

SESSION 1: HEALTHY DISCIPLES

READ:

Our vision for this year is to multiply healthy disciples and to transform communities.

These Bible studies are designed to help us achieve this.

They are based on two premises (ideas). The first is that wherever there are healthy disciples, communities will be transformed. After all, the Lord has told us that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world!

The second is that healthy disciples will naturally multiply. The parable of the sower and the seed makes this very clear.

So, the key to success is for us to become healthier disciples. As we do, we will multiply and we will see communities transformed.

This is what makes Christianity different from much of the world around us: people generally look for better methods, but God always looks for better people*.

*The author first came across the phrase 'Men seek better methods, but God seeks better men' in the writings of Samuel Chadwick, an early C20 Principal at Cliff College, a Methodist lay training college.



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There's one other premise we need to take note of before we begin: Individual Christianity is almost unknown in the New Testament.

Everything we do, we do together as part of the body of Christ. This includes Bible study. It's good to read the Bible every day and this may mean reading it by ourselves, but we should bring what we have learnt to our brothers and sisters and share it with them. It may well be a great blessing to them just when they need it. They may also help us to see where we haven't got things quite right – none of us have a monopoly on the truth! We need one another's insights if we are going to become healthy disciples.



STARTING POINT:

If you aim at nothing, you'll probably hit it!

How do we know what we are aiming for?

What does a healthy disciple look like?

It's a curious fact that after the Book of Acts, the term 'disciple' doesn't appear in the New Testament. However, the *qualities* of a disciple are to be found on almost every page. This is a central theme of the New Testament; the most important way for followers of Jesus to identify themselves is by their character and behaviour.

Discussion: *So, each member of the group should make a list of ten qualities they would expect to see in a healthy disciple.*

Now compare your list with others in your group.



Leaders: One way of doing this is for the first person to read out their list and then for others to tick off any of the qualities that they have also identified. Then the second person reads out any qualities not on the first person's list, then the third reads any that weren't on the first two lists and so on until all the qualities on everyone's list have been read out.

Another method is to ask people to share their list with one or two others and then share their findings (similarities and differences) with the group.

What are the main similarities and differences? Why do you think this is?

Leaders: You may have to coax responses from some members about why they have chosen particular qualities.

Finally, as a group, try to agree on one list of the five most important qualities of a healthy disciple. Even if you can't, keep your list safe, we will come back to it later.

Challenge:

If you're feeling really brave, you can even try to agree on a top three or rank the qualities in order of importance!

For the next session:

If you had to recommend one book from the Bible that helped people to become healthy disciples,

- which book would you choose?
- why would you choose it?
- if you had to choose one verse or (short) passage to sum up the message of the book, what would it be?