

How to Point the Way and Clear the Path to Effective Discipleship

I get asked all the time how we do discipleship at Elevation. Related to this question, I also get asked how we follow up with new believers.

Do we relentlessly call people until they're in a small group?
Do we offer 57 Bible studies for people to grow in their faith?
Do we provide a yearlong systematic theology course for new believers?

We do have specific and practical things that we do. But when it comes down to it, our philosophy is pretty straightforward and simple:

1. **We point the way**
2. **We clear the path.**

1) We point the way.

Ultimately, there's nothing we can do to force people to grow in Christ. Nothing. So whether we offer a 26-option discipleship program or a 4-option one really doesn't matter. If someone really doesn't want to grow, they're either going to say no 4 times or 26.

For that reason, **we keep it pretty simple.**

We give new believers material to help them grow in the initial stages of their faith and we call and encourage them to get plugged in. We constantly stress the importance of small groups. We faithfully proclaim the Word and encourage people to read it for themselves. In short, we point the way to what it looks like to have a relationship with Jesus for themselves.

If they decide not to walk that way, that's their decision. And we've made the decision that we're not going to chase all of them down if they don't.

Some people might say to this: Is that what Jesus would do?

I don't have to wrestle with that question because it's exactly what Jesus did. **Jesus didn't hook his finger in people's noses to make sure they were following him.** When you read through the gospels, Jesus always cast His net extremely wide. *Everyone* was invited to follow. But He didn't chase people down if they weren't committed (as in the case of the rich young ruler).

The call was to follow Him. Not be dragged kicking and screaming behind Him.

All He did was point the way. To Himself.

2) We clear the path.

This is where *our* greatest responsibility comes into play. If we've pointed the way clearly and people are responding, **it's our job to make sure the path is clear** for them when they decide to walk on it. There's no room to drop the ball when it comes to people's spiritual development. If they're taking a step towards Christ, we've got to make sure that step lands unobstructed.

In other words, we've got to make sure our systems and processes are running at full speed. And running efficiently. If someone wants to get in a small group, we've got to follow up with them quickly. If someone needs counseling, we need to get them into it right away, and into the best counseling available.

Whatever approach your church uses to pull the maximum God-given potential out of people, it really doesn't matter. Whether you take people through a five-year development plan. Or you just put them into small groups and let the growth happen more organically. Your responsibility is ultimately the same either way:

- 1) Point the way to Jesus clearly.**
- 2) Clear the path to Him effectively.**

Let's commit to doing both with excellence so we can see our people become all that God has designed for them.

Read more from Steven [here](#).

Would you like to learn more about effective discipleship? [Connect with an Auxano Navigator and start a conversation with our team.](#)