

# DISCIPLESHIP. SUPPLEMENT 6

[LEADERSHIP]

## TEN INSTRUCTIONS FOR LEADING A DISCIPLESHIP GROUP

The instructions in **bold type** in the manuals for group leaders help the group leader to stimulate the students to get involved.

### 1. The spirit of the times we live in.

- During the 18<sup>th</sup> century **rationalism** was in sway.

People said, “*I know and therefore I am*” (Descartes) e.g. “My identity is determined by *my knowledge* (of the Bible or Jesus Christ).

Christians rather read and studied the Bible than occupy themselves with themselves!

Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples (Christians). Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32)!

- During the 19<sup>th</sup> century **activism** was important.

People said, “*I do and therefore I am*”, e.g. My identity is determined by *my activities* (my daily job/task and other activities in the area or society where I live).

Christians rather do something for another person than occupy himself with the Bible.

Jesus says, “What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? (Mark 8:36).

- During the 20<sup>th</sup> century **existentialism** reigned.

People said, “*I feel/experience and therefore I am*”, e.g. “My identity is determined by *my feelings or experiences* (of the Bible or Jesus Christ).

Christians rather talk about themselves, their feelings and experiences than about Christ and his Word!

Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9:23)!

**Discuss the spirit of the times we live in together with the group members!**

### 2. The management style of the group leader.

- Christian leadership is always **servant leadership** (Matthew 20:25-28) and **shared leadership** (Acts 20:28)!

- To lead or to manage means *to set an example* (1 Peter 5:3) in the following areas:

- in your own relationship to God, to other people and to yourself (1 Timothy 4:12)
- in your own progress, behaviour and sound doctrine (1 Timothy 4:15-16)
- in your sound teaching (1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 Timothy 1:13-14, Titus 2:7-8)
- in correctly handling the Bible (2 Timothy 2:15)
- in practising yourself what you teach to others (Matthew 23:3; Ezra 7:10)
- in gently instructing instead of quarrelling (2 Timothy 2:23-26)

- To lead or to manage means *to teach* in large meetings or in small groups that meet in houses (Acts 5:42).

- To lead or to manage means to teach the whole revealed will of God in the Bible and things that help people to grow spiritually (Acts 20:20,27).

- To lead or to manage means *to motivate, explain, challenge, help, warn, rebuke, correct and train* students (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Above all *love* your students. Be an *encourager* (Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:24-25).

- To lead or to manage means *to be a good observer* (Proverbs 24:32) and *listener* (Proverbs 18:13). Take your students seriously. Accept them, as they are (Romans 15:7). Allow your students to make mistakes.

- To lead or to manage means *to pray* for your students. Know your student’s strengths and needs. Discover what God is doing in them and how you can help them to grow.

### 3. Managing worship.

- Let the group members read the Bible passages.

- The group leader reads the accompanying meditation about one of God’s characteristics (attributes).

- Take turns to respond with one or two sentences in worship to God.

- Or divide into groups of two’s or three’s and worship God with soft voices (in countries where you do not wish to attract the attention of hostile neighbours).

### 4. Managing the sharing times.

- The **preparation (assignment)** for at home assigns Bible passages (about 3½ chapters from the Bible) from which every group member will have a regular personal time of fellowship (a quiet time) with God.

- During every meeting, the group members take turns to share what they have learned from one of their personal times with God during the past week. Allow about 2 minutes per person. Encourage students to make use of their written notes.
- Help students to listen to the person sharing, to take him seriously and to accept him.
- Remind students not to react upon his sharing and also not to talk about his sharing and thus betray his confidence.
- The group leader may also include the following kinds of sharing in his training programme:

#### 5. Managing the teachings.

- Use only the Bible as source of your study and as absolute authority for all human thinking and behaviour and for Christian doctrine and life. Your teaching of the truth must be based on the correct rules for interpreting the Bible (hermeneutics)
- Prepare the teachings well. Decide how much time you need or want to use for each teaching. The answers to question are recorded in the manuals.
- When you as a group leader teach, your management style is that of a teacher teaching with authority (Matthew 7:29). A good group leader *teaches the truth* with clarity, conviction and authority. The 'truth in the Bible' is more than the mere opinions of different people.
- As group leader you involve the group members in reading Bible passages (**Read**), in discovering the truth (**Discover**) and in discussing the truth (**Discuss**). You stimulate them to discover the truth by themselves, to think and understand the truth, to draw conclusions and make applications. Give them an opportunity to ask questions and to share their discoveries with one another. Your goal is that the group members develop their own convictions about the Bible and commit themselves to apply these in their lives.
- Prepare the discussion and the answers to the questions very well. A short explanation of the teaching or summary of the answer is given below each question in the workbooks (**Notes**).
- Encourage the students to write down their own notes of everything they learn from the Bible and from one another. During the lesson much is said that has not been recorded in the manuals.
- Make the teaching and training as practical as possible. Stimulate students to practise regularly what they learn.
- Request students to complete the preparation for at home and come prepared to the meetings.

#### 6. Managing memorisation.

- Motivate the students continually with good reasons from the Bible to memorise Bible verses.
- Meditate together about the meaning of every new Bible verse before you memorise it.
- Let the students take turns to lead the group in memorising a new Bible verse during manual 1. In the manuals 2 to 12 memorise only the first Bible verse of each new series together in the group. Memorise the others at home.
- During the meeting, divide into twos and check one another's last memorised Bible verse.
- Once in a while review five memorised Bible verses which you have previously memorised.

#### 7. Managing the Bible studies.

- As the group leader you must prepare the Bible studies well. The answer to many questions are given in the manual.
- When you as a group leader lead a Bible study, your management style is that of a guide who participates in the Bible study and not of a teacher. A good guide *coaches* his students *to discover, think, draw conclusions and make applications themselves*. He guides the reading of the Bible, the sharing of the discoveries, the discussion of the questions, the brainstorming of the possible applications and the praying.
- The goal of the group leader is to guide the group in the five steps of the Bible study: listening to the reading of God's Word (Nehemiah 8:8), discovering and sharing the truths in God's Word (Colossians 3:16), understanding God's Word by asking questions (2 Timothy 2:15), relating the truths to life (Matthew 7:24-27) and responding to God's Word by praying (Psalm 143:8-10).
- The truth is more than the mere opinions or interpretations of people. The truth is what God intended to say and do in the Bible. Therefore the Bible must be explained correctly according to the rules of explaining the Bible (hermeneutics). It is the responsibility of the group leader to keep the group on track and not allow another person to grab the leadership of the group or get the group side-tracked. Nevertheless, be sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Involve every student in the Bible study. That is why the group members take turns to read the Bible, to share their discovery, to ask their question, to devise possible applications and to respond to God in prayer.
- Encourage the students to be honest about what they think and feel. Stimulate them to make their own notes of the lesson and to learn from others in the group.

#### 8. Alternative Bible study methods.

- See [www.deltacourse.org](http://www.deltacourse.org) Delta study 35.

## 9. Managing prayer times.

- Encourage every student to respond in prayer at the end of every meeting. Help him to pray short: for one thing and not longer than 2 sentences.
- Sometimes pray in small groups for each other and for others (intercession), or pray through a Bible passage (Scripture prayer).
- Teach students to record the prayer requests of others or to make notes about things that they would like to pray for.

## 10. Alternative group activities.

- See Delta study 35, method 2, presentations. For example:
- Divide the group into two or three groups.  
Give them 15 minutes or more to prepare an act or mime about a theme of say 5-10 minutes.  
Let every group present their act.
- See Delta 35, method 2, drawing or illustration.
- Or after discussing the topic, let every student make a drawing or painting about the subject. Discuss a few paintings. Let everyone say what he sees in the painting (only facts, not interpretations). Then allow the painter to explain what he or she had intended to paint.