

7

Principles of Effective

DISCIPLESHIP

01

DISCIPLESHIP MUST BE CHRISTOCENTRIC

We must remember the ultimate goal, for each person, regardless of what we hope to get out of them, is **transformational union with God**.

Discipleship involves a deep, ongoing move of the **Holy Spirit**, inspiring individuals to reflect Jesus in their lives.

Avoid making discipleship about **self-importance or consumerism**; instead, keep it grounded in Jesus' will and purpose.

02

COMMUNITY, CONVERSATION AND PARTICIPATION ARE CRUCIAL



Transformation happens in community through long-term, trusting relationships where people can know and be known. Growth is deepened through dialogue, sharing stories, and following Jesus' commands together. Like an apprenticeship, discipleship thrives when life is shared with someone further along in the journey.

A CULTURE OF GROWTH MINDSET AND SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

Discipleship requires fostering a mindset of lifelong growth where individuals take responsibility for their spiritual development while journeying together to become more like Jesus. Daily Bible reading is identified as the top factor in cultivating self-denial and service to others, emphasizing the importance of personal discipline.



The church's role is not to take over personal discipleship but to partner with individuals by providing tools, common language, opportunities, and challenges.

CREATE SPACE TO UNDERSTAND SUFFERING

PERSEVERANCE



Engaging with and persevering through suffering—whether external or internal—allows us to experience God’s faithfulness and fosters spiritual growth.

REFLECTION



Facing inner struggles, like the shadow self or a “dark night of the soul,” is as vital as overcoming external hardships in our journey toward transformation.

FORMATION



Overcoming suffering is formative to a person’s discipleship journey; those who view hardships as key to their spiritual development, find greater growth.

BALANCING CHARACTER AND DOCTRINE

05

Both character and doctrinal formation are essential in discipleship, as knowing truth and living it out in a Christ-like way must go hand in hand. Like a railroad track, input (doctrine) and experience (character) work together, tied by dynamic reflection. Disciples need support in navigating cultural challenges with resilience, unity, compassion, and grace, expressing Jesus' love even when misunderstood. True discipleship transforms from the inside out, emphasizing integrity and a Kingdom-focused worldview.



06

CLEAR LANGUAGE, VISION, AND OUTCOMES

clarity

Define discipleship clearly to give individuals and the church a shared understanding of goals and purpose.

vision

Consider long-term growth, asking what you hope disciples will look like in 10 years.

markers

Identify subjective and objective signs of growth in people's lives.

focus

Keep the goal centered on transformational relationship with Jesus, not just church attendance

strategy

Ensure discipleship pathways are clear, connected, and intentional to avoid disjointed efforts.



07

INTEGRATE DISCIPLESHIP INTO EVERYTHING

Discipleship is a culture, not a program

Discipleship must be holistic, woven into every ministry of the church, from kids and youth to outreach.

It's about cultivating a culture of spiritual growth rather than relying on short-term programs or large-scale campaigns that often focus on church attendance metrics over disciple-making.

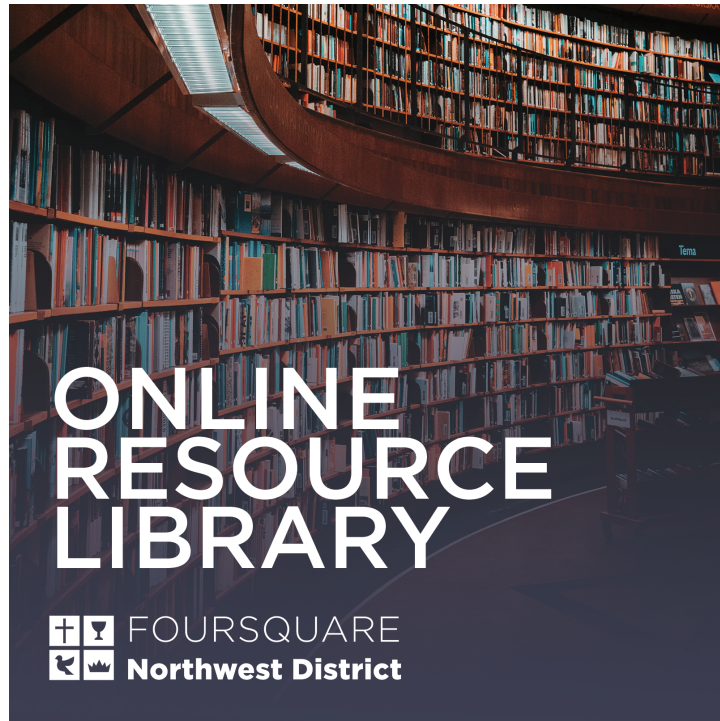
Beyond Sunday sermons

While Sunday services inspire unity and common culture, they are not the primary tool for transformation. Instead, they should motivate people to engage in deeper discipleship through community and personal responsibility, addressing critical topics like suffering and spiritual growth.

Intentional depth and patience

Discipleship requires deliberate, long-term processes that prioritize spiritual depth. Every church department should function as part of the discipleship mission, offering opportunities for deeper spiritual formation and fostering a congregation committed to growing closer to God.

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