

QUIET TIME

Theme: Workers

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understood.

- Day 1 Matthew 4:18-25
A worker is a fisher of men
- Day 2 John 4:34-38
A worker sows and harvests. There will always be a harvest somewhere!
- Day 3^{BS} 1 Corinthians 3:5-11
A worker lays the foundation and builds upon it
- Day 4 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12
A worker cares as a mother and encourages as a father
- Day 5 1 Timothy 4:6-16
A worker works diligently and makes progress
- Day 6 2 Timothy 2:1-7
A worker is reliable and qualified to teach
- Day 7 Deuteronomy 1:9-17
Characteristics of a worker within God's people
- Day 8 Psalm 78:1-8
Characteristics of a worker within his family (cf. verse 70-72)
- Day 9 Matthew 9:35-38
Pray for more workers
- Day 10 Matthew 10:5-23
Train more workers
- Think about Matthew 9:38.
Pray that the Lord may send out more workers into his harvest!
 - Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

STUDY

Theme: Spiritual multiplication

Read study 24 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: Workers

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passage is: **1 Corinthians 3:5-15**

MEMORISATION

1. Motivation

Jesus memorised Bible verses (Luke 4:4-13). Are you doing that?

2. Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

WORKERS

Ephesians 4:12

...to prepare (equip) God's people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up

Ephesians 4:12 (NV)

3. Review and back-review

Review the last 5 memorised verses once every day and back-review all other memorised verses once every three weeks.

4. Review of the Bible books

All 27 books of the New Testament

The 4 Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

The 1 Historical Book: Acts

The 13 Letters of Paul: Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, 1&2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon

The 8 General Letters: Hebrews, James, 1&2 Peter, 1&2&3 John, Jude

The 1 Apocalypse: Revelation

24. Spiritual multiplication

Spiritual multiplication means multiplying the number of people becoming Christians, multiplying the number of Christians who become disciples (mature believers), multiplying the number of disciples who become workers and multiplying the number of workers who plant (house)churches. The Bible teaches ‘multiplication’!

A. Spiritual multiplication in the Bible

1. Spiritual multiplication by Jesus Christ

In order to multiply the number of Christians you must go out to win people for Christ. In order to multiply the number of disciples (mature believers) you must make disciples. Jesus Christ did exactly this.

Evangelising in the large group

Jesus Christ won people by involving them in his own life: “Come and see”, “Follow me” (John 1:37-39,43) and by getting involved in their lives: he discussed with them, he taught in public places and he ate with them (John 2:1-2; John 2:13; Luke 2:46-47; Luke 4:15-16; Luke 5:29-30). He won people by proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God to crowds of people, inviting them to repent and to believe (Mark 1:14-15).

Making disciples in the small group

After about one year Jesus prayerfully invited twelve men to follow him, in order to be with him and later to be sent out by him (Mark 3:13-15; Luke 6:12-13). They observed his life and ministry; they listened to his teaching and answering questions; and they gained experience how he helped people, won people and changed people.

Equipping workers in the small group

Then Jesus asked his disciples: “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). He trained them as his apprentices; sent them out on short mission trips to serve people and to proclaim the gospel to them. In this way they practised to do what Jesus taught them under his supervision. During the last two years of his ministry on earth Jesus spent much time in seclusion with his disciples (John 11:54) in order to instruct and equip them with a view to their future ministry. The great commission is to send out workers into the world to proclaim the gospel about his kingship to all nations (Matthew 24:14; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8) and to make disciples in all these nations (Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus trained his disciples to continue his ministry in the world (John 20:21). They in their turn equipped new workers (2 Timothy 2:2).

The importance of the individual

Jesus stimulated faith and moulded character by focussing on the individual: e.g. Nathanael, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the lame man at Bethesda, the adulterous

woman, the man born blind, Martha, Lazarus and Mary, (John chapters 1–12). Later he also focussed on Mary Magdalene, Thomas and Peter (John chapters 20–21).

2. Spiritual multiplication in the Old Testament

‘Spiritual multiplication’ means increasing the number of people who believe in God and obey his Word. During the Old Testament period spiritual multiplication consisted of God instructing his people to pass on knowledge about God and his Word to the next three generations (Joel 1:2-3; Psalm 78:3-7)! God gave the fathers the responsibility to tell the next three generations about God’s words and deeds: to their own children, to their children’s children and to the next generation! In this way each generation of people in Israel were given a chance to know God, his words and deeds and to obey God. The children are one’s own children (Deuteronomy 6:1-2,6-9), but also the children of others within Israel.

3. Spiritual multiplication in the New Testament

Jesus Christ

Jesus instructed his disciples (and all following generations of disciples) about making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20)! He gave his eleven disciples the command to go and make disciples of all the nations and teach them to obey all that he commanded them. The great commission is one of these commands! This means they in their turn must go and make disciples and teach their disciples to obey all that Jesus commanded! In this way there would be new disciples and new workers making disciples in every generation!

Peter

Peter was one of Jesus’ disciples. He proclaimed the gospel to crowds of people, taught them and planted new congregations (*Read Acts 2:37-47; 4:4; 5:14*). He involved Barnabas in his ministry in Jerusalem (*Acts 4:36-37*).

Barnabas

Barnabas in his turn proclaimed the gospel and taught people in Antioch (in Syria). He helped the new congregation to grow. Also he saw the importance of the individual and walked all the way from Antioch in Syria to Tarsus in Turkey to fetch Paul and involve Paul in the ministry in Antioch (*Read Acts 11:19-26*).

Paul

Paul proclaimed the gospel and taught many people in many places. He founded numbers of new congregations in several countries in Asia and Europe. He revisited these congregations, wrote letters to them and sent other workers to them; he made disciples, equipped workers and sent them out to new places to do what he did. He especially trained Timothy for 14 years (2 Timothy 3:10-14).

Timothy

Paul commanded Timothy to entrust what he had learned from Paul to reliable people who would be able to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2). In this way the number of Christians, disciples, workers and new congregations were multiplied!

Summary: Jesus involved Peter in his ministry. Peter involved Barnabas in his ministry. Barnabas involved Paul in his ministry. Paul involved Timothy in his ministry and Timothy involved other reliable and able people in his ministry! In this way the ministry of multiplying the number of new believers, new disciples, new workers and new congregations reached us today!

We Christians

Today every Christian individual is important and should in some way be involved in the ministry of multiplying the number of new believers, disciples, workers and congregations. Jesus Christ intended every Christian to be involved in the great commission! We Christians living today have the responsibility to go and make disciples of all the nations: that is, in some way contribute to the multiplication of new believers, disciples, workers and congregations in the world! Every individual Christian can make a contribution: either to lead another person to Christ, or to follow him up; or to help him to grow to a mature believer; or to equip him to become a worker; or to help in some function to found a new congregation. Christians should direct their focus on evangelising in the large group, making disciples in the small group and developing Christian character in a person to person encounter.

4. Which kind of people should be multiplied?

Not simply the number of new converts (believers), but the number of disciples (mature believers) should be multiplied. Christians should bear 'lasting fruit' (John 15:16). A 'disciple' is a believer who actively follows Jesus Christ, learns from Jesus Christ and develops the special characteristics of a disciple. A disciple is a mature Christian, who knows Jesus Christ personally and intimately and who obeys his teachings. Disciples are made in one's own family (Psalm 78:3-7). Disciples are made in one's own province and in neighbouring provinces (1 Thessalonians 1:5-8). The great commission of Jesus Christ is to make disciples in every 'nation' (i.e. a people group with its language and culture) in the world (Matthew 24:14; 28:19; Acts 1:8; Revelation 5:9).

B. More Christians, more disciples and more workers: how?

'Spiritual multiplication' means increasing the number of new believers, disciples, workers and (house) churches everywhere in the world! Jesus said: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few" (Matthew 9:37). Therefore especially the number of workers needs to be

multiplied! It is the workers who win new believers, make new disciple and plant new (house) churches! The key to spiritual multiplication is the workers! The number of workers are to be multiplied first by prayer (Matthew 9:35-38) and then by training (Matthew 10:1,5-9) (*Read* Matthew 10:1-42)!

1. More Christians ... through evangelisation

The number of Christians should be multiplied by proclaiming the gospel and calling people to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Evangelisation is 'sowing' and 'reaping'. Jesus teaches that there are different kinds of workers in the area of evangelisation. He says: "One sows and another reaps". Sometimes evangelisation is sowing and at other times it is reaping (John 4:35-38). The same Christian is at times a sower: he proclaims the gospel in different ways. At other times he is a reaper: he helps interested people to receive Jesus Christ into their hearts and lives. Every worker in God's kingdom is a sower and a reaper. He sows and another Christian reaps what he sowed. Or he reaps what another Christian sowed. In God's sovereign plan it does not matter whether one is a sower or a reaper, because there will always be a harvest! God's workers may always rejoice that their ministry is NEVER in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58)! God's Word never returns empty to him, but accomplishes what he desires and achieves the purpose for which he sent it (Isaiah 55:10-11)!

2. More disciples ... through establishing

The number of mature believers should be multiplied by making disciples. This is the great commission of Jesus Christ: "Teach them to obey all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). New disciples are made by teaching the Bible to new believers and helping them to apply what they learn. Note that knowledge of Jesus Christ and the Bible is NOT the same as obeying Jesus Christ and his teachings (Matthew 7:24; Luke 11:28)! The workers take care that the new believers develop a personal continuous relationship with Jesus Christ; that they learn how to apply what they are taught and that they are transformed to look more like Jesus Christ in character and behaviour (*Read* Ephesians 4:11-16).

Note, it is God who causes people to be born again (John 3:3-8) and it is God who causes them to grow spiritually (1 Corinthians 3:6).

3. More workers ... through equipping

The number of workers should be multiplied through equipping disciples for works of service so that the Body of Christ may be built up. Jesus Christ gives some Christians special gifts to equip other Christians for their tasks (Ephesians 4:11-12)! They equip some disciples to do evangelism (Mark 16:15), others to make disciples (1 Corinthians 3:5-11), to equip workers (Matthew chapter 10) and to plant new churches (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). In every congregation there ought to be many

different kinds of tasks and ministries: besides the above mentioned: to instruct children, to win the youth, to give marriage and family counselling, to give pastoral care, to show mercy to the sick and destitute, to be group leaders and administrators, to clean the buildings, to lead Bible Study groups, prayer meetings, worship services, etc. Every Christians needs to be equipped and needs to serve in some ministry, either in his own community or in a foreign country.

Note: it is God who appoints people to different tasks in his kingdom (Mark 13:34). Although all Christians should eventually become God's co-workers, not all will become workers in God's kingdom. Each worker has a different task.

C. More (house) churches. How?

'Spiritual multiplication' also means multiplying the number of (house) churches everywhere in the world. How do new (house) churches come into being? The Bible teaches us the following:

1. God takes the initiative to multiply churches

The Holy Spirit can call certain people in the congregation to special tasks in his kingdom. For example, he called Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1-4a) to go on a mission journey to other cities and countries to proclaim the gospel, make disciples, teach them all the will of God, plant new congregations and to appoint elders for these churches.

2. The workers make disciples (Acts 13:5,13-52; 14:1-22)

Workers as Paul and Barnabas proclaimed the gospel and taught God's Word everywhere people were willing to listen. They proclaimed the message in synagogues of the Jews (Acts 13:5a; 17:10-12), to government officials who invited them (Acts 13:7), at a prayer meeting at a riverside (Acts 16:13), in the jail (Acts 16:25) and to a whole household that included the family, the servants, the labourers and their children (Acts 16:32; 18:7-8). They had discussions with people on the marketplace (Acts 17:17). They met weekly in small groups discussing the Bible (Acts 17:1-4). And they taught people two years long in a lecture hall (Acts 19:8-10).

They spoke about Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection (*Read Acts 13:26-41*). They proclaimed the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and justification from everything they could not be justified by the law (Acts 13:38-39). When they were persecuted they fled to another place and continued to proclaim the message there (Acts 14:19-20). And they revisited the believers to encourage and strengthen them. In this way large number of people became disciples in different cities (Acts 14:21-22).

3. The workers plant new independent (house) churches and appoint elders

The disciples in a particular place gathered together to form a new (house) church. These congregations (house-churches) were independent from other congregations. Paul and Barnabas appointed the first new elders for these congregations (Acts 14:23; cf. Titus 1:5). Together the elders form 'the body of elders' (1 Timothy 4:14). The elders were committed to the care of the Lord Jesus Christ with prayers and fasting. The Lord Jesus Christ is the real Leader and the body of elders are responsible and answerable only to the Lord (Acts 20:17,28; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:7,17). 'The Head' (Ephesians 1:21-23), 'the Shepherd' (John 10:16) or 'the Bishop' (1 Peter 2:25; 5:4) of every individual congregation is only the Lord Jesus Christ himself and not any human being or human umbrella organisation! All the elders are 'under-shepherds and have been appointed, not to lord it over the congregation, but to serve the congregation (1 Peter 5:1-4; Matthew 20:25-28).

4. The workers continue to exercise influence on the new independent (house) churches.

Paul revisited these congregations, sent other workers to help them and wrote letters to instruct them (1 Corinthians 4:14-17). These Letters are included in the Bible. Nevertheless, Paul did not lead or organise the local congregations. When a body of elders had been appointed, the elders were directly responsible and accountable to Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 4:14; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17).

5. The workers give an account to their own congregations

When Paul and Barnabas had completed their missionary journey, they reported all God had done through them to their own congregation. Note, they did not merely report what they had done and accomplished, but what GOD had done and accomplished through them (Acts 14:27)! All the glory in the congregation must go to God in Christ throughout all generations, forever and ever (1 Romans 11:36; Ephesians 3:20-21)!

D. Make disciples who will go and make disciples

1. More disciples ... more workers

A disciple is a mature believer. A worker helps a new believer to become a disciple. The key to multiplying more believers, more disciples and more workers is more WORKERS! The principle of spiritual multiplication is dependent on workers who make more disciples, who in their turn make more believers! Or to put it in another way: the key to spiritual multiplication is to help believers become disciples, who in their turn become workers, who in their turn will go and do the same! In this way God multiplies the number of believers, the number of

disciples, the number of workers and the number of congregations in the world!

Spiritual multiplication is important because Jesus Christ saw the great need: the crowds of people were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. And Jesus gave the solution to the need: “The harvest is plentiful but the WORKERS are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9:37-38). Spiritual multiplication is so important, because the harvest is so plentiful!

2. Making disciples: a movement

The principle of spiritual multiplication creates a movement. The movement will spread to families, to friends, to colleagues at the working place, to scholars in schools and students in colleges, and eventually to people living in other countries!

However, if one tries to capture and control the movement by institutionalising it into an organisation (a denomination with a particular leadership structure) it will shut down the movement! The sociology of church planting in history has discovered that:

A MOVEMENT begins with a few inspired PEOPLE, who win the lost and build up the saved. However, soon the emphasis shifts from people to ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMES in order to somehow ‘organise’ the mass of new believers. And soon the emphasis shifts once more to ORGANISATION in order to ‘manage’ the activities and programmes. Finally the emphasis shifts to LEADERS who ‘control’ the organisation. Because the emphasis shifts from people who are being developed (served) to leaders who control (lord it over), the people lose interest and the movement dies.

Thus, in order to MAINTAIN THE MOVEMENT the emphasis must always remain on Jesus Christ himself (as Leader) and on winning the lost (evangelism) (Matthew 24:14) and building up the saved (making disciples) (Matthew 28:18-20)!

Activities, programmes, organisation and leadership are needed, but must SERVE THE MOVEMENT. When activities, programmes, organisation and leadership become the focus and goal, the movement dies and traditional denominations arise that try to maintain the status quo.

In the Bible the emphasis remains on PEOPLE IN EVERY NATION who make up the harvest. They must be harvested! For the harvest workers are needed! And workers are people who have been made disciples and have been equipped for their work of service (Ephesians 4:11-12). Jesus says that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Nevertheless, the power of Jesus Christ is unlimited and he is the Lord! He who gave the great commission to make disciples of all the nations also has all power (authority) in heaven and on earth and is present every day! It is he who gave the great commission and it is he who will see to it that the task will be accomplished in every country and among all people groups!

The Bible does not say that this task would be easy. Through the centuries many workers have often laboured with much suffering and with little visible results. But notwithstanding all this, the final and complete victory is a promised fact (Romans 8:31,37; Revelation 17:14)! The gospel of Christ’s kingdom (kingship) will be proclaimed in all the nations (Matthew 24:14). Disciples of Christ will be made in all the nations (people groups) in every country of the world (Matthew 28:29). The full number of the elect (Romans 11:25-26) in every corner of the world will be reached by the time of the second coming of Christ (Matthew 24:30-31)! No one and nothing will be able to frustrate God’s final plan (Revelation 5:9-10; 7:9; cf. Isaiah 14:24-27)!