

A rustic outdoor dining table with lanterns and a burlap cloth, set against a backdrop of a house with string lights.

Discipleship
happens at
the table

SMALL GROUP RESOURCE
IPHC DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

WELCOME TO DiscipleshipBox

I'm so glad you've chosen to join us over the next four weeks as we study God's Word and grow in community together! DiscipleshipBox was designed with you in mind and includes everything you need to host a group at your home, your office, a coffee shop, or anywhere else you want to meet! We've been praying and believing for God to grow the relationships in your life.

Prior to His death, Jesus stated emphatically that He would build His Church. He also promised His followers that the Holy Spirit would come. In the book of Acts, we see the fulfillment of these declarations. The Day of Pentecost was significant in many ways. In Chapter 2, we read of the birth and the building of the Church. The Holy Spirit was called by our Lord, the Comforter, or the One who would walk alongside believers. The Holy Spirit was sent to comfort believers and to construct the Church. Our focus for these studies is to look at the building blocks that were designed by Jesus to be discipleship fundamentals for every church in any age.

In His last statements before His ascension to heaven, Jesus made the mission of the Church clear. He said, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." Our subject is "Making Disciples." The word disciple, or learner, is used to describe a person who is fully committed to being a "Christ-follower."

On the Day of Pentecost, 3,000 people became believers. At the close of the chapter, we are told that people were added daily as they were being saved. An all-important question is, "how were these new believers being disciplined?" I want us to discover and develop these principles in our lives and churches. These disciples were sound in doctrine, strong in fellowship, steadfast in prayer, and successful in witness.

As you progress through this content, keep us posted through social media. Use the hashtag #IPHCDiscipleshipBox so we can see how you are growing and enjoying this ministry tool. If you have any thoughts or suggestions, feel free to personally reach out at discipleship@iphc.org.

Sincerely,

Bishop Tommy McGhee

Executive Director, Discipleship Ministries

Sound in doctrine

FUN & FOOD

FOOD: Who doesn't love buttery popcorn? Whether you're getting to know new people or catching up with old friends, we hope you can have a poppin' good time the first night of your DiscipleshipBox.

GAME: Do you remember how excited we were in elementary school for Show & Tell? Well, for our first night of DiscipleshipBox, we're throwing it WAY back to the good ole days!

"60 SECOND SHOW & TELL"

You have 60 seconds to find one item in your purse, wallet, or phone that describes you. Show everyone in the group what it is and explain why it "explains" you! Continue around the room until everyone's had a turn.

READ

Acts 2:42-47 NKJV

INTRODUCTION

The word "doctrine" was not a boring, theological, academic presentation. All the church had was the oral communication of the witnesses and the apostles. They only had what would BECOME the Gospel, and it was focused on Jesus. To be a disciple, you must know about Jesus and have a desire to learn about Him – who He is and what He's done. This week's lesson will focus on the importance of sound doctrine within discipleship.

sound in DOCTRINE

GROUP DISCUSSION

The first priority for new believers was to be committed to truth. The term "apostles' doctrine" does not refer to a theological system. The early believers were learning from the apostles who had been with Jesus during His ministry and were eyewitnesses to His death, resurrection, and ascension. The doctrine was, in essence, what was later recorded in the four Gospels. One of the greatest signs that a person is becoming a true Christ-follower and disciple is the desire to know more about Jesus. This process was not just knowing about Him, but also following Him in obedience. The Great Commission also includes the words, "Teaching them to obey the things I have commanded."

The question for all of us to consider is, "Do we possess the desire to know Christ more completely and to obey His teachings?" You and I will never be a strong disciple until, or unless, we make the study of the Word of God a top priority in our lives and become obedient to the teachings of our Lord.

QUESTIONS

1. What is my personal commitment to learning more about Jesus as revealed in the Bible?
2. Does my local church teach the fundamental doctrines of the Bible?
3. How could you help encourage others to become students of the scriptures?

PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

Cereal Parties are all the rage these days, and we'd love for your group to experience it! Ask each person to bring their favorite cereal next week (or maybe fun toppings and add-ins), as well as one person to provide the milk. Don't forget to be prepared with bowls and spoons!

Strong in fellowship

FUN & FOOD

FOOD: Cereal bars are all the rage these days, and spoons are useful for more than just playing games! Set up a fun cereal bar for everyone to share their favorites, either mixing different flavors with fun add-ins or staying faithful to the tried-and-true classics.

GAME: Aren't the easiest questions to answer on an exam the ones with multiple choice, or True/False options? Well, SURPRISE! Tonight's game of "No, No, Yes!" is actually a "Fill in the Blank" Pop Quiz! You're welcome!

"NO, NO, YES!"

Ask group members a series of questions, and tell them their answers CANNOT be "yes" or "no," or they are out. Prepare a list of questions, such as, "Were you born in California (state name)?" They must answer without using yes or no. For example, "I was born in California." The fun comes in layering the questions and asking them quickly in order to get a yes or no. Do this with several people and enjoy a good laugh as the questions get harder to answer!

INTRODUCTION

The early church was a group of believers who gathered together for fellowship. Their concept of fellowship was more involved than what we participate in today. Their practice was to gather often for the "breaking of bread," which is mentioned in Acts 2:42, 46. This breaking of bread must have included the sharing of meals with one another.

It also means that these believers shared frequently in the regular observance of the "Lord's Supper," or communion. This observance is an act of obedience and dedication. This week's lesson focuses on the importance of strong fellowship within discipleship.

Strong in FELLOWSHIP

GROUP DISCUSSION

Fellowship to the believer is more than sharing meals and the "Lord's Supper." It also includes times of praying, worshipping, and sharing. We will take a more detailed look at the importance of prayer next week. The church is a place of gathering for worship. In Ephesians 5:19, the Apostle Paul described the gathering of the church as a place for "Singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves and making music to the Lord in your hearts." We learn that worship is not a performance, but rather a participation by those who have gathered. True worship takes place when we are joyfully serving and "making music to the Lord in our hearts." Worship music and styles are about preferences. Unfortunately, in many churches, these preferences have served to divide us instead of uniting us.

Another element of fellowship is sharing. Jesus said, "By this, all will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another." We are also told that we should love not just by our words but with our deeds. Fellowship includes caring for each other. The Church demonstrates this aspect of fellowship by sharing their possessions with those who were in need.

QUESTIONS

1. How are you personally committed to participating in fellowship as described in our study?
2. What are some ideas to help your church become more like the early church as it relates to fellowship?
3. How would you describe what fellowship means in the context of your church?

PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

"People's Choice!" Take some time discussing what to do next week. What are some tasty favorites you would like to share? Make sure everyone is involved in the planning!

WEEK 3

Steadfast in prayer

FUN & FOOD

FOOD: People's Choice. You chose it, so set it up and enjoy.

GAME: Whether your doodles look like ancient hieroglyphics or Van Gogh's "Starry Night," we all have an inner artist waiting to come out!

"DIY Pictionary"

Players silently draw different things, while their team tries to guess the drawing. Teams compete against each other to have the most guessed words and win the game, or you can do ALL PLAY. Think of some things to draw and write them on slips of paper, fold them up, and put in a bowl or hat. Have teams take turns sending up a player to pick a word and draw it on a piece of paper or dry erase board. If the team guesses the word before the time runs out, (i.e. 60 seconds), they get a point. Then, the other team takes a turn. Once you have reached the end, tally up the points and announce a winner!

INTRODUCTION

Prayer is one of the distinguishing elements in the gathering of believers. Acts 2:42 states, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Let's take a look at the word prayers. The plural use of the word indicates that they prayed often in their times together. It is vital for us to know that the use of the plural refers not only to the number of times they prayed but also the nature of their prayers. This week's lesson focuses on the importance of steadfast prayer within discipleship.

"HOW IT EVOLVES"

We'd love to see how your group develops. Post pictures on social media and tag **@IPHCDisciple** and use the following hashtags:
#IPHCDiscipleship #IPHCDiscipleshipMinistries #IPHCDiscipleshipBox

Steadfast in PRAYER

GROUP DISCUSSION

Many Christians think of prayer as just asking God for the things and the outcomes that they desire. However, there are different aspects of prayer. In addition to prayer, we read in scripture about supplications, intercessions, and thanksgivings.

Prayer is, in general, when we are asking in relation to the **promises of God**. Learning to pray the scriptures is a powerful way to pray.

Supplications refer to the times we are asking in relation to the **mercies of God**. In the Old Testament, David prayed, "Lord, be merciful unto me." Jesus told the story of the religious man going into the temple to pray. This man prayed for God to recognize how good he was, not about how needy he was. Another man, a common man, went to the temple to pray. The second man simply cried out to God saying, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." We all need mercy. We need to pray for what we don't deserve, but God has still provided through the sacrifice of His Son and our Savior.

Intercessions are the prayers we offer in relation to the **purposes of God**. Interceding is when we pray for people and situations. This type of prayer is what we see in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Intercession is an integral part of prayer life for true disciples.

Thanksgivings are the prayers we offer in relation to the **goodness of God**. We all have so much to be thankful for. Paul teaches us that we should give thanks to God in everything. It is easy to leave out this aspect of prayer.

Disciples need to learn to pray continually and to set aside time for thanksgiving, supplication, and intercession. See 1 Timothy 2:1 for further study.

QUESTIONS

1. In what ways have you been challenged in your personal prayer life?
2. Does your church set aside time to gather for corporate prayers?
3. If our prayers were more like those of the early church, what effect do you believe it would have on your church and community?

PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

Who doesn't love a warm cookie and a tall glass of milk? Ask each person to contribute by bringing assorted cookies (maybe even trying a sugar-free or gluten-free option). Don't forget the milk! BONUS: Have a cookie recipe exchange while you're at it! Just write the recipe you used on a note card to share with the group.

successful in witness

FUN & FOOD

FOOD: DiscipleshipBox groups are made up of good friends, and who better to share warm chocolate chips or chunks of raisins and oatmeal with? Oh! And by the way, did anyone remember the milk?

GAME: All you need is a ball of yarn or string. No, you're not knitting a sweater, so put away the knitting needles! It's for tonight's game.

"WEB OF WITNESS"

How did you first come to know Jesus? Were you raised in church, or did you tag along with a friend? Perhaps you found Jesus as an adult, or through a kind stranger.

Have everyone stand in a circle; give one person the ball of yarn. This person is to share how they came to know Jesus. As they hold one end of the yarn, they will then toss the yarn-ball to a person across from them. This will continue until everyone has a part of the yarn in their fingertips, which will create a web. The web represents how God has intricately woven each path together to create one incredible story. Think about ways you can step outside of your comfort zone to expand this web and become a successful witness of the Gospel.

INTRODUCTION

The last verse of Acts 2 states that the early disciples were "praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." The success of their witness is directly related to their success of being the Church that Jesus was building. This week's lesson focuses on the importance of being a successful witness within the discipleship model we have been studying.

Successful in WITNESS

GROUP DISCUSSION

Being the Church, as described in these verses (Acts 2:42, 46), should be the goal of every Christ-follower and congregation. We frequently try to build the church by using methods that fail to place the emphasis on being the Church. Too often, the idea behind our efforts is to increase the number of people who attend services. The commission of the Church is to make disciples. How do you think we are doing in the eyes of the Lord? We know that a multitude of people gathered on the Day of Pentecost, but the only numbers reported were those who were saved and became a part of the church, which produced true disciples.

We want to challenge and encourage people to examine their own lives. Are we true disciples according to this Biblical passage? Disciples are people who have been saved by believing the gospel message; studying the scriptures to learn more about Him and to follow in His example. Disciples are people who gather with other believers and participate in the fellowship of prayers, worship, sharing, and the breaking of the bread. Disciples are people who know how to pray based on a full understanding of its meaning. We also want to challenge church leaders to consider whether our priorities are based on this Biblical mandate and model of the church. Let's not be satisfied with anything less than what our Lord is calling us to be so that we can be successful in seeing people come to know Him and become true Christ-followers!

QUESTIONS

1. How do you think your church places an emphasis on being a witness to your community?
2. What suggestions could you offer on improving your witness?
3. What are the areas in which you need to focus on becoming more of a true disciple?

PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

You have reached the end of the DiscipleshipBox series. However, there is no reason the fun can't continue. Keep your group going by starting a new study. Remember to take time to implement the things you have learned about true discipleship as you pursue sound doctrine, strong fellowship, steadfast prayer, and success in your witness.