

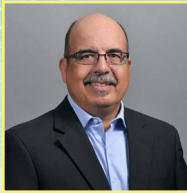


ILLINOIS Focus



Ron Aguilera, President

DISCIPLESHIP JESUS' WAY



just happen. It is the result of intentionally helping people become more and more like Christ.

2. Discipleship is relational (to be with Him). Jesus first invited the disciples *simply to be with Him*. They learned by watching Him interact with, teach, and love the crowds. Remember, Jesus walked everywhere. It took hours even days, to get from one place

disciples after they ministered to others. Being engaged in mission was part of their discipleship.

I believe discipleship and mission go hand in hand. Mission opportunities are simultaneously discipleship opportunities. As we move forward the mission God has given us here Illinois, I encourage each person to be part of a discipleship process, and every church to develop a

Jesus commanded us to “Go and Make Disciples.” This is our mission, our task, as followers of the Way. Now, Jesus could have chosen any WAY, any method, to make sure the world would hear of His love and sacrifice for them, and to ensure the message would be shared around the globe. He chose discipleship. He chose to pour His life into a group of people and entrust the word to them. It all started with Jesus calling a few men to follow Him. His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with people, who the multitudes would follow. These men were to be His method of winning the world to God. Mark 3:14 says it well, He also appointed 12—*He also named them apostles—to be with Him, to send them out to preach.*

As I think about this verse, here are three thoughts on Jesus and discipleship:

1. Discipleship is intentional (He appointed). With intentionality, Jesus chose those in whom He would invest. He appointed them. The only time the Bible records Jesus praying all night was before He chose His disciples (Luke 6:12-13). Discipleship does not

to another. We don't think much about how Jesus used this time, but it is clear that Jesus shared His life with the disciples, not just His words. Because the Christian faith is highly relational, discipleship remains relational.

3. Discipleship includes deployment (to send them out). Part of the disciples' development included being sent out to preach. True discipleship always results in the disciple being sent out. Being “sent out” further develops the disciple. Multiple times in the gospels, Jesus debriefed with His

discipleship plan. How will we help each person that comes into our churches grow in their relationship with Jesus? And, who will journey with them, disciple them? After all, this is what Jesus commanded us to do, “Go and make disciples...of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all he has commanded. (Matthew 28:19, 20)

The Disciples Most Important Work 2
Ven Conmigo al Futbol 3
Praying Without Ceasing 7

& MORE



Volume 6 - Issue 5 - October 2019

ISSUE FOCUS

DISCIPLESHIP / PRAYER



The theme of discipleship has prompted a myriad of strategies and models designed to amplify the possibilities for personal and kingdom growth. Prayer should be the lifeblood of any discipleship conversation. Every church should have effective discipleship strategies in place, but prayer is the fuel that gives purpose, direction, and power to these plans.

Paul Miller, in his book *A Praying Life*, profoundly states that “prayer is where I do my best work as a husband, father, dad, worker, and friend.”¹ Jesus’ most important work as a disciple-maker was His deep commitment to prayer. The very act of choosing His disciples was bathed in an all-night prayer vigil to His Father (Luke 6:12-16). Jesus’ prayer intercession for His disciples in John 17 is a powerful reminder of the necessity of praying for those in our sphere of influence. Jesus intentionally modeled a vibrant prayer life to His Father and longed for His disciples to become “one just as We are one” (John 17:22). Through observing the prayer life of Jesus, His disciples realized His source of power, strength, and love. It remains evident that this awareness influenced

The Disciples MOST IMPORTANT WORK



Pete Braman
Ministerial Director

the boat to cast our nets and “fish for men” (Matthew 4:19).

John 17 is not only Jesus’ prayer for His current disciples but “for those who will believe in me” (John 17:20). This prayer aligns with Jesus’ challenge for us to “pray for the harvest” and workers (Matthew 9:38). The greater reality is our faithfulness to the great commission to “go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19). There is a desperate need to individually and corporately pray for the harvest of new disciples. Ellen White reminds us that we should “solicit prayer for the souls for whom you labor; present them before the church as objects for the supplication.”² Jesus was able to effectively pray for His disciples because he was intimately connected to their lives. The closer He got to His disciples, the more He became aware of their needs and struggles. When we are willing to walk beside those we pray for, intercessory prayer becomes more powerful. The harvest is more plentiful than ever before. Let us pray believing that Jesus will give us the courage and conviction to live the disciple-makers life.

... AN INTIMATE CONNECTION WITH

GOD IS THE FIRST WORK...

one of His disciples to plead with Jesus to teach them to pray. The rest of the verse described how John the Baptist taught His disciples to pray (Luke 11:1). This emphasis reinforces the fact that mature disciples must teach new disciples the ways of prayer.

A plethora of distractions and time constraints often clouds the prayer life of a disciple. If we take an honest look at Jesus’ ministry life, we must see that he was under constant demands, pressures, and stress. Having the weight of the world and sin on His shoulders was something we cannot fathom or comprehend. Crowds followed Him, His words were scrutinized, His life was threatened, healing was expected, and His purpose was woefully misunderstood by most. Mark 1 describes how the “whole town” came to Jesus for some form of help or healing. The next morning, Jesus was nowhere to be found. The disciples formed a search party, and when they saw him, they reminded Jesus that “everyone was looking for you” (Mark 1:37). Jesus’ example reminds us that a “solitary place,” and an intimate connection with God, is the first and primary work in a disciple’s life. The disciples felt that Jesus should go back to Capernaum and continue His ministry, but communion with His Father sent Him to another territory. Not only is prayer the key that unlocks God’s strength to help us face life’s challenges, but it is also the roadmap to help us reach other disciples. Through our relationship with Christ, He will send us to new disciple-making territories. Jesus will demonstrate which side of

¹ Miller, Paul E. *A Praying Life*. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2009) p. 257.

² White, Ellen G. *Medical Ministry*. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing, 1932) pp.244, 245.

Ven conmigo al **FUTBOL**



Rubén Bullón, Associate Ministerial Director,
Hispanic Ministries

Quando trabajaba en Brasil, todos los lunes salíamos con el personal de la oficina a jugar futbol. Eran momentos agradables y la pasábamos súper bien. Pero había un problema.

Uno de mis colegas de la oficina no jugaba futbol. En Brasil, no jugar al futbol es casi un crimen. No que no le gustaba el deporte. Le gustaba correr. Pasa que correr es un deporte solitario y nosotros lo queríamos mucho así que todos los lunes lo invitábamos: hey, ven al futbol con nosotros?! La respuesta era siempre negativa pero con diferentes explicaciones: no se jugar... so me gusta... No tengo zapatos de futbol.... No tengo con quien ir. Cada semana una excusa diferente.

¿ Ya se dio cuenta que en la iglesia pasamos por la misma situación? No importa cuantas veces invitemos, hay gente que sencillamente no quiere participar de nada. ¿Las excusas? No tengo tiempo, no se hacer, no me gusta,

tengo hijos pequeños y por allí va. Cada semana una excusa diferente. Pero dejemos ahora de pensar en mi colega pastor o en los miembros de la iglesia que no quieren trabajar. Pensemos ahora en el maestro. Una única persona le dijo no al Señor: El joven rico . Dos persona presentaron excusas que fueron prontamente rechazada por Cristo . Todos los demás, después de escuchar el llamado de Cristo dijeron "SI". Jesús no tenia nada material que ofrecer. Su predicación iba en contra lo que la gente quería. Muchos lo criticaban. Aún así la gente lo seguía. ¿Cuál era su secreto? ¿Por qué un llamado tan diferente siempre encontraba una respuesta positiva?

Mira lo que dice la Sierva del Señor: "Sólo el método de Cristo será el que dará éxito para llegar a la gente. El salvador trataba con los hombres como quien deseaba hacerles bien. Les mostraba simpatía, atendía a sus necesidades y se ganaba su confianza. Entonces les decía: "Seguidme."

“ SÓLO EL MÉTODO DE CRISTO SERÁ EL QUE DARÁ ÉXITO PARA LLEGAR A LA GENTE. ”

El "Seguidme" del maestro solamente venia después de mucha labor. Ese concepto es vital en la ganancia de almas pero también en lo que llamamos de discipulado. Las personas en la iglesia no siguen llamados, invitaciones, convocaciones o el terrorismo escatológico.

Las personas de la iglesia siguen a otras personas. Es común escuchar gente en la iglesia diciendo: "Si fulano va yo también voy" o "No quiero ir solo(a)".

Si quieres que la gente te siga y participe de las actividades de la iglesia es vital seguir el método de Cristo. Eso se llama discipulado. Involucrarme con ellos, conocerlos, ganarles la confianza. Cuando las personas me quieran, me conozcan y confíen en mi entonces es que estarán dispuestas en seguir una invitación mía. Amigos siguen amigos.

CONTINUA EN LA PÁGINA 5



Books on discipleship models derived from the life of Jesus fill libraries. You can go into a seminary library and immediately submerge yourself in books with data and models about how to encourage discipleship at your church. Many will aim at the goal of church growth or the theology of discipleship. Models range from small groups, life groups, mentorship programs, Bible studies, and the list can go on. Which model is right? Which model or method should we go with to implement discipleship at our church?

Jesus taught his disciples many things in his Gospel ministry while here on earth. However there is one specific activity that Jesus made sure to emphasize. *“Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him; ‘Lord, teach us how to pray...’* (Luke 11:1) Jesus then goes on to teach the prayer that we still memorize today: The Lord’s Prayer. In this prayer model, the first couple of lines speak volumes about what it means to be a faithful follower of God, true and complete dependence on God. A disciple first and foremost is an individual who is wholly submitted to God’s will in heaven and is dedicated to ushering that will here on earth.

It becomes clear that the first step in discipleship at our churches is not an excellent worship service, or an engaging children and youth program. It isn’t the Bible studies or the books we can ingest for the consumption of information. It is

Discipleship and PRAYER



David Quilatan,
Associate Pastor
Youth Ministries,
Bolingbrook Church

prayer. The goal might be to create intentional “spaces” for our church members to engage in prayer to God and for each other. What those look like is where we can be creative. Here are some principles in creating that space.

1. Assume that no one knows how to pray.

When the disciples asked, “Lord, teach us how to pray” Jesus already understood that this isn’t something that they are used to doing daily. Statistics show that around 50% of Americans claim that they pray every day. Therefore it would be safe to assume that if your church is open to the community and consequently new believers, then at least half of the room has never prayed before. Being able to bring prayer into our community is essential. Being able to make it relatable and ingestible to the non-believer is paramount, which leads me to the next point.

2. Whatever prayer space you make, make it safe.

It is easy to forget that our methods need to reflect our mission. If our mission is to bring prayer into the lives of our members, we have to remember that pushing a standard of prayer could result in low buy-in from members. Community members

should be able to enjoy a space where they are not just invited to prayer, but where prayer is inviting.

At Bolingbrook Church, we took these two principles and created a prayer ministry that we did not realize would work as well as it did. It started as a means to undergo 21 days of prayer leading up to a Resurrection weekend in April. The method was a prayer line where people call in, listen to a short devotional, and share their praises and prayer requests. Immediately, people joined, and prayers were answered as time went by. After the 21 days of prayer, we felt the Lord encouraging us to make this a consistent thing. Now every Monday morning at 8, our prayer line is open to everyone in our community, whether the caller is churched or unchurched. People can listen to the devotional and hear the prayers on their commute to work or getting their kids ready for school. We named the prayer line P.U.S.H., which stands for Pray Until Spectacular Happens. That is what the attenders expect, and that is what they have started to see.

People who have never prayed before reported that they have learned the way to pray simply by listening to the prayer on the line. People have learned to listen to the burdens of others and learn to pray for those people. It has gotten so much buy-in from the participants that they are starting a Facebook Group and quarterly potluck to meet and celebrate the answered prayers together. A community was formed without us trying. Soon we are going to be pushing for multiple lines throughout the week. Prayer has that effect on people. It brings us close and binds us together naturally.



“VEN CONMIGO AL FUTBOL” CONTINUACIÓN DE LA PÁGINA 3

Volvamos a Brasilia, a mi colega pastor. Un día lo invite a almorzar. Después de una rica comida le digo: quiero que vayas conmigo a un lugar. Fuimos. Llegamos a una tienda de futbol. Otro colega nos esperaba allá. Llamamos a uno de los vendedores y le dijimos: queremos transformar este colega en un buen jugador de futbol. ¿Qué tenemos que comprar? Zapatos de futbol, short, medias, playera, canilleras. Fuimos juntos. Ahora ya no tienes mas excusas. Vienes a jugar con nosotros. Amistad, confianza y algunos dólares extras. Vino a jugar ese lunes y todos los otros lunes. Siempre en mi equipo. Ahora con el corriendo en la cancha con nosotros, estábamos verdaderamente completos.



- Rubén Bullón



INTRODUCING...

Pastor Jason Salyers was reared in a Seventh-day Adventist home in California where he attended Bakersfield Adventist Academy from grades K-12. While in college at Southern Adventist University, he accepted the Lord's call on his life to train for professional ministry. Shortly thereafter he entered full-time denominational service and has since served in a wide variety of ministry settings (including a concurrent stint as a sworn law-enforcement officer (deputy sheriff) in Tennessee). As part of his doctoral education (ABD) through Regent University in Virginia, Pastor Jason developed the first-ever Office of the Ombuds-Mediator within the denominational structure of the Seventh-day

Adventist Church. Related to the creation of that role, he became a Registered Civil Mediator in the state of Minnesota, as well as certified in the foundations of the International Ombudsman Associations, and the International Institute for Restorative Practices.

Mindy (née Smith) is the daughter and granddaughter of Seventh-day Adventist pastors, educators and missionaries. Her degrees in Elementary Education (BA) and School Counseling (MA) have helped prepare her for work in a variety of settings. She has served as an educator in early childhood development, a university administrator, a K-12 school counselor, the interim Education Superintendent for a conference, and as a nationally known bully-prevention specialist working in partnership with VersaCare and La Sierra University.

Mindy and Jason were married in November of 2005 and are the grateful parents of two beautiful daughters, Brynlie (8), and Elliott (5). They enjoy spending time together as a family and love making Jesus the center of their home-life experience. They are honored to be part of the Illinois Conference, and count it a privilege and joy to share with others about the heart of God.



The Bartolome family has ministered in the Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for the past 12 years. Pastor Ira spent five years as an associate pastor with the North Cascade Seventh-day Adventist Church and seven years as pastor of the Centralia Seventh-day Adventist Church. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Andrews University and is currently working on a Doctor of Ministry also at Andrews University.

Pastor Ira's wife, Daisie holds degrees in Communications and Teaching English as a Second Language. Brooklyn is 11 and Kalina is 8 and they both attend Downers Grove Adventist School.

Their ministry in Downers Grove hopes to convey the beautiful character of Jesus Christ. In the past outreach to the community has been a valued focus. They are excited to join the Downers Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church family and discover how God is calling them to convey His love to the surrounding community.



Joshua Voigt
Pastor, North Aurora Church
Conference Prayer Coordinator

PRAYING WITHOUT CEASING

Have you ever prayed all night long? My friend Chris and I tried it one night. We wanted to spend the night in prayer. We started at 9:00 at night kneeling in our room and thanking God for all the good things He had done in our lives. We began at birth and went through our lives, thanking God for all the blessings we could remember. I peeked at my watch assuming we had at least been praying for an hour only to see the big hand pointing to the four and the little hand halfway between the nine and ten. By midnight, we were still on our knees although Chris had fallen asleep once and I had fallen asleep twice. We had prayed about everything we could possibly think to talk with God about. In fact, many times we repeated ourselves just needing to fill the empty air. The next thing I knew I woke up at 3:30 am with my legs aching. I looked for Chris and found him fast asleep in his bed. The next morning, we commiserated with one another about how we failed to stay up one night and pray. How could we ever fulfill 1 Thessalonians 5:17 where Paul urges us to pray without ceasing if we couldn't even stay up all night to pray?

Over two decades later, I have to say I have yet to stay up all night in prayer. I know some Godly prayer warriors who can do it, but I cannot. Does that mean I am a failure? It depends on your definition of prayer. Ellen White, in her book *Prayer*, puts it this way.

"Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted, and the health of the soul be preserved. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Wellspring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience (p. 12)."

Prayer is more than just the words that come out of our mouth. Prayer is our portion of meaningful communication with God. Just as I can communicate with those around me in a variety of ways, so we can do the same with God. Have you ever sent God a text message? A tweet? A snap? Or an IG? We do it to our social circles, why not God? People have used prayer journals for years to communicate with God through writing. Why not use a shorter form to send God a quick message? I text my wife throughout the day at times when I cannot talk with her. Why not God? We can pray to God through song. I love that God is described as rejoicing over us by singing (Zephaniah 3:17). Since coming back from Oshkosh, my kids cannot stop singing the Chosen theme song at the top of their lungs. Sing songs you already know or write your own. Maybe use King David's words. The Psalms are filled with songs to God. Artwork is also a form of communication that can tell God how we feel.

From the moment we first wake up to the moment we go to bed, God should be a part of our life. While I have to admit I have not perfected a 24/7 communication with God, I have established a few habits throughout the day as spiritual check-ins. Just as Israel of old was called three times a day to face the temple and pray, we can have routines that point us to God. When we are in continual communication with God, it is easier to see how He is working in our lives, which, in turn, makes communication with God easier.

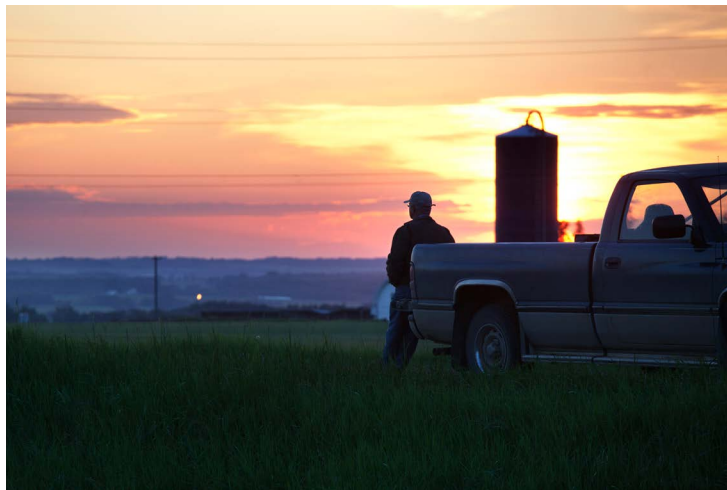


THE FINAL ACT OF STEWARDSHIP

When talking about Christian Stewardship, we usually think about faithfully returning our tithe and giving offerings to support our local congregation and the worldwide church and its mission. Besides this, we might consider using our time, talents, influence and everything we have from Him for God's cause.

All those ways of fulfilling our stewardship calling cease when we come to the end of our life journey. This is why the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes suggests:

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going." Ecclesiastes 9:10 NKJV



If Jesus does not come soon, we all will face the reality of death. We will need to leave all the material possessions accumulated during our lifetime. What cause will we support with our estate? Will those who will benefit from our plan continue to support the same purpose as us during our lifetime? Are they followers of Christ? Is your vision of finishing God's Work their vision? God's servant reminds us: "In disposing of your property by will to your relatives, be sure that you do not forget God's cause." E.G. White, Counsels on Stewardship, p. 328

Prayerfully consider how you could support God's Work by your final act of stewardship. Contact Arkadiusz Bojko, Planned Giving Consultant for the Illinois Conference.

Presenting Jesus **IRRESISTIBLY!**



Connect with us on Facebook!

www.ilcsda.org

Phone: 630.856.2850

Fax: 630.734.0926

Email: info@ilcsda.org

Address:

619 Plainfield Road
Willowbrook IL 60527

Illinois Focus Editor: Shona Cross
Design: Heather Lanphear

