

REVIVAL NEWS

From Revival Ministries Australia

P.O. Box 2718 BC TOOWOOMBA Q4350 Australia

Phone: 61-7-46130633; e-mail: rma@revivalministries.org.au

Website: www.revivalministries.org.au

**** NOVEMBER 2019 **** NOVEMBER 2019 **** NOVEMBER 2019

DOING DISCIPLESHIP

By Paul Galligan

Since we responded to the Lord's calling in 1997 and formed Revival Ministries Australia as a fledgling apostolic ministry in January 1998, the so-called Great Commission was our commission. By the grace of God, we have been committed to *"making disciples of all nations"* (Matthew 28:19), and that has been our main work both in home base, Toowoomba Australia, and in our nation, as well as going to the nations of the world.

In October 2019 a team of three of us had the privilege of doing an intensive discipleship training in Myanmar. Twenty-five disciples gathered with us for nine days and we taught the word from 8.30am to 4.30pm each day. Some of the trainees were 'church planters' and they were so relieved when we shared that Jesus did not commission us to 'go and plant churches', but He commissioned us to 'go and make disciples. This is our work, and this should be a primary focus of every church and every ministry. If a person is called and goes in obedience and makes some disciples, then that person has formed a church. The meeting of the church is the disciples who are being taught, who gather together with their teacher. Can you imagine if all churches were making disciples of the believers who attend the church, what a huge difference that would make in the world.

1) DISCIPLESHIP IS A LIFESTYLE – how we live as committed Christians

In his letter to the church in Ephesus, Jesus said, *"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works"* Revelation 2:4-5a. Jesus knew that if this church returned to the first works, their love for Him would be restored. The question we must ask ourselves is **'What are the first works'**? The answer to this question comes by looking at what the **first church** did and practiced in Acts 2.

On the day of Pentecost, after Peter had preached so powerfully, proving that Jesus was the Christ prophesied in the Old Testament, many responded. Acts 2:41 *"And those who gladly received his word were baptised; and that day 3000 souls were added."* All these new believers were added to the 120 who had been in the upper room when the Holy Spirit came.

Acts 2:42 tells us in clear terms what this newly formed church of thousands of believers actually did: *"They continued steadfastly [in a committed way] in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers."* We can say that these are the first works! This church was on fire for Jesus and the gospel, and their lifestyle took a radical turn once they had been baptised. Even before we look at the first works that they did

and the brief description in **Acts 2:43-47** of how they lived, we need to look at the greater context of **Acts 2**.

- The Holy Spirit was poured out by Jesus after He had been *“exalted to the right hand of God and having received from the Father the Promise of the Holy Spirit”* (**Acts 2:33**).
- As Peter preached the truth of who Jesus is, *“that God had made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ”* (**Acts 2:36**), many were convicted, *“cut to the heart”* (v.37), and they wanted to respond.
- Peter, exercising the keys that Jesus had given him (**Matt.16:19**), told them to *“Repent, and let everyone of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* **Acts 2:38**. Peter’s instructions have been misunderstood and not being obeyed by the church to this day. There is much controversy over baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, even though that is clearly the instruction of Peter and confirmed in **Acts 8:16** & **Acts 19:5**. Also many do not expect that new believers being baptised in water will then receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

These are the foundational experiences that led to the first church practicing the first works.

The first works are four-fold. The thousands of new believers in **Acts 2** continued committedly in four things:

- i. **Apostles’ doctrine** - the Apostles’ doctrine is the teaching of the word of God, that is, the word that has come by revelation from God to the apostles. God has *“appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers”* (**1 Cor.12:28**). These three ministries are responsible for bringing the word of God that comes by revelation with prophetic understanding, equipping and enabling the teachers to bring forth the word of God. We need the restoration of apostles and prophets (**Ephesians 2:20; & 3:5**) to lay the proper foundation of the word in the church. It is this word that the teachers are to teach.
- ii. **Fellowship** - Fellowship is gathering together with others where we live, for example, in houses. *“Now all who believed were together ... from house to house”* (**Acts 2:44 & 46**). There was a deep level of caring and sharing among the believers. They were selling *“their possessions and goods”* to help those in need in the Christian community (**Acts 2:45**).
- iii. **Breaking of Bread** - We are to remember Jesus at the Table of the Lord. The first church broke bread *“from house to house”* (**Acts 2:46**). This was their practice. It was only much later that the practice of ‘Sunday church’ meetings became the norm and that the breaking of bread was practiced weekly in those gatherings. Unfortunately, today, many churches do not break bread even weekly. The Breaking of Bread restores to the believers the reality of Jesus dying for our sins, the reality of the new covenant relationship we have with God through the blood of Jesus and the real hope of ‘His coming’ (**1Cor.11:23-26**).
- iv. **Prayer** - We are to pray together. **1 Timothy 2:1-2** tells us who we should pray for: a) all people b) for all in authority. The result will be peace in our neighbourhood and in

our nation. This kind of prayer should be part of our daily life. As well as the instructions in **1 Timothy 2:1-9** regarding prayer, Jesus also gave us clear instructions in teaching us the Lord's Prayer (**Matthew 6:9-13 & Luke 11:1-4**). A prayer meeting of two or three meeting gathering together in agreement in Jesus name (**Matt.18:18-20**) can have an enormous effect in the nation.

These are the four first works of the early church and **v.46** tells us that they continued in these four things "*daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house*".

Acts 2:43-47 shows the pattern of a functioning Christian community: helping one another, sharing with others, contributing to one another's needs, having favour in the community so that others in the community can be reached. The Lord will add new ones.

Discipleship is how we live: disciples are to read the Scriptures, fellowship together, break bread and pray. We are the church! This is being the church! How we live should demonstrate who we are. It is practical; people will see that you have a lifestyle of following Jesus.

2) THE OUTWORKING OF DISCIPLSHIP

In Paul's instructions to Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:2** we see that discipleship is from one generation to the next, which means that more and more believers are being discipled and then released into ministry to disciple others. "*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men [and women] who will be able to teach others also.*"

In this verse we have different levels of training and impartation:

- **Paul, an apostle**, received revelation from Jesus. Apostles are as "*wise master builders*" (**1Cor.3:10**), whose work of ministry is to raise others up into the ministry.
- Paul indicates that he imparted to a **group of ministers** "*many witnesses*", among whom Timothy was one,
- these ministers are to pass on what they have been taught to **faithful men/women**. It is not enough to have received a ministry gift from the Lord, then get some training and just be a minister. All ministry is in the context of discipleship – training others to be able to do the work of the ministry, so that the gospel of the kingdom goes forth to every people group.
- The faithful men and women who have been trained will in turn **teach others**. There is no indication that these generations of trainees who are teaching others, should stop producing and raising more faithful men and women. It should be an ongoing reality: that each generation that is taught the apostolic word, will then teach others.

This is apostolic discipleship. Jesus raised apostles, and the apostles imparted to witnesses/ministers, who impart to faithful men/women who will then teach many others. The outworking of discipleship is to train and equip workers who will be able to teach another generation, and it does not need to stop there. This 'other' generation, if they are properly discipled will by their very lifestyle and practice be teaching another generation and so on. This becomes the fulfilment of the Creation Mandate given to Adam and Eve in **Genesis 1:28**.

3) THINGS TO NOTE IN DISCIPLESHIP

1 Timothy 4:13 Paul says there are three things that need to have expression regularly in the midst of the brethren. *“Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”* There are three things in this verse that should be the practice of the church:

- Reading of the Scripture – this is more than private reading at home; this is the public reading of Scripture. The public reading of Scripture is extremely important among people groups who have levels of illiteracy. The only time such ones can learn Scripture is through the public reading of the Scripture, but Paul’s instruction is for all of us when we meet together. There should be the public reading of Scripture in the meetings of the church.
- Exhortation – this is the ministry of preaching, exhorting the brethren through the word to *“continue in the faith”* (Acts 14:22) and that faith comes by hearing the word preached (Rom.10:17).
- Teaching – we need teachers who faithfully expound the Scriptures *“precept upon precept, percept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line”* (Isa.28:12a). Paul is adamant that we are to *“teach no other doctrine”* (1Tim.1:3). We are to pass on the teaching that we have received, which is called the *“apostles’ doctrine”* in Acts 2:42.

People will hear the word as the Scriptures are read out loud, and even learn and memorize Scriptures. Exhortation or preaching brings encouragement to the brethren. Teaching is line upon line to bring knowledge and understanding of the word.

Making disciples should always include the children, in the house or in the fellowship meeting – are we making disciples of the children? Are our schools discipling the children?

God is restoring discipleship to His church. The church is the assembling of disciples. This is **the new wineskin**. There is a discipleship revival. This will never happen if we cling to the old wineskin. Be a disciple yourself; help others to be disciples and provide discipleship for others. This is the planting of the church.

4) THE GOAL OF DISCIPLESHIP

Habakkuk 2:14 *“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of YAHWEH as the waters cover the sea”*. When enough people have been discipled then the glory of God will be seen in the earth, and the whole earth will be filled with His glory. It is the knowledge of the glory of YAHWEH: this is the work of discipleship. There is a wisdom *“yet not the wisdom of this age ... but the wisdom of God in a mystery”* (1Cor.2:6-8). The knowledge of the glory of God is to be taught.

Ephesians 4:13 *“till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”*. This is the goal. If the five ministries are received and able to minister among the brethren, then we will come to maturity.

Ephesians 5:26-27 *“that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and without blemish”*. The goal is a glorious church. It is the washing of water by the word that will sanctify and cleanse us, and we will become that glorious church.

Hebrews 6:1-3 The goal is perfection, *“let us go on to perfection”*. That is why we need the foundations laid (**v.1-2**); then God will permit us to go on to perfection (**v.3**). God knows how to build His church; how to prepare His glorious church, but we need His permit to go on to maturity and for that to happen the foundations need to be properly set in place. This is the beginning of discipleship – making sure that every believer is properly taught in the *“first principles of the oracles of God”* (**Heb.5:12**).

WE ALL NEED TO BE DISCIPLES!

Once we enter into discipleship, that is, being purposely taught and trained, so that we can impart that knowledge and training to others, then we take on the lifestyle of a disciple of Jesus Christ. This is what is so difficult when one is simply a member of a local congregation, that meets only once or maybe twice a week and often does not disciple and train the brethren as to how to be disciples.

How many churches offer training to young parents? It is very concerning to see families with young children and the children are not disciplined [remember disciple and discipline come from the same base word]. Discipleship is for the whole family. If dad and mum are disciples then they will be able to disciple their children.

Doing discipleship is a way of life! It is the new wineskin! It is the way of ‘being the church’ that enables our natural children and our spiritual children to grow up in the Lord, being blessed and able to continue in the Lord, in due time discipling others.

+++++