrong ways. Youth and Young Adults re-interpret tradition and seek to live out that interpretation in contemporary lives which make faith relevant.

Questions for group discussion (40mins)

- ❖ What are the established (immediate) needs of our young people?
- ❖ What ministries do we have in place for young people within the church?
- ❖ Am I equipped to be a part of (or a facilitator of) youth ministry?
- ❖ How have we been engaging the youth within our community?

Thoughts for Application (15 mins)

We must concentrate on helping our young people to understand that they too can become disciples of Christ. It is up to us to live out that example by sharing Christ's love with them.

Approaches to Prayer:

Consider the Youth and Young Adults in the church, community and professional areas. Then look at your idea of Youth/Young Adult ministry – is it ministry to; for or with? Then offer this in prayer so that ministry with and among youth and young adults may be life-changing as they learn and live into Luke 6:40

Closing Prayer (5 mins)

Heavenly Father, we Your servants come to You knowing our inadequacies, our failures and our weaknesses. We trust in You and know that Your Spirit can guide us to growth. Help us as we engage our young people. You know their struggles in life, You know what they seek, help us to discern these needs in order that we may be able to seek them out and effectively minister unto them. Equip us Lord for this task and keep us ever mindful of the fact that all we do, is to Your honour and glory. Bless us as we continue along the journey of discipleship, through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

***Intentional Discipleship
Lenten Bible Study 2019
Discipleship to youth and young adults***

Notes

Please make a note of what was most impactful for you in this bible study. What can you learn about discipleship from the youth?

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Intentional Discipleship

Lenten Bible Study 2019

Fifth Week of Lent

Discipleship in the community

Questions for early contemplation (15 mins)

1. Who is my neighbour?
2. How do we build connections between ourselves and those around us?
3. Is this you? Wake up – check WhatsApp - greet the family – check facebook - greet your neighbour – check WhatsApp – check Google for news of the world. Can this be described as discipleship in the community?

Scripture Reading: (5 mins).

- ❖ Luke 10: 25-37
- ❖ John 4: 1-30, 39-42

Commentary on the theme (10mins)

In this story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus describes the interaction of persons from two hostile groups and enlarges the sphere of ‘community’ to include those who do not care about each other. He used this cross- cultural encounter as an opportunity to teach about an enlarged but inclusive moral universe. This is how Jesus dealt with diversity. In telling the story, He not only provided moral food for thought but reversed the social stereotypes and shook up the conventional world views of His hearers.

In the story in John 4:1-29, 39-42 about the Samaritan woman, we see Jesus engaging a Samaritan. He did not just talk about it, He lived out His beliefs. The encounter shows the interaction between two persons who because of their

cultural traditions were considered enemies. It started as dialogue about a basic human need but evolved into a significant community event.

After their conversation, the Samaritan woman becomes a witness to the life-transforming influence of Christ as she runs back to the village and shares the news. There is urgency as her sense of mission was aroused. The villagers welcomed Jesus into their community and all were re-united, arising from a seemingly impossible encounter. In the end, each enemy sees, instead, the face of a friend, a relationship develops and there is healing in body and, more importantly, the soul. The woman's experience was such that she could effect change in her community. This was Intentional Discipleship in its finest form.

Critical to the community are the ways in which people take responsibility for the welfare of each member. A true community unites persons and removes fixed lines which create and exclude the outsider. It becomes inclusive and the members will experience God's mercy and love. It then becomes religious - reflecting a transcendent power. There is room for healing, sharing and service. In this way, we are expressing the real and living outcome of Jesus' words in the prayer "God's will, (not our own), be done". Community then, is a by-product of love. The love of God and love of community are interconnected.

Christ brought something new and precious to our understanding of God. Through Christ's life and example God was brought closer to us. 'Behold the lilies of the field, they neither toil nor spin ...' (Matthew 6: 28). Perhaps we need to look at our understanding of God in this present age. The experience of 'God with us' as companion, healer and confidante ensures closeness and removes the distance formerly assigned to God who was viewed as being 'out there' - away from us. This God who is close to us, then, more easily enters the community and, being grounded in our lives, connects us with each other.

Questions for group discussion (40mins)

1. If you were hurrying to work and saw someone battered and bruised lying by the roadside, what would you do?
2. How do we answer God's call to live in community for others? Is it my way or the highway?
3. What are some of the realities of serving the community today? Can discipleship in the community really work in today's world?

4. Intentional Discipleship springs from an inner passion. How can we share this passion with our community?

Thoughts for Application (15 mins)

- Intentional discipleship calls and empowers us to be more deliberate about our relationships within our respective communities. God calls us to serve beyond social or cultural boundaries.
- Consider the words of CPWI Hymn #346, written by the prolific twentieth century hymn writer Delores Dufner. Even as it recognizes our diversity it is inclusive and calls us to act accordingly.

Summoned by the God who made us

Rich in our diversity,

Gathered in the name of Jesus,

Richer still in unity:

Let us bring the gifts that differ

And, in splendid varied ways,

Sing a new church into being

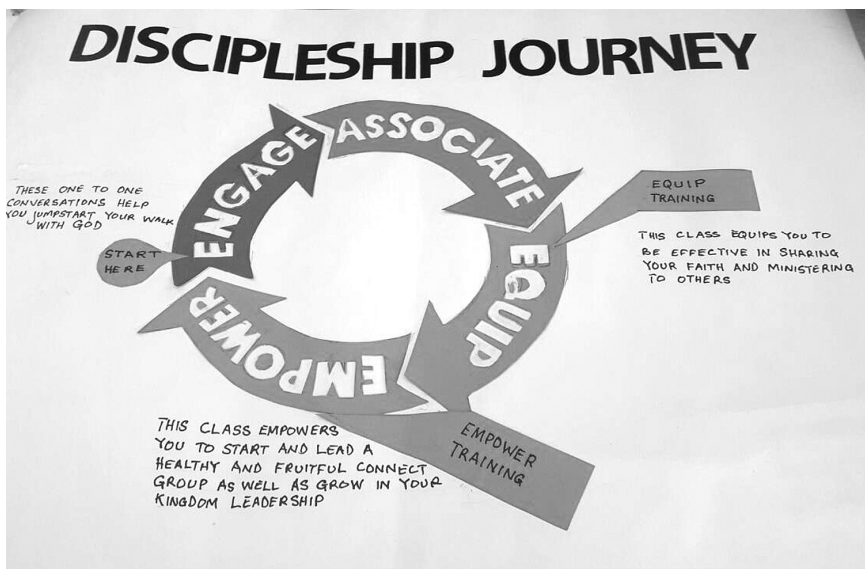
One in faith and love and praise .

Approaches to Prayer

Instead of influencing, the church is infected by what society is prepared to accept as normal, which leads to division and exclusion. Pray that the church (as a community) starting with you will be a place of inclusiveness that creates a welcoming space for all who will come.

Closing Prayer (5 mins)

Lord, our Father, You know that too often we have some difficult choices and decisions to make. Dispel our fears and show us how to help those we do not know, those who we would like to help but, for many reasons, we cannot or do not. We recognize that many see in us a way out of their situation although we do not see it that way ourselves. Lord, in Your mercy, help us to have mercy; help us to discern those to whom we should bring Your comfort, healing and peace. Help us to be patient and firm and walk with us O God, along the pathways of our varied lives and be our constant companion, friend and guide.
Amen.



The diagram illustrates an individual's personal intentional discipleship journey having taken the challenge to commit to a faith relationship with Jesus Christ and to invite others into this relationship.

*Done by: Horace Baugh,
St. Agnes Grange, Hanover*

***Intentional Discipleship
Lenten Bible Study 2019
Discipleship in the community***

Notes

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Intentional Discipleship

Lenten Bible Study 2019

Holy Week

Discipleship to the Outsider

If Discipleship is about helping others who are unlike us to embrace a life in Christ, bringing them joy and fulfilment, instead of sadness; then we must ask ourselves, what are we prepared to set aside to make that happen? Holy Week is about making costly journeys, not only for Jesus but for those who embrace the painful way of the cross in the hope that this may lead others to the fullness of life.

Questions for early contemplation (15 mins)

- How can we invite “Non-believers” into a relationship with Jesus as Lord? That is to say, to make Jesus as the authoritative figure in their lives. Not an overbearing oppressor but one who “speaks with firmness and joy.”
- Is it possible to have a conversation about the truth of the Gospel without belittling others ? How can we invite people into discerning what the truth is that Jesus reveals?

Review of previous weeks’ studies:

- What new things are we learning about ourselves as we read and reflect on scripture together?
- How does our church community act in ways that demonstrate a commitment to the dignity of every person, especially those who are different from us?

Scripture Reading: (5 mins).

- ❖ Joshua 24: 14-15

Commentary on the theme (10mins)

This final study looks at possibilities for discipleship among people who are either outside our faith community, or whose religious viewpoint predisposes them to a different way of life.

Old Testament Scholar, Walter Brueggemann draws attention to this question in his book *'Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism'*. Brueggemann uses the word "outsider" to describe those persons who stand apart from the "community of faith". In Jamaica today, Rastafarians would easily fall into that category, but so are a growing number of other persons who live by identities other than the one we hold.

While the historical issues behind the book of Joshua are complex, scholars have noticed that in "the central hill country" around the city of Shechem, there was no "conquest," no armed confrontation with the inhabitants of the land, but what seemed to be a relatively peaceful coexistence between these communities. This point must be kept in mind as we contemplate the question of Discipleship and outsiders, who are not hostile to the faith but who, nevertheless, live by a different set of values. Their children attend the same school and meet in the same social setting as we do. The outsider then, is only so defined, because he or she lives by different standards. The question comes down to this: How can such a person whose philosophy of life is different, if not opposing to ours, become a participant in the liberating message of the Gospel?

In the text from Joshua chapter 24, we are invited into a meeting where Joshua authorizes the people to make a decision, either to live in covenantal ways laid down by the God of the Covenant, or to live another kind of life approved by "other gods" who are very different from Yahweh. It is this choice, Brueggemann argues, that permits outsiders to become insiders.

On hearing Joshua's speech that day, those who saw themselves as being outside of the Covenant had their ideology of death broken, and their yearning for entitlement and belonging stirred. What the audience heard that day from Joshua was God's promise of new possibilities. The possibility of healing and transformation, of liberation and freedom and an entitlement as God's chosen people. The outsiders had, for too long, claimed the story of death. However, Joshua's reflection on God's new possibilities had all the ingredients to change everything about the way they were living. They were able to imagine their lives differently. They discovered that in hearing this story about God, a story which had never been narrated to them before, they would also be given a new way of

looking at themselves. Somehow, when we claim that new identity, new possibilities for our freedom and our future become open. It is as if God authorizes a different social and moral practice for our living. And, precisely at this point, a different kind of life begins to emerge.

We see the same thing emerging from the New Testament story of Jesus and the woman at the well in John's Gospel, chapter 4. The woman whom Jesus met at the well and asks for a drink of water is very much an outsider. She is an outsider for two reasons: First of all, she is a woman of questionable morals, and secondly, she is a Samaritan. Nobody goes to the well to draw water in the middle of the day, and she does. Her obvious feeling of isolation as an outsider made it necessary for her to do so.

We are told in the text that Jesus' disciples had gone into the town to buy food. This meant that Jesus was sitting by himself when the woman came to draw water. As in the case of the story of Joshua and the "people beyond the river," Jesus does not confer on the woman the identity she claims, the identity of an outsider. Instead, he affirms her as equal by asking her for a drink. When we are able to accept a gift from people who claim an inferior status, we immediately create an opportunity for a conversation to take place. Jesus did precisely that for the Samaritan woman. As a result, she became ready to accept an alternate direction for her life.

When new members are welcomed into the fellowship, a shift in the congregational equilibrium, caused by new ideas and new energy, is likely to occur. If a congregation is not prepared for that change to take place, then the congregation must think again, if it has any interest in discipleship.

Questions for group discussion (40mins)

- Rowan Williams reminds us that Discipleship is a state of being, and that Jesus' disciples were attracted to Him because He was good to be with. Spend a few moments and reflect on the nature of your own discipleship and if others around you would say: **You are someone good to be with.**

•

- Is discipleship possible without an acknowledgement of our mutual dependence on one another?
- If discipleship is about helping others to embrace a Jesus-shaped life that gives one the freedom to be one's self on the one hand, and obedience to God on the other; what are the possibilities for engaging those who claim a belief say in Rastafarianism?

Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said: “God is smart, making us different so that we will get to know our need of one another. We are meant to complement one another in order to be truly human and to realize the fullness of our potential to be human. After all, we are created in the image of God who is a diversity of persons who exist in ineffable unity.” (*An African Prayer Book*)

Thoughts for Application (15 mins)

- List methods and measures for application of the principles/theme discussed.
- Full humanity can only be realized when everyone is connected to a vision of its possibility. Anglicans believe that the Gospel provides us with that possibility. There still remain feelings of mistrust among so many which makes it twice as hard to create space for conversation with those who view themselves as not connected to the “Church community”. Yet, it is the primary responsibility of the Christian Disciple to follow Jesus into the “Space” where the unconnected occupy.

Approaches to Prayer:

Have you ever felt like an outsider; like you didn't belong? As individuals and as a church, pray for the grace to be able to:

1. Accept the responsibility for protecting the physical well-being and the honour of the stranger
2. Interpret any threats to the visitor as a person
3. Offer food, water, safe lodging and God's love to the stranger who comes into our midst.

Closing Prayer (5 mins)

O God of all the nations of the earth, remember the multitudes who have been created in Your image but as yet do not know the redeeming work of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Grant that, by the prayers and labours of Your holy Church, they may be brought to know and worship You as You have been revealed in Your Son; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever ***Amen.***

***Intentional Discipleship
Lenten Bible Study 2019***

***Going Forward...
Discipleship and me!***

Participants should be encouraged to commit to a realistic individual plan for Intentional Discipleship

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

As Gospel Based Disciples we commit:

1. To regularly engage the Gospel
2. To take seriously our own spiritual formation
3. To nurture and foster the spiritual formation of others
4. To live the Baptismal Covenant
5. To live as a community of disciples
6. To foster reconciliation, healing and vision
7. To pray and worship regularly
8. To respect the spiritual traditions, values and customs of our many peoples
9. To take full responsibility for our local ministries.

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And finally...

Reflections on Intentional Discipleship

Roadbuilding is rough work, hard labour,
muscles strained, hands calloused,
back near breaking even with lifting gear,
hard hat, protective boots.

Site clearance is dirty work and
dangerous – removing rotten structures,
risking unsafe ground, uncovering long-forgotten corruption,
the stink too strong to breathe of waste and dereliction.

God you cry out to us to clear the site,
build the road because You are coming and
You will come along the road we build.

Give Your people, we pray
the will and stamina for the job.
Give us courage, to tackle the clearance of debt
and exploitation which corrupt communities and nations.

Give us the grit and determination
to straighten out the crooked structures
which make it hard for the poor and the weak
to journey to freedom

– And help us to shout aloud that
You will come along the road we build.

Heather Pencavel

INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank You that You have awakened Your church to hear again the call of our Saviour Jesus Christ to come to Him and learn from Him. Grant that as we say 'yes' to His call to discipleship, your Holy Spirit will enable us so completely to commit all the areas of our lives to His service, that in our personal, family and church lives, our work, recreational and social lives, we would act as Jesus would have acted if He were in our place; in His name and for His sake we pray.

Amen.

WRITTEN BY:
RT. REV. HAROLD DANIEL
RETIRED BISHOP OF MANDEVILLE



DIOCESE OF JAMAICA & THE CAYMAN ISLANDS