

SIX MARKS OF DISCIPLESHIP

As Christ-followers, we called to “the measure of the full stature of Christ.” (Eph. 4:12).

The following “marks of discipleship” will help us move in that direction:

1) PRAY daily – Disciples pray.

Psalm 63:1-7 “I will lift up my hands and call you by name”

Ps. 46 – “Be still and know that I am God”

Centering prayer – good place to start. Guidelines (from www.thecentering.org) =

Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.

Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.

When you become aware of thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.

At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.

Some recommend 20 minutes 1-2x/day for 30 days. Try it!

*Lord's Prayer - *Our Father, who art in heaven... (“debts”/ “debtors”)*

Here are two prayers that Pastor Jim has found helpful:

** Lord, I give my life to you again today. Do with me whatever you will. I pray that you will use me to minister to your people. Help me to bring honor to your name. And grant me a humble heart. (Adam Hamilton)*

** Holy Spirit, lead me, guide me, as I move throughout this day; may your promptings deep inside me show me what to do and say. In the power of your presence, strength and courage will increase. In the wisdom of your guidance is the path that leads to peace. (Jim Forbes)*

2) WORSHIP weekly – Disciples worship

Believers gather for worship, common prayer, eating bread & drinking wine in remembrance of the one in whose name they gather.

What can we do to facilitate an encounter between God and God's people?

What can we do to ensure that worship is genuinely participatory and not merely a spectator sport?

3) READ the Bible – Disciples know the scriptures

We take the Bible seriously though not literally.

Need to have a Bible that is intelligible; a good study Bible helps a lot. Need to know what “genre” you are reading. Some good translations: New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), New International Version (NIV), New Living Translation (NLT), New Century Version (NCV), The Message (transl. by Eugene Peterson). Speak to one of the pastor for more ideas here.

4) SERVE at & beyond First Congregational Church, UCC

Vision: to see every member engaged in a personally fulfilling ministry that honors God.

"We are not looking for people to fill roles, we're looking for roles to fulfill people."

Micah 6:8 – "What does the Lord require of you?... but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God"

Help to usher in God's kingdom – starting with those closest to us

Serve according to the unique S.H.A.P.E. God has given us! (Rick Warren) SHAPE stands for Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experience.

What is your primary "arena of ministry" – home, workplace, church, and/or world?

Disciples are ministers. Ministry = "demonstrating God's love by meeting people's needs and healing their hurts in Jesus' name.")

5) Be in RELATIONSHIP to encourage spiritual growth in others

Family, friends, co-workers, church members = spiritual friendships

Purpose of the gospel is "life change."

Small groups – optimal place for "life change"

We need to hold one another accountable for our spiritual health and growth – for support and encouragement

6) GIVE of my time, talents & resources

Pledges can be made to the church – helps us to plan better.

A "pledge" is simply an estimate of giving. We receive pledges each November for the following year – helps us draw up a budget for coming year.

Many friends (non-members) support our ministry – give money, sing, help with programs, usher...

Financial giving –Need to pray about that. 10% tithe = Biblical ideal. What % of your income do you give away? (And what % of your income are you saving?)

Question to ponder: Which of these six are you strong in? Which of these are "growth areas" for you?