

The Great Omission

Finding our way in Discipleship again

Rev Neil Meyer: TIM Talk, Kemnay 21 March 2019

Are our members the church's client base? In other words, are they the beneficiaries of the products and services which the church provides?

Or are they the church's volunteer workforce – the ones who carry out the mission and vision of the organisation?

Before he left them for the final time, Jesus gave his disciples the Great Commission (Matt 28) to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

As the church we've been seduced by consumer culture:

We have allowed people to become spectators instead of participants.

We offered them religious services instead of challenging them to serve.

We made church members instead of disciples.

Dallas Willard calls this: The Great Omission.

1. Discipleship is the most basic level of being a Christian

A disciple is simply a follower. The German word “Nagfolge” is probably a better translation than anything we have in English. A “Nagfolge” is one who comes after, one who follows in the footsteps – an heir, even.

Following or “nagfolg”-ing simply implies movement

And this is where discipleship differs from membership.

Members are static. You’re either in or you’re out.

You can stop being a follower in one of two ways:

Walk in another direction

Sit down / stop walking

“There is nothing we can do to be saved; but there is a lot for the saved to do.”

2. Church ≠ That thing we do on Sunday

Sunday morning cannot bear the full weight of the Christian life. Whole-life discipleship doesn't mean we have to think about church 24/7. It means recognising that God is thinking about us 24/7. It means realising that God cares about every aspect of our lives and not just about what we do or don't do at or around church. Discipleship needs to be lived out in every area of our lives or not at all. Either you're following Jesus everywhere, or you're not following him at all.

3. Discipleship ≠ Education

Although discipleship *includes* learning, it is essentially about *sharing life* with Jesus and his people in such a way that our character is gradually transformed into the likeness of Christ. What we “get” from Discipleship is not more knowledge, but rather the heart and mind of Christ, until we become people who easily and routinely obey what Jesus has commanded.

So, if we want to ask “How do we DO Discipleship?”, we might just as well ask “How do we form habits?” (in this case the Habit in question is the routine, habitual obedience to Jesus)

- Learning about the habit
- Putting disciplines in place that force us to repeat the behaviour regularly (washing feet)
- Surrounding ourselves with others who practice the same habit (sharing a meal together)

Jesus made disciples by eating with them regularly.

If I can give you one piece of advice about making disciples in your church or in your family – sit down at table together at least once a week.

Q & A
