

Developing a Discipleship Program for Hurting People

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Many times church leaders are hesitant to provide a discipleship program for the wounded in their congregation, because they have heard horror stories of "support groups" in churches gone bad. The basic considerations listed below help to provide a proactive program. Keep a clear Biblical progression in mind rather than a reactive approach, which moves from crisis to crisis and allows the person's woundedness to define the discipleship program.

Define discipleship: It is amazing how many churches do not articulate a clear definition of what the great commission calls us to do—make disciples. There can be different definitions of what constitutes discipleship. I define discipleship as—putting their hand in His hand. In other words, my job is to help the wounded person draw closer to God.

Define the focus: What we believe is important to help the person to begin to rebuild his/her life. These goals should be both general and specific.

For example:

1) We need to help clear the way to God the Father.

- clarify the character of God
- helping them learn how to trust Him

2) Give them tools to access Scripture for themselves.

The specific skills they need to know include:

- how to see God's character in the Word of God
- how to use Scripture as the "Sword of the Spirit" against strongholds
- how to turn Scripture into affirmations of choice
- how to meditate on the truth

3) Teach them how to be spiritually aggressive.

Topics of discussion include:

- what it means to be spiritually aggressive
- the importance of the mind as the battlefield
- how to discern the source of thoughts
- our authority in Christ
- a Biblical perspective on spiritual warfare
- how to “take back ground” (that is, close any doors open to enemy influence)
- how to deal with strongholds
- how to steep our mind in truth
- how to uncover lies and choose truth

Choose Curriculum: Choosing what to study, *after* defining the focus of the discipleship program, prevents a hodge-podge approach which wanders from one study to the next without prayerful consideration of what the basic issues are in the life of a wounded person.

For example:

1a) Clarifying the character of God

Behold Your God, by Myrna Alexander

Getting to Know the Father, by Alaine Pakkala

This is a personal Bible study that focuses on the two attributes that come under the most scrutiny by people who have been wounded—the goodness of God and/or the sovereignty of God.

1b) Helping them learn how to trust God

This Changes Everything: Learning to Trust God, by Alaine Pakkala

This study teaches that when a person understands how much God loves them, it is far easier for them to trust Him.

2) Giving them skills to access Scripture for themselves

Open Heart Devotions: The Gospel of Mark, by Alaine Pakkala

Sword of the Spirit Meditation Cards, by Alaine Pakkala

3) Teaching them how to be spiritually aggressive

The Bondage Breaker, by Neil Anderson

Victory Over the Darkness, by Neil Anderson

Taking Every Thought Captive, by Alaine Pakkala

The Adversary, by Mark Bubeck

Fight! Meditation Cards, by Alaine Pakkala

Further information and resources on this topic are available at www.lydiapress.com.