

Homegroup Notes for Week Beginning 19/5/2025.

Introduction:

This term, the notes follow aspects of the Disciple series that we are following on Sunday evenings. They are seeking to encourage you to consider ways in which your group can become a place of discipleship, encouraging each other in the way of Christ through a number of discipleship practices.

Jesus' simplest command was two words, 'Follow me'.

Leave what you have been doing and re-learn a new way of life as my disciple.

The Message translation of Matthew 11.28-30 expresses this particularly clearly,

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

To live this life we need to begin with a response to the love of God in Christ that is expressed through the cross and the resurrection, and we need to practise the presence of God through the Holy Spirit, shaping our words, our thoughts and our deeds.

John Mark Comer suggests that this does not happen without thought and discipline. Not to practise this is to find ourselves following someone or something other than Christ.

"For those of us who desire to follow Jesus, here is the reality we must turn and face: If we're not being intentionally formed by Jesus himself, then it's highly likely we are being unintentionally formed by someone or something else."

He suggests that the way to be formed in this life involves:

- Being with Christ
- Becoming like Christ
- Doing as Christ would do.

Additional Resources:

John Mark Comer, 'Practicing the Way'

Numerous resources can be found here, practicingtheway.org

Podcasts are available also here,

<https://open.spotify.com/show/08pHYEWdAJgGjpWTcVK9e3?si=085378f07e9548ce>

Disciple 4: Fasting



Mark 8.34 says,

Then Jesus called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

At the centre of the call of Christ is self-denial

- What do you think it means to 'deny yourself' in following Christ?
- How does that sit alongside contemporary culture which speaks about the value of authenticity and 'being yourself' or even 'realising yourself'?

The Message translate the same phrase with Jesus saying to his disciples, *You're not in the driver's seat; I am.*

- What do you think this might suggest about the purpose of fasting?

Read Matthew 6.16-18



- Does this passage see Jesus assuming that we will fast?
- Rose pointed out that Jesus speaks here more about how not to fast than how to fast. What is he calling out on those who are not fasting as they should?

Read Matthew 9.14-17

- The Pharisees ask Jesus why his disciples do not fast. What do you make of his answer?
- Those of us who know Jesus will fast Jesus himself suggests (Matthew 9.15) but differently reflecting a 'new wineskin'. How do you think fasting after the incarnation may be different to fasting before the incarnation?

Why do you think we should fast? It is not a law or a requirement but a practice that will draw us closer to God.

Rose suggested:

- To offer ourselves to God (Romans 12.1)
- To awaken or express our hunger for God (John 4.31-34)
- To practice self-control (Psalm 35.10)
- To deepen our prayer life (Luke 2.26-28)

Can you add any other reasons?



So...what do you think would be a good way to respond to this discussion?

Whatever you decide, it should be a decision of conscience not obligation and a response to Jesus.

Close today listening to [Jesus be the Centre](#) or a similar song and pray focusing on your hunger for God.