

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will teach from the Bible what is a disciple of Jesus Christ. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's teaching is: A DISCIPLE BEARS FRUIT THROUGH DISCOVERY GROUPS.

There are many ways in which Christians can preach and teach the gospel. There is personal evangelism, small group evangelism, mass evangelism, literature evangelism, drama evangelism and radio evangelism. Today we will learn about one kind of small group evangelism, called *the discovery group*. We will consider some biblical principles for evangelism, suggest an approach for one kind of small group evangelism and give an example of one such a programme.

(S) **POINT 1. BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR EVANGELISM**

First principle for evangelism. Pray for non-Christians. Colossians 4:2-4 says, "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ. ... Pray that I may proclaim it clearly." Pray for your non-believing family members, friends, colleagues and neighbours, that God may open an opportunity to share the gospel with them and open their hearts to receive it. Prayer is an expression of your dependence on God and his work in people's hearts and lives.

(T) **Second principle for evangelism. Get involved in the lives of non-Christians.** Acts 10:38 says, "Jesus ... went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil". Awaken the non-Christians' interest by *getting involved in their life situations*. Live a quality life *among* them, get involved and participate in *their* activities, share *their* difficulties and *their* interests and show a personal interest in *them*. Allow them to observe your life from close by and for a longer period of time in the midst of *their* situation of life. The quality of your life, your dependability, faithfulness, sincerity, sharing, helpfulness, personal interest and love can remove their distrust or dislike for Christ and draw them into a relationship with Christ.

(S) **Third principle for evangelism. Involve non-Christians into your life.** John 1:38-39 says, "Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, Teacher, where are you staying?" He replied, "Come and you will see." Awaken the non-Christians' interest by *inviting them into your life situations*. Live a quality life in *your* own home, open *your* home for non-Christians, invite them "to come and see" who Christians are and what Christians are doing, and involve them into *your* activities and relationships with other Christians. Allow the non-Christians to observe from close by and for a longer period of time that a relationship with God and with other Christians is possible and that such a relationship has deep influence on *you and your family*. Practising what you preach makes your message powerful!

(T) **Fourth principle for evangelism. Read or study the Bible together with non-Christians.** Acts 8:30-31,35 says, "Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I", he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus." Acts 17:2-4, "As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. 'This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,' he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women." Encourage the non-Christian *to read or investigate the Bible together with you*. In this way he attains knowledge and understanding of the gospel. For example, organise a *Bible discovery group*, say weekly for a few months. Your method could include the elements of Acts 17: *reasoning, explaining and proving*. *Reasoning* means *to discuss* a Bible passage. *Explaining* means *to open up completely* difficult parts of the passage. *Proving* means *to give evidence* and facts from other parts of the Bible, especially facts concerning God, Christ, his death and resurrection. Your goal should be "to know Christ and to make him known". Help the non-Christian to discover what the Bible really says. **One.** What does the Bible say about whom God is, whom Christ is and how Christ wants to relate to us? **Two.** What does the Bible say about what Christ did on earth and what Christ is doing now? **Three.** What does the Bible say about what a life without Christ is like and where it leads to and what a life with Christ is like and where it leads to? How can a person experience a personal relationship with Christ?

(S) **POINT 2. APPROACH FOR ONE KIND OF SMALL GROUP EVANGELISM**

Let me suggest the approach for one kind of small group evangelism, called *the discovery group*. The idea is to make use of a small place where Christians and non-Christians meet together to discover and discuss the truths in the Bible.

First. The place and atmosphere of a discovery group. Choose a suitable place, like a home, a small room or a quiet place outside to meet together. Keep the meeting small, unofficial and informal. Therefore it might be best not to include *preaching, singing or praying*. The only activities of the discovery group are *reading the Bible* and *discussing the Bible*. In some cultures and places, however, the inclusion of singing and praying might be appropriate and helpful. Decide what is the best approach in your situation. Some discovery groups meet in a home; others meet at their working place or outside under a tree.

(T) **Second. A Christian and his non-Christian friend work together in a discovery group.** A few Christians decide to have a discovery group every week for a few months. Every Christian tries to invite 1 or 2 non-Christians to these meetings. Tell them that the purpose of the small group is “to discover and discuss together from the Bible the truths about God, man and life”. The Christian and non-Christian friend come together to the meeting place. They discover and discuss the truths from the Bible together. And after the meeting, they leave together. The discovery group meeting should take about 90 minutes.

(S) **Third. The leader introduces the discovery group.** The leader welcomes everybody. Everybody introduce himself or herself. The leader explains the purpose of the meeting as well as the approach of the discovery and discussion. He says the following five things: **One.** The purpose of the discovery group is “to discover and discuss together from the Bible the truths about God, man and life.” **Two.** We will read a chapter from the Bible twice: first together and then quietly by ourselves. **Three.** There are 3 leading questions and each group of two persons will first discuss a question. **Four.** Then the whole group will share and discuss their discoveries and ask their questions. **Five.** At the end there will be a summary of the discovery group discussion.

(T) **Fourth. Each participant in the discovery group reads the Bible twice.** Hand a Bible to each participant. Let everyone find the same chapter in the Bible. Let every participant take a turn and read one verse of the chapter. After reading the chapter together, ask everyone to read the chapter one more time quietly.

(S) **Fifth. The leader asks three kinds of questions during each discovery group meeting.** During each discovery group meeting, the leader asks three questions out of the chapter they are studying. He prepared the questions before the discovery group meeting by basing each question on one question in each of the following three groups of questions.

Group 1. Questions about what Jesus Christ does.

- * How does Jesus show his interest in people as individuals?
- * How does Jesus meet a specific problem of life? Problems like, ignorance, sickness, evil prejudice, criticism, stubbornness, selfishness, opposition, death, etc.
- * How does Jesus display his authority over a particular situation of life?
- * Why does Jesus heal the person in this way?

Group 2. Questions about who Jesus Christ is.

- * What unique aspect of his person does this particular event reveal?
- * What claim does Jesus make about himself?
- * What does Jesus mean when he says that he is for example “the Light of the world” or “the Bread of life”?

Group 3. Questions about how a person can get a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

- * How did different people respond to Jesus’ actions or teachings?
- * What does Jesus say that a person must do to have a relationship with him?
- * What changes took place in the person who believed or obeyed?

(T) **Sixth. Discovering and discussing the answers in the discovery group.**

One. The discovery group is characterised by *reading, discussing, explaining and proving*, as in Acts 17. There should be *no preaching, teaching or challenging people to make a decision*. The discovery group is characterised by *a small group interaction* and not by *a one-way communication* from a speaker to an audience.

Two. The discovery group concentrates on helping the non-Christians to discover the truths of the Bible for themselves. Therefore, during the discovery and discussion in small groups of one Christian and one non-Christian, the Christian should encourage the non-Christian to make his own observations and to draw his own conclusions. The Christian could ask the non-Christian accompanying questions like:

- * Which *facts* relating to the question can we find?

* What do *you* think does this mean?

* How can we *relate* this to our life situation today?

Three. The function of the discovery group leader is to be a *chairman* of the discussion, rather than *the teacher* of the Bible. He asks the leading questions and guides the whole group discussion by stimulating everyone to share their discoveries, to ask their questions and to argue any particular point they want to make. He tries to draw the group into a discussion about the truths they discovered in that chapter in the Bible. He must take everyone's questions and arguments serious. He is responsible to see to it that the discovery group does not get sidetracked from its main purpose. He summarises each question, making as much as possible use of the contributions of the participants. At the end, he gives a short summary of the discoveries, preferably by way of drawing an illustration. The illustration should illustrate the truths found in the particular chapter they studied.

(S) **POINT 3. SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR A DISCOVERY GROUP**

You can use the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as well as chapters like Romans 3 and Ephesians 2 for your discovery group. Let me share as an example five chapters from Mark that have proved to be useful in the discovery group.

One. Mark 1:1-45. It teaches that Jesus is powerful and spiritual, God and yet tempted, Preacher, Teacher and Healer, dependent and compassionate.

Two. Mark 2:1-27. It teaches about the spiritual and physical authority of Jesus, about the sick versus the healthy, and the old versus the new.

Three. Mark 3:1-35. It teaches about the religious rules versus human needs, evil spirits versus the Holy Spirit, earthly family versus God's family.

Four. Mark 4:35 - 5:43. It teaches about the authority of Jesus over nature, demons, incurable sickness and death.

Five. Mark 10:1-52. It contains the teaching of Jesus about divorce, children, the rich, leaders and his crucifixion.

(T) **POINT 4. EXAMPLE OF A DISCOVERY GROUP PROGRAMME**

Here follows an example of one discovery group programme.

One. Let the Christians sit together with the non-Christians they have invited and explain that the purpose of the discovery group is "to discover and discuss together from the Bible the truths about God, man and life".

Two. Read a chapter from the Bible twice: first read Matthew 9:1-38 together, each person taking a turn to read one verse around the circle. Then let everybody read Matthew 9:1-38 once more quietly for himself.

Three. The leader prepared the following 4 leading questions:

Question 1. How does Jesus show his interest in people as individuals?

Question 2. What aspects of Jesus' personality are revealed in the event of the healing of the paralysed man?

Question 3. What does Jesus mean when he says, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few" (9:37)?

Question 4. How did different people in this chapter respond to Jesus?

Discuss every leading question in the *small groups*, consisting of the Christian and his friend, for about five minutes before continuing the discussion in the *whole group*.

Four. Share and discuss the discoveries and try to clarify the questions within the whole group for about 10 minutes for each leading question.

Five. At the end, summarise the discoveries and discussion by drawing an illustration that illustrate the truths found in Matthew 9:1-38, which the group has just studied. And invite everybody to the next discovery group meeting.

(S) **POINT 5. ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Practise the discovery group approach to evangelism in a small group. Divide your group into pairs, of which one plays the role of a non-Christian. Use Matthew 9:1-38 and the leading questions outlined above.

Remember, the more experience you gain, the better it will go. Start your own discovery group.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and make disciples" and Internet on www. Etc.

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to "Discipleship training on the air".