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## ASCENT COMMUNITY CHURCH

Core Group Leader Training

Section 1: Foundations

Module 3: Incarnational Ministry

# Incarnational Ministry

God's method to help people grow and change

## OVERVIEW

It is easy to believe that the best method to help people grow closer to God is to get all the right information into their heads. Choosing solid curriculum and things to study in a group is important, but it will ALWAYS be secondary when it comes to helping people grow. "Incarnation" means to put into flesh. Into a skin and bones person. You can put a lot in a book, or a video or a podcast but it can never match what you can put into a person. As a core group leader, we believe that God has called you to be God's message with skin on to the people in your group. The way that you love and care for them will teach them about who God is and draw them more deeply into relationship with Jesus.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- People don't primarily grow through the information that we give them. In the Old Testament, God sent the law, the prophets and worked miracles but people kept turning away. When that didn't work, God decided to come Himself.
- As Jesus came into our world to establish relationship and care for us, so are we called to enter the worlds of the people in our core groups to establish relationship and care for them.
- Jesus' chosen style of ministry was to come into the lives of his people. Then he said, "As the Father has sent me, so now I am sending you." (John 20:21) We are called to have our chosen style of ministry be the same with the people in our core groups.

## READING

1. Required Reading:
  - a. Spiritual Friendship by Mindy Caliguire. Chapter 4 "God Among Us"
  - b. Philippians 2 by Paul the Apostle
2. Further/Suggested Reading
  - a. Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry by Andrew Root. Chapter 4 "Who is Jesus Christ?"
  - b. The Missional Church in Perspective by Van Gelder and Zscheile p. 111-123
  - c. The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert E. Coleman. Chapter 2 "Association"

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## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How did you decide to become a follower of Jesus? Was there a person who was especially important in your life who helped you make that choice? What did he or she do that made an impact?
2. What emotions does the idea of entering the lives of the people in your group and caring for them bring up in you? What worries you? What excites you?
3. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 2:8, *We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too.* What are ways that you can imagine sharing your life with people in your core group?

## A VERSE TO REMEMBER

### John 1:14

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

would you describe your current level of expectation that God's would interact with you through a friend and vice versa?

about a few experiences that might have influenced that level of ctation.

ot only are these relationships possible, but within them lies the e for an outpouring of the Spirit of God in our day—transforming souls of individuals and accomplishing the purposes of God in our lives and in our world.

is is relatively new for you, or even if you already enjoy this kind relationship, how do you imagine your life might be different ough deeper connections to a few soul friends? What would be the e?

#### 4 GOD AMONG US



Soul friendships, while receiving their extraordinary power from God, possess some clear and consistent human characteristics. What marks the kind of relationship through which God can freely move among us? Many factors contribute, such as honesty, self-awareness, genuine love and acceptance, but soul friends are also characterized by being open (or undefended), authentic and “unagendaed.” Under these circumstances, your soul is literally opened up to another person in a mutual way, and this is what makes transformation by God’s Spirit possible.

Open or undefended relationships transcend the invisible system of calluses and emotional armor that generally keeps the self protected from other people. That invisible system of protection is our defenses, which are elaborate and strong, and very important in many settings. But in an open relationship, the defenses gradually come down, and we allow our true self to be known.

“Unagendaed” relationships occur when we drop our agendas for what we want from other people and just connect with them as they are. Often we have unspoken agendas for other people. We may not even be aware of them until we find ourselves angry or disappointed in someone—and realize they just weren’t meeting our expectations. When I am tempted to move toward friendship with someone I enjoy but from whom I also want something, that’s when an agenda creeps in.

## SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP

Relationships marked by these qualities throw open wide the gates for the Spirit who indwells each one of us to move freely. Most of us learn this slowly, but we can make progress toward this kind of relationship. When we love other people for their own sakes, we become concerned for their well-being, for their future, for their freedom and for their lives. We want them to "win"; we want them to experience everything God has for them. We are absolutely *for* them—for their growth, for their happiness, for their freedom, for their being exactly who God has made them to be. Nothing more and nothing less.

However, even when that desire is awakened in us, on our own we remain completely powerless to ever really break the barriers our friends may have in their lives. But because of our relationship with them, because of mutual openness and trust, the soul has "cracked" just a bit more and God moves deep within—at a level far below words. Supernatural power is released.

■ Did you ever have the distinct impression that God was speaking to your heart through another one of his followers? Describe the circumstances surrounding that experience. Who was it, what did you sense God saying to you, and how did you respond?

■ Have you ever had a sense that God was working directly through you in someone else's life? What happened?

## GOD AMONG US

The potential power of the Holy Spirit being poured into another person's heart and soul depends on your own deep fellowship with Christ. What words would you use to describe your current experience of intimacy with Christ?

When we remain deeply connected with God, one of the realities of the spiritual life is this: We cannot *not* bring his person and presence into every circumstance we find ourselves in. He's there because we're there. That's the miracle of indwelling. Furthermore, we don't have to work so hard at being like Jesus, and we don't have to think so very much about what Jesus would do; because of our intimacy and yieldedness, over time we simply act and behave as he would because that's what makes sense to us. Things that characterize the person of Jesus will eventually begin to characterize us. Our minds are being renewed; this is the miracle of transformation taking place. And when we bring that very-much-in-process-but-open-to-God self into relationship with others, all heaven breaks loose!

But it all hinges on our own intimacy and surrender to God.

■ In what ways do you suspect that your own character is being shaped in a way that is more like Jesus? Have you found yourself more compassionate lately? Less anxious?

■ What tends to keep you close to the heart of God during ordinary days? Are there certain practices or places that remind you of God's presence and love? What are they?

■ Talk with God right now about your desire to remain connected. Prayerfully ask, *What is one simple thing I could do today to pursue a deeper connection?* (Be sure to listen!)

God can touch our souls when we are relating with one another. I am with God when I am with my soul friends in open and unguarded ways. If we could let down our guard and learn to relate this way, what might happen?

## 5 GROUP DISCUSSION



### Summary

God created humans in his own image, which includes his very *essence* as community. We are designed to enjoy and to develop mutual relationships of self-giving love, just like the Trinity. But the pain and brokenness and disappointments of life often leave us deeply isolated, unwilling to extend ourselves relationally. Yet intimate relationships remain one of the primary ways God intends to be present with us and among us. We tend to forget this! And our souls suffer for it, our communities suffer for it, our world suffers for it. Developing a few soul friends—intimate, life-giving relationships that help us pay attention to God—can help us experience the new life available in God. The incredible power of soul friends to bring healing and transformation into our lives hinges in the reality of God's indwelling Spirit in the lives of his people. When, as individuals, we remain deeply connected to God and then develop relationships marked by openness, authenticity and the lack of a hidden agenda, the power of God freely moves in and among us.

### Discussion Basics

This discussion guide works best in a context of openness and vulnerability among friends (new or old!). Before answering the opening question, if you don't know each other already, take plenty of time to exchange names and some basic get-to-know-you information—like



## Philippians 2 New Living Translation (NLT)

### Have the Attitude of Christ

**2** Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? **2** Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.

**3** Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. **4** Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

**5** You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

**6** Though he was God,<sup>[a]</sup>  
he did not think of equality with God  
as something to cling to.

**7** Instead, he gave up his divine privileges<sup>[b]</sup>;  
he took the humble position of a slave<sup>[c]</sup>  
and was born as a human being.

When he appeared in human form,<sup>[d]</sup>

**8** he humbled himself in obedience to God  
and died a criminal's death on a cross.

**9** Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor  
and gave him the name above all other names,

**10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

**11** and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

### Shine Brightly for Christ

**12** Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. **13** For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

**14** Do everything without complaining and arguing, **15** so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and

perverse people. **16** Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless. **17** But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God,<sup>[e]</sup> just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy. **18** Yes, you should rejoice, and I will share your joy.

## Paul Commends Timothy

**19** If the Lord Jesus is willing, I hope to send Timothy to you soon for a visit. Then he can cheer me up by telling me how you are getting along. **20** I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare. **21** All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ. **22** But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News. **23** I hope to send him to you just as soon as I find out what is going to happen to me here. **24** And I have confidence from the Lord that I myself will come to see you soon.

## Paul Commends Epaphroditus

**25** Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need. **26** I am sending him because he has been longing to see you, and he was very distressed that you heard he was ill. **27** And he certainly was ill; in fact, he almost died. But God had mercy on him—and also on me, so that I would not have one sorrow after another.

**28** So I am all the more anxious to send him back to you, for I know you will be glad to see him, and then I will not be so worried about you. **29** Welcome him in the Lord's love<sup>[f]</sup> and with great joy, and give him the honor that people like him deserve. **30** For he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death while doing for me what you couldn't do from far away.

### Footnotes:

- a. **2:6** Or *Being in the form of God.*
- b. **2:7a** Greek *he emptied himself.*
- c. **2:7b** Or *the form of a slave.*
- d. **2:7c** Some English translations put this phrase in verse 8.
- e. **2:17** Greek *I will rejoice even if I am to be poured out as a liquid offering.*
- f. **2:29** Greek *in the Lord.*

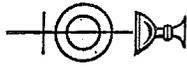
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### New Living Translation (NLT)

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LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS

MATT. 28:20



## 2 · Association

### HE STAYED WITH THEM

Having called his men, Jesus made it a practice to be with them. This was the essence of His training program—just letting His disciples follow Him.

When one stops to think of it, this was an incredibly simple way of doing it. Jesus had no formal school, no seminaries, no outlined course of study, no periodic membership classes in which He enrolled His followers. None of these highly organized procedures considered so necessary today entered at all into His ministry. Amazing as it may seem, all Jesus did to teach these men His way was to draw them close to Himself. He was His own school and curriculum.

The natural informality of this teaching method of Jesus stood in striking contrast to the formal, almost scholastic procedures of the scribes. These religious teachers of His day insisted upon their disciples adhering strictly to certain rituals and formulas of knowledge, whereby they were distinguished from others; whereas Jesus asked only that His disciples follow Him. Knowledge was not communicated by the Master in terms of laws and dogmas, but in the living personality of One who walked among them. His disciples were distinguished,

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not by outward conformity to certain rituals, but by being with Him, and thereby participating in His doctrine (John 18:19).

### TO KNOW WAS TO BE WITH

It was by virtue of this fellowship that the disciples were permitted "to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God" (Luke 8:10). Knowledge was gained by association before it was understood by explanation. This was no better expressed than when one of the band asked, "How know we the way," reflecting his frustration at the thought of the Holy Trinity. Whereupon Jesus replied: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:5, 6), which was to say that the point in question already was answered, if the disciples would but open their eyes to the spiritual reality incarnated in their midst.

This simple methodology was revealed from the beginning by the invitation that Jesus gave to those men whom He wanted to lead. John and Andrew were invited to "come and see" the place where Jesus stayed (John 1:39). Nothing more was said, according to the Record. Yet what more needed to be said. At home with Jesus they could talk things over and there in private see intimately into His nature and work. Philip was addressed in the same essential manner, "Follow me" (John 1:43). Evidently impressed by this simple approach, Philip invited Nathaniel also to "come and see" the Master (John 1:46). One living sermon is worth a hundred explanations. Later when James, John, Peter and Andrew were found mending their nets, Jesus reminded them in the same familiar words, "Come ye after Me," only this time adding the reason for it, "and I will make you fishers of men" (Mark 1:17; cf., Matt. 4:19; Luke 5:10). Likewise, Matthew was

called from the seat of custom with the same invitation, "Follow me" (Mark 2:14; Matt. 9:9; Luke 5:27).

#### THE PRINCIPLE OBSERVED

See the tremendous strategy of it. By responding to this initial call believers in effect enrolled themselves in the Master's school where their understanding could be enlarged and their faith established. There were certainly many things which these men did not understand—things which they themselves freely acknowledged as they walked with Him; but all these problems could be dealt with as they followed Jesus. In His presence they could learn all that they needed to know.

This principle which was implied from the start was given specific articulation later when Jesus chose from the larger group about Him the twelve "that they might be with Him" (Mark 3:14; cf., Luke 6:13). He added, of course, that He was going to send them forth "to preach, and to have authority to cast out devils," but often we fail to realize what came first. Jesus made it clear that before these men were "to preach" or "to cast out devils" they were to be "with Him." In fact, this personal appointment to be in constant association with Him was as much a part of their ordination commission as the authority to evangelize. Indeed, it was for the moment even more important, for it was the necessary preparation for the other.

#### CLOSER AS TRAINING ENDS

The determination with which Jesus sought to fulfill this commission is evident as one reads through the subsequent Gospel accounts. Contrary to what one might expect, as the ministry of Christ lengthened into the second

and third years He gave increasingly more time to the chosen disciples, not less.<sup>1</sup>

Frequently He would take them with Him in a retreat to some mountainous area of the country where He was relatively unknown seeking to avoid publicity as far as possible. They took trips together to Tyre and Sidon to the Northwest (Mark 7:24; Matt. 15:21); to the "borders of Decapolis" (Mark 7:31; cf., Matt. 15:29) and "the parts of Dalmanutha" to the Southeast of Galilee (Mark 8:10; cf., Matt. 15:39); and to the "villages of Caesarea Philippi" to the Northeast (Mark 8:27; cf., Matt. 16:13). These journeys were made partly because of the opposition of the Pharisees and the hostility of Herod, but primarily because Jesus felt the need to get alone with His disciples. Later He spent several months with His disciples in Perea east of the Jordan (Luke 13:22-19:28; John 10:40-11:54; Matt. 19:1-20:34; Mark 10:1-52). As opposition mounted there, Jesus "walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed thence into the country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He tarried with His disciples" (John 11:54). When at last the time came for Him to go to Jerusalem, He significantly "took the twelve disciples apart" from the rest as He made His way slowly to the city (Matt. 20:17; cf., Mark 10:32).

In view of this, it is not surprising that during passion week Jesus scarcely ever let His disciples out of His sight.

1. Some scholars, like Henry Latham, have contended that prior to ordination of the apostles Jesus' first concern was with the multitudes, while afterward the emphasis shifted to the disciples, and especially to the Twelve. Henry Latham, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-269. Whether such a decisive division of concern is justified from the Record or not, the fact is clear that Jesus did increasingly give Himself to the apostolic company as time went on.

Even when He prayed alone in Gethsemane, His disciples were only a stone's throw away (Luke 22:41). Is not this the way it is with every family as the hour of departing draws near? Every minute is cherished because of the growing realization that such close association in the flesh soon will be no more. Words uttered under these circumstances are always more precious. Indeed, it was not until time began to close in that the disciples of Christ were prepared to grasp many of the deeper meanings of His presence with them (John 16:4). Doubtless this explains why the writers of the Gospels were constrained to devote so much of their attention to these last days. Fully half of all that is recorded about Jesus happened in the last months of His life, and most of this in the last week.

The course followed by Jesus through life was supremely portrayed in the days following His resurrection. Interestingly enough, every one of the ten post-resurrection appearances of Christ was to His followers, particularly the chosen apostles.<sup>1</sup> So far as the Bible shows, not a single unbelieving person was permitted to see the glorified Lord. Yet it is not so strange. There was no need to excite the multitudes with His spectacular revelation. What could they have done? But the disciples who had fled in despair following the crucifixion needed to be revived in their faith and confirmed in their mission to the world. His whole ministry evolved around them.

And so it was. The time which Jesus invested in these few disciples was so much more by comparison to that

1. This fact was impressively recognized by the disciples, as Peter said: "Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead" (Acts 10:40, 41).

given to others that it can only be regarded as a deliberate strategy. He actually spent more time with His disciples than with everybody else in the world put together. He ate with them, slept with them, and talked with them for the most part of His entire active ministry. They walked together along the lonely roads; they visited together in the crowded cities; they sailed and fished together in the Sea of Galilee; they prayed together in the deserts and in the mountains; and they worshipped together in the Synagogues and in the Temple.

#### STILL MINISTERING TO THE MASSES

One must not overlook, too, that even while Jesus was ministering to others, the disciples were always there with Him. Whether He addressed the multitudes that pressed upon Him, conversed with the Scribes and Pharisees which sought to ensnare Him, or spoke to some lonely beggar along the road, the disciples were close at hand to observe and to listen. In this manner, Jesus' time was paying double dividends. Without neglecting His regular ministry to those in need, He maintained a constant ministry to His disciples by having them with Him. They were thus getting the benefit of everything He said and did to others plus their own personal explanation and counsel.

#### IT TAKES TIME

Such close and constant association, of course, meant virtually that Jesus had no time to call His own. Like little children clamoring for the attention of their father, the disciples were always under foot of the Master. Even the time He took to go apart to keep His personal devotions was subject to interruption at the disciples' need (Mark

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6:46-48; cf., Luke 11:1). But Jesus would have it no other way. He wanted to be with them. They were His spiritual children (Mark 10:24; John 13:33; 21:5), and the only way that a father can properly raise a family is to be with them.

#### THE FOUNDATION OF FOLLOW-UP

Nothing is more obvious yet more neglected than the application of this principle. By its very nature, it does not call attention to itself, and one is prone to overlook the commonplace. Yet Jesus would not let His disciples miss it. During the last days of His journey, the Master especially felt it necessary to crystallize in their thinking what He had been doing. For example, once turning to those who had followed Him for three years, Jesus said: "Ye (shall) bear witness because ye have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:27). Without any fanfare and unnoticed by the world, Jesus was saying that He had been training men to be His witnesses after He had gone, and His method of doing it was simply by being "with them." Indeed, as He said on another occasion, it was because they had "continued with" Him in His temptations that they were appointed to be leaders in His eternal Kingdom where they would each eat and drink at His table, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:28-30).

It would be wrong to assume, however, that this principle of personal follow-up was confined only to the apostolic band. Jesus concentrated Himself upon these few chosen men, but to a lesser and varying degree He manifested the same concern with others that followed Him. For example, He went home with Zaccheus after his conversion on the street of Jericho (Luke 19:7), and He

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spent some time with him before leaving the city. After the conversion of the woman at the well in Samaria, Jesus tarried two extra days in Sychar to instruct the men of that community who "believed on Him because of the word of the woman who testified," and because of that personal association with them "many more believed," not because of the woman's witness, but because they heard for themselves the Master (John 4:39-42). Often one who received some help from the Master would be permitted to join the procession following Jesus, as for example, Bartimaeus (Mark 10:52; Matt. 20:34; Luke 18:43). In such a way many attached themselves to the apostolic company, as is evidenced by the seventy with Him in the later Judean ministry (Luke 10:1, 17). All of these believers received some personal attention, but it could not be compared to that given to the twelve.

Mention should be made, too, of that small group of faithful women who ministered to Him out of their substance, like Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42), Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, "and many others" (Luke 8:1-3). Some of these women were with Him to the end. He certainly did not refuse their gracious kindness, and often took the occasion to help them in their faith. Nevertheless, Jesus was well aware of the sex barrier, and although He welcomed their assistance, He did not try to incorporate these ladies into the select company of His chosen disciples. There are limitations in this kind of follow-up which one must recognize.

But apart from the rules of propriety, Jesus did not have the time to personally give all these people, men or women, constant attention. He did all that He could, and this doubtless served to impress upon His disciples the need for immediate personal care of new converts, but

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He had to devote Himself primarily to the task of developing some men who in turn could give this kind of personal attention to others.

THE CHURCH AS A CONTINUING FELLOWSHIP

Really the whole problem of giving personal care to every believer is only resolved in a thorough understanding of the nature and mission of the church. It is well here to observe that the emergence of the church principle around Jesus, whereby one believer was brought into fellowship with all others, was the practice in a larger dimension of the same thing that He was doing with the twelve.<sup>1</sup> Actually it was the church that was the means of following up all those who followed Him. That is, the group of believers became the body of Christ, and as such ministered to each other individually and collectively.

Every member of the community of faith had a part to

1. One can not help but observe in this connection that the references to "the disciples" as a corporate body are much more frequent in the Gospels than are references to an individual disciple. T. Ralph Morton even goes further with this analogy and contends that most of the references to individuals refer to failures on their part, while the references to the group as a whole more often speak of their joy, understanding, or achievement. When it is remembered that these accounts were written under inspiration by the disciples, and not Jesus, it is quite significant that they would set forth their own place in such terms. See T. Ralph Morton, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-30, 103. We need not infer from this that the disciples were unimportant as individuals, for such was not the case, but it does impress us with the fact that the disciples understood their Lord to look upon them as a body of believers being trained together for a common mission. They saw themselves through Christ first as a church, and secondly as individuals within that body.

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fulfill in this ministry. But this they could only do as they themselves were trained and inspired. As long as Jesus was with them in the flesh, He was the Leader, but thereafter, it was necessary for those in the church to assume this leadership. Again this meant that Jesus had to train them to do it, which involved His own constant personal association with a few chosen men.

OUR PROBLEM

When will the church learn this lesson? Preaching to the masses, although necessary, will never suffice in the work of preparing leaders for evangelism. Nor can occasional prayer meetings and training classes for Christian workers do this job. Building men is not that easy. It requires constant personal attention, much like a father gives to His children. This is something that no organization or class can ever do. Children are not raised by proxy. The example of Jesus would teach us that it can only be done by persons staying right with those they seek to lead.

The church obviously has failed at this point, and failed tragically. There is a lot of talk in the church about evangelism and Christian nurture, but little concern for personal association when it becomes evident that such work involves the sacrifice of personal indulgence. Of course, most churches insist on bringing new members through some kind of a confirmation class which usually meets an hour a week for a month or so. But the rest of the time the young convert has no contact at all with a definite Christian training program, except as he may attend the worship services of the church and the Sunday School. Unless the new Christian, if indeed he is saved, has parents or friends who will fill the gap in a real way, he is

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left entirely on his own to find the solutions to innumerable practical problems confronting his life, any one of which could mean disaster to his faith.

With such haphazard follow-up of believers, it is no wonder that about half of those who make professions and join the church eventually fall away or lose the glow of a Christian experience, and fewer still grow in sufficient knowledge and grace to be of any real service to the Kingdom. If Sunday services and membership training classes are all that a church has to develop young converts into mature disciples, then they are defeating their own purpose by contributing to a false security, and if the person follows the same lazy example, it may ultimately do more harm than good. There is simply no substitute for getting with people, and it is ridiculous to imagine that anything less, short of a miracle, can develop strong Christian leadership. After all, if Jesus, the Son of God, found it necessary to stay almost constantly with His few disciples for three years, and even one of them was lost, how can a church expect to do this job on an assembly line basis a few days out of the year?

*THE PRINCIPLE APPLIED TODAY*

Clearly the policy of Jesus at this point teaches us that whatever method of follow-up the church adopts, it must have as its basis a personal guardian concern for those entrusted to their care. To do otherwise is essentially to abandon new believers to the Devil.

This means that some system must be found whereby every convert is given a Christian friend to follow until such time as he can lead another. The counselor should stay with the new believer as much as possible, studying the Bible and praying together, all the while answering

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questions, clarifying the truth, and seeking together to help others. If a church does not have such committed counselors willing to do this service, then it should be training some. And the only way they can be trained is by giving them a leader to follow.

This answers the question of how it is to be done, but it is necessary now to understand that this method can accomplish its purpose only when the followers practice what they learn. Hence, another basic principle in the Master's strategy must be understood.