

Discipleship Pathway Pastors' Edge (September, 2017) - Glen Elliott

Discipleship

- The invitation - Matthew 4:19; Luke 9:23
- The command - The Great Commission
- Finding faith, living out faith (evangelism and spiritual growth)

Discipleship Requires a Clear Pathway

What is the plan and pathway to help a person move from their first visit or encounter to maturity in Christ? Is it accidental? Haphazard? Or intentional? Discipleship must be deliberate, clear and simple. How have you planned to take someone from not knowing about Jesus (let alone the Bible) to truly reflecting Jesus in all they do? That is a huge challenge and requires a plan, not just a random collection of programs and events. People do not intuitively know how to grow to be like Jesus. Don't make them guess!

The Pantano Discipleship Pathway

The intent here is not for you to imitate Pantano. Please don't. But may these ideas spark your imagination and get you to think through your strategy to make disciples. You must scale your pathway to your current size and the next level of growth you desire.

A. The Pantano Discipleship Blueprint (see blue graphic handout):

1. Based on Matthew 4:19: Connect (with God and others), Grow (follow Jesus - spiritual maturity to be like Christ), Go (serve, evangelize).
2. Discipleship happens in small groups.
 - a. Classes are for education and information. There is little relationship that develops in classes. There is almost no accountability. They are needed, but they are not the core of discipleship. Our core classes:
 - Bible Basics (MRI class)
 - Financial Peace University
 - SHAPE (matching skills, personality, passion, experience and spiritual gifts with serving)
 - Parenting the Love and Logic Way
 - Two marriage classes: Enrich and Embrace Marriage Together
 - b. Groups are where relationship happens and they provide real care, accountability, challenge and support. This is where real discipleship happens.
3. Types of Groups:
 - a. Life Groups (Each provides Bible study, prayer and care)
 - b. Interest Groups (running, hiking, scrapbooking, zumba, holy yoga, etc.)
 - c. Care Groups (divorce, porn, cancer, alzhiemers, Mending the Soul, etc.)

4. Miscellaneous:

- a. Groups are free to choose their curriculum and content. We provide RightNow Media and we do 2 studies as a church every year (often on RightNow Media). Some use the sermon discussion questions.
- b. We train leaders to guide their group members toward spiritual maturity. Each group leader has a coach to help and guide them. We have 14 coaches.
- c. Every group engages in “My Global Partner” and “My Local Partner” or has a missionary and a local service outreach to engage in the “Go.”

Stats: 60% of adult attendance are registered in groups. Actual attendance in groups is 50% of attendance. We have 81 registered groups currently (more that don't want to register). Plus middle and high school groups. Attendance is taken which provides great stats. Our goal is 100% plus (including non-attenders).

B. The Program Components:

1. Starting Point. A place for folks who want to know more, want to know the next step or are ready to get connected. Trained hosts help them and invite them to Discover Pantano. They get to meet the Pastor and ask questions. Room #1 off the courtyard (an easy and obvious place to find).
2. Discover Pantano. A 4 week group experience on Sunday mornings (rotates through all service times) in a “living room” environment. We try to help people discover if Pantano is the right fit for them (We do refer to area churches!) and help them commit to being a part of the discipleship path. Room #2 off the courtyard.

Week 1 - Connect - getting to know each other and some staff. The Lead Pastor visits each group for a few minutes. We model a small group experience.

Week 2 - Who we are - What we believe (Bible based, externally focused, non-denominational, etc.) and what we practice (Weekly communion, baptism, giving, etc.). Elder governed, staff led. The Gospel presented. All In partnership introduced.

Week 3 - Groups and Classes. We explain how they are different and the vital importance of being in a group or starting a group. They take our “Compass” (our online tool to assess where they are at in terms of spiritual maturity) before the final week.

Week 4 - Debrief the Compass to discover next steps. They are introduced to our local and global outreach. They visit Launching Point (see below).

Stats: Most of our baptisms result from people being in Discover. If a person makes it through week 2 - they end up staying and become a regular participant.

The majority of “graduates” are baptized, become All In Partners, involved in a group and/or serving and giving. It works!

3. Launching Point. This is our “web site in a room” (It has computers too). This is where anyone can find out about and register for any program, event, group, class, serving opportunity or activity. Room #3 off the courtyard.
4. 7 Touches Required Before Someone Commits
 - a. Greeted by our Guest Service team or Lead Pastor (1-2 touches)
 - b. Visit Starting Point - (2 touches - host and Lead Pastor)
 - c. Call and Letter that week (2 touches)
 - d. Discover Pantano (many touches including Lead Pastor, Leader and Pastors)
 - e. Call back in 30-60 days by a Pastor
 - f. Additional follow up after baptism (most are serving and/or in a group by this point)

Discipleship: the Marriage of Spiritual Growth and Evangelism

Note: we are early in the testing phase of this. Again the question is what is your intentional plan to mobilize your people to disciple (help others come to faith and grow in their faith)?

- A. Pray for One emphasis throughout the year. Messages or application (3-4 times) and bands.
- B. Discipleship Making Movement (DMM) plan:
 1. See [video](#) and resources at <https://idisciple.cityteam.org/>
 2. No expert needed as the focus is discovering biblical truth together. We believe the Bible and the Holy Spirit can guide us to truth, faith and spiritual maturity. All you need is a Bible, paper and pencil. This method has launched hundreds of thousands of house churches.
 3. We are planning to include the 52 Discovery Bible studies and questions (See below) in a printed paperback Bible.
 4. Discovering God - 26 pre-selected verses to introduce people to God.
 5. Obedience-Based Discipleship - 26 pre-selected studies. Topics include obedience, persecution, sin, character, love, worship, surrender, generosity, etc.
 6. The pattern for each study (will be included in the Bible):
 - a. **Review** - Follow up and accountability
 - Who did you share last week’s passage with?
 - Did you do anything different since our last meeting?
 - Have you experienced God since the last time we met?
 - b. **Discover** - What Does it Say?
 - What are you thankful for this week?

- What problems do you have this week?
- Is there any way this group can help you?
- Pray
- Read the Discovery Passage (one of 26 pre-selected texts)
- What happens in this passage?
- What does this passage tell us about God?
- What does this passage tell us about people?
- c. **Obey** - What Does It Mean and What Will I Do?
 - If this passage is true how does this passage change how we see God?
 - If this passage is true how does this passage change how we treat others?
 - If this passage is true how does this passage change how we live?
 - What other questions do you have about this passage?
- d. **Share** - Who Will I Tell?
 - Do you know anyone you can share this story with?
 - Do you now anyone who needs help? What can this group do to help them?
 - Pray