



More Than
STONE SOUP

A Stewardship and Giving Emphasis Program for Congregations

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

When we are baptized we are baptized into the family of God. In Baptism we are named and called to a life of Christian Discipleship.

While we might sometimes hear about this discipleship lifestyle, not everyone is familiar with the seven principles or disciplines that comprise Christian Discipleship. Yet these principles are so important to our faith and our relationship with God. Today we examine the principles in depth.

The seven principles are organized into two groups. The first group includes Prayer, Study and Worship. These are the relationship building principles that help us in our understanding of God. Engaging in these three principles builds our faith and trust in God, affording us the confidence and freedom to exercise and express our faith in daily living.

The relationship building disciplines draw us into daily personal prayer, private and organized Bible study, and faithful weekly worship. These disciplines must become so routine we become engaged on a daily basis without any conscious decision to do so—we just do them.

In addition to building and strengthening our faith and trust in God, and our relationship with him, these three principles prepare us for a life of commitment and service to God and his Kingdom here on earth.

The second group of Christian Discipleship principles, or disciplines, includes Stewardship, Evangelism, Mentoring

and Service to Others. The Apostle Paul eludes to God's purpose and plan for our salvation. Paul writes,

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10 NKJV

These four disciplines are the “works” of which Paul speaks. They are the fruits of our faith and the direct result of our relationship with God. Moreover, these principles are the acts which further the Kingdom and perpetuate the Christian faith. This is how they work:

Our giving, or stewardship provides the funding so vital to maintaining church plant and staff so that ministry can happen. A stewardship of our time and intellectual gifts provides the human resources necessary for ministry. The sharing of our faith, evangelism, spreads the gospel message to those in need of knowing God's love for us. Teaching, or mentoring, our youth and those new to the faith, serves to encourage and nurture discipleship in others. Finally, serving others in Christ's name brings God's love to light in a way that draws others to him, and encourages new faith.

For the committed Christian, the Seven Principles of Christian Discipleship are not an option, but a way of life. The seven principles are how we live out the Call of our Baptism. The seven are essential for healthy churches, and should be taught and encouraged in every congregation. Paul tells us in his first letter to the Corinthians,

“Let a man so consider us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” 1 Cor. 4:1 NKJV

For the sake of our Lord and his Kingdom, for Christian churches everywhere, and for the sake of our broken world, may we – as stewards of the mysteries of the faith – be found faithful to the Seven Principles of Christian Discipleship.