

God's Love Goes Out - Discipleship

Scripture: Acts 2: 42-47 // Deuteronomy 6: 4-9

Date: July 5, 2020

DELIGHTED

Over the past weeks Maranatha YYC has continued it's journey of looking at the church – a Vision 2020 of who the church is called to be and how we can best live that out. Last week we looked at the Worship part of a church as saw it as the foundation of the church. A foundation in that church begins with who God is and what God has done and that leads into praise and adoration and gratitude and action.

DESIRED

HUNGER

The early church – described in Acts 2 – were only a few thousand believers but they were very excited. They were excited by what they had seen and excited by what they had heard – and they wanted more! The people wanted to learn more of this Jesus that the first church had seen in the miracles of the apostles and had heard in Peter's sermon

Acts 2 speaks of the church listening and learning of the teaching of the apostles. The apostles were those who had been around Jesus during His earthly ministry and the apostles were the ones who had been taught by Jesus following His resurrection. They were now the ones to communicate these truths to others.

HOPE

Perhaps the church could be illustrated as a building that represents in its structure the various ministry focuses of the first century church – with the understanding that some of those principles are still relevant for Maranatha in 2020. This week we add the framework – the support pieces. A framework of learning or discipleship or faith formation that is built off the foundation to give the structure strength growing up.

The walls of the structure represent various aspects of learning. One wall is learning more of who God is and what God has done. Another wall is learning who we are to this God and what God is calling us to do with that revelation. A third wall is learning more about the brokenness of the world around us and also the ways in which God is working to reform it back to its intended glory.

DEVOTED

COMMITTED

The text in Acts 2: 42 begins with a Greek word – *proskartereō*. The word *proskartereō* means devoted and the early church was devoted to its learning and faith formation.

Devoted is a word that speaks into focus and also a commitment. The early church was persistent in its desire to learn more of Jesus. Devoted is a word that speaks into quality as well as quantity.

CHOSEN

The Greek also clarifies the tense in that THEY devoted THEMSELVES. In other words – they willingly chose this course of action. They empowered themselves, they scheduled themselves to learn more about God – themselves – their culture and how to respond

CHRIST

The focus of the apostles' teaching was of course – Jesus Christ. The focus of their devotion was not just the study of Jesus neither was it the the teachers of Jesus. The focus of their devotion was to learn more about the glory and the grace of Jesus Christ Himself.

DISCIPLED**DEFINED**

The bible speaks of the disciples as the twelve men who followed Jesus however, the word is not restricted to only those twelve people. Several times Jesus speaks of disciple in a generic way and in Acts it is never used for the 12 men – but for everyday people. People who had chosen to follow Christ's life and were not devoted to learning of Christ's truth

A disciple is to be someone who is a learner. A learner who is intentional about what they want to know more about and who they are learning it from.

FAITH FORMATION

Faith formation – discipling – works at its best with a few frameworks in place to support and nurture it. Firstly it's relational as learning works best when the teacher has a love for the topic and the learner. The learner wants to learn about the topic because they can witness the competence of the teacher and the passion of the teacher for the topic at hand.

Secondly, it's developmental. Faith grows! It is not stagnant and it develops. There are various stages of how we grow physically, mentally and event spiritually. The growth happens from the time we are born until the time we die – it is continuous. We can continue to grow – evolve – in our learning of God, ourselves and the world in which we live.

Thirdly, it is transformational. Learning forces the learner to adjust and adapt their new learning into their world view and environment. Finally, it is evidential. Learning moves from academic to practical application in the 'real' world as it is evidenced what the learner knows and how they live it out.

APPLICATION / CONCLUSION

MEASURING GROWTH

In a church structure though - how does one measure the success of a faith formation? Is there a pass / fail? Do you use a ruler or perhaps measuring cups to determine when something is full. Do you use milestones such as baptism or profession of faith to determine the completion of faith formation. However, discipleship is a process not a product and it needs to be seen as ongoing not completed.

MCRC MINISTRIES

At Maranatha YYC – DiscipleSHIP is one of our key ministry areas. Church School with an age appropriate teaching with loving and caring teachers. Youth Group with its focus on accepting and then living out Jesus' call to salvation and service. Small Groups – including one this fall on how to live justice in your daily life.

ONLINE (DIGITAL) – OFFLINE (PEOPLE)

Covid 19 has challenged much of how churches operate as the digital age has allowed us to access many more resources but the digital age has diminished the sharing that grows learning.

YET – we're called to continue as disciples of Christ as we learn more of who Jesus Christ is to us – and the world around us. We're called to learn how to live that faith out – as believers. We're called to lean into others that they too might learn of the good news – and accept it for themselves as well.

GOD'S LOVE OUT - DISCIPLESHIP

God's love was evident here on earth through the person and work of Jesus Christ and God's love is still evident here as it is poured out. Poured out on the church by the power of the Holy Spirit and poured out through the church by the grace of Jesus Christ.

The framework of the church is always learning. Learning who God is, learning what God has done and learning how to respond in lives of worship and service.