

# Shepherding and Discipleship

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Ephesians 4:11–16

We, as a church, are together to make much of Christ. Valuing God necessarily involves valuing what He values—loving what He loves.

*“God loves the church with a love too deep for human imagination:  
he loves her with all his infinite heart.”*

*Charles Spurgeon*

## Application Questions

1. What can we glean from Titus 1:5, when Paul tells Titus that he left him in Crete, “so that you might put what remained into order”? According to the Bible, is any gathered group of Christians considered a church? The words, “that the things lacking thou mayest arrange” (Young’s Literal Translation) or “to set right what was left undone” (Holman Christian Standard Bible), indicate that something is appropriate to set in order before a church can be complete. What was lacking? [Hint: something needed to be appointed]
2. According to Ephesians 4:11, shepherd-teachers are a \_\_\_\_\_ to the church. Notice also that in Ephesians the church is presented in stunning majesty as precious beyond any natural apprehension (Ephesians 1:21-22; 3:8-10, 21; 5:25-27, 32), and it was to that very church that Paul is seen stressing the importance of what in Acts 20:17, 20, 28-32?
3. What was stated as the number one obstacle to Christian discipleship (Luke 14:27)?
4. What is meant by the statement: “Christian discipleship is always in relationship”? The idea of discipleship came from the Jewish concept of learning and imitating a teacher (rabbi) to which the disciple would attach himself (Luke 6:40). Consider 1 Corinthians 11:1; 4:16-17; 1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 5:2-3; Hebrews 13:7; Philippians 4:8-9. Was there ever the notion of a self-made disciple in the ancient world?
5. How does Christian discipleship relate to the local church? Read Matthew 28:18–20. The only other place that the verb “make disciples” is used outside of the book of Matthew is in Acts 14:21. What immediately followed (Acts 14:21–23). Should Christian discipleship be disconnected from the local church? Consider the connectedness of the church in the role of Christian discipleship in Acts 2:42-47.
6. What were the four elements of discipleship identified in the sermon?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ (Mark 9:31; Luke 11:1; John 18:19; Hebrews 6:1)
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ (Philippians 4:8-9)
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 28:19-20)
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ (John 8:31-32)

7. What are some other marks of Christian discipleship? Read John 13:35; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Colossians 1:28.
8. What should be the bullseye of Christian discipleship? Practically speaking, how does one help another to grow toward this goal? [Hint: providing the example and teaching the four elements above]
9. In Christ's ordained order of the church, shepherding is given to help equip the body to do what (Ephesians 4:11-12)? Does this include discipleship?

This suggests that the pulpit should be considered the first and most public means of discipleship for the church. It also follows in the examples given in the New Testament, as the church would gather to hear the Word preached (church in Jerusalem, Acts 2:42; 5:42; church in Antioch, Acts 11:26; 15:35; church in Corinth, Acts 18:11; church in Ephesus, Acts 20:20). Notice the word "teach/taught" or "teacher" being oriented to believers in the church in Romans 12:7; Galatians 6:6; Ephesians 4:20-21; Colossians 2:7; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 1 Timothy 2:7; 4:11; 6:2; 2 Timothy 1:11; 2:2. Consider also Hebrews 5:11-14.

So discipleship is something that both shepherd-teachers (Ephesians 4:11-12) and the body itself does (Ephesians 4:12-16). Should Christian discipleship take place in: (a) one-to-many teaching, (b) one-to-one teaching, or (c) both?

10. Ephesians 4:15 gives a key to the manner of discipleship among the one anothers of the church. There are two grand and indispensable necessities presented, what are they?