

Developing a Discipleship Program for DIDs and Other Hurting People

Many times church leadership is hesitant to provide a discipleship program for the wounded in their congregation because they have heard horror stories of "support groups" in churches gone bad. The basic considerations listed below help to provide a proactive program, with a clear Biblical progression in mind rather than a reactive approach which moves from crisis to crisis and allows the student's woundedness to define the discipleship program.

Define discipleship -- it is amazing how many churches don't articulate a clear definition of what the great commission calls us to do -- make disciples. There can be different definitions of what constitutes discipleship. I define discipleship as -- putting their hand in His hand. In other words, my job is to help the wounded person draw closer to God.

Define the focus -- what we believe are important initially to help the person begin to rebuild their life. These goals should be both general and specific.

For example:

1) We need to help clear the way to God the Father

- clarify the character of God
- helping them learn how to trust Him

2) Give them tools to access Scripture for themselves

The specific skills they need to know include:

- how to see God's character in the Word of God
- how to use Scripture as the "Sword of the Spirit" against strongholds
- how to turn Scripture into affirmations of choice
- how to meditate on the truth

3) Teach them how to be spiritually aggressive

Topics of discussion include:

- what it means to be spiritually aggressive
- the importance of the mind as the battlefield
- how to discern the source of thoughts
- our authority in Christ
- a Biblical perspective on spiritual warfare
- how to “take back ground” (that is, close any doors open to enemy influence)
- how to deal with strongholds
- how to steep our mind in truth
- how to uncover lies and choose truth

Choose Curriculum -- Choosing what to study, *after* defining the focus of the discipleship program prevents a hodge-podge approach which wanders from one study to the next without prayerful consideration of what are the basic issues in the life of a wounded person.

For example:

1a) Clarifying the character of God

Behold Your God by Myrna Alexander

Getting to Know the Father by Alaine Pakkala

This is a personal Bible study that focuses on the two attributes that come under most scrutiny by people who have been wounded -- the goodness of God and/or the sovereignty of God.

1b) Helping them learn how to trust God

This Changes Everything: Learning to Trust God, by Alaine Pakkala

This study makes the assumption that people are able to trust God to the degree that they believe that He really loves them unconditionally. Therefore, it focuses on His amazing love for us.

2) Giving them skills to access Scripture for themselves

Open Heart Devotions: The Gospel of Mark, by Alaine Pakkala

Sword of the Spirit Meditation Cards, by Alaine Pakkala

3) Teaching them how to be spiritually aggressive

The Bondage Breaker, by Neil Anderson

Victory Over the Darkness, by Neil Anderson

Taking Every Thought Captive, by Alaine Pakkala

The Adversary, by Mark Bubeck

Fight! Meditation Cards, by Alaine Pakkala

Further information and resources on this topic are available at www.lydiapress.com