

MINISTRY PROCESS AND PROGRAMS (Philosophy of Ministry)

As a disciplemaking church, we affirm that we are committed to following Christ Jesus in obedience to His Great Commission (Matthew 28:19—20). A disciple is a believer who is in the process of becoming more like Christ: displaying His character, daily living out His values and disciplines, answering Christ's call to a life of service to others. Just as new born babies grow into childhood, youth and adulthood, Christians should experience a natural development of growing from one phases of maturity to the next. At Brooklyn Park Evangelical Free we see discipleship as the processes of Christians becoming **Grounded** in Christ, **Growing** in Christ and **Going** for Christ. The following Philosophy of Ministry provides a brief description of the ministries that we employ to help our people progress through these disciplemaking phases.



Defining Ministries for Whole Church Disciplemaking

The emphasis of intentional discipleship is the transformation of lives through relationship with Jesus Christ, rather than church programs. Our church is concerned about spiritual growth. We want to think in terms of “steps” or process; therefore, we will always seek to be clear about whom each ministry is trying to serve, what that ministry is to accomplish and where the participants should go as a next step of growth. We want to make it “easy and obvious” for our guests and congregation to grow, so we are clear about what each ministry or program is designed to accomplish in the disciplemaking process. Any activities that are not reflective of the effective discipleship process will be modified or discontinued.

Grounded in Christ:

There are two important commitments for Christians: first, to Christ Jesus; second, to the Church—the Body of Christ. Our weekend worship services are our primary “entry” environments. We want our guests to feel honored, so we do everything we can to welcome and include them. The primary goal is to ensure that people come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Children, youth and adult ministries all offer environments where newcomers can worship together. Other opportunities to experience our church for the first time include *Alpha*, *Celebrate Recovery*, Support Groups and invitation events. To move beyond worship attendance into fellowship we offer open mid-size and small groups: Adult Bible Fellowships, youth group, children's Sunday classes and short-term open small groups in homes.

- **Worship:** We demonstrate unity by gathering corporately at one of several worship service opportunities to celebrate the living Christ, pray, give thanks and hear from God through the proclamation of His Word (using clear and meaningful forms of communication).
- **Invitation Events:** We offer stand-alone events that are specifically designed to help our unchurched neighbors accept an invitation to our church facility. This helps break the

“building barrier” as they become comfortable on our campus. Program examples: Waffle Breakfast and Comedy Club.

- **Open Small Groups—“Come and See” Groups:** Each fall, winter and spring we offer a six-week open small group series hosted in homes throughout our area. These short-term groups allow people to move from being guests in worship to becoming friends by “test-driving” a short small group experience. When group members want to stay together they can choose to do another six-week series or go to the next level of a small group. These groups introduce believers to the basics of Christianity and assist them in developing a pattern of ongoing spiritual growth, helping them build enough commitment to participate in a “Follow Me” group. Program example: home-based small groups.
- **Support and Recovery Groups:** We will offer relational groups that address life issues in the areas of support and recovery. These groups provide loving accountability, encouragement, skill building and relationships that demonstrate the transforming power of Christ’s love in healing hurts and overcoming life’s challenges. Program example: *Celebrate Recovery*, *Divorce Care* and grief recovery.
- **Mid-Sized Groups:** We provide fellowship by meeting in mid-sized life stage groups (17—70 persons) to build community, to teach God’s Word, to include newcomers and to develop meaningful outreach to people like those in the group. We seek to continually offer a mid-sized group for every age and life-stage and seek to involve fifty percent of our worship attenders. In addition, we expect that mid-sized groups will also form discipling small groups for their participants. Program examples: Adult Bible Fellowships, *Men’s Fraternity*, Women’s Ministry Bible Studies.
- **Outreach Groups:** We will continually offer new groups for relational evangelism (the first level of the “Come and See” phase), where fewer than half of those attending are believers. These groups will meet long enough to address a specific topic or need, develop closer relationships and demonstrate the transforming power of Christ’s love. Program example: *Alpha*.

Growing in Christ:

We want to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ to unbelievers within our culture and effectively communicate in both deed and word the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Effective evangelism equals prayer for those who need salvation, plus acts of love, plus words of love, plus a clear presentation of the Gospel, plus the time and work of the Holy Spirit. We encourage all members to pray for non-Christian neighbors, family, friends and co-workers, invest in their lives and be ready to introduce them to Christ—giving an answer to everyone who asks us about the hope that we have in Christ Jesus (1 Peter 3:15).

- **T.I.P. (Prayer, Care, Share Outreach):** We encourage members to pray for and build loving relationships with non-Christians within their sphere of influence (**Prayer**), demonstrating God’s love by meeting tangible needs (**Care**), and being prepared to give a witness of the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ (**Share**). We also employ the “Teller,” “Inviter,” “Prayer” (T.I.P.) approach to whole-church evangelism. We challenge all members to accept the role of “pray-er” for the non-Christians God places in their lives and on their hearts—listing their names and needs. Next, it’s to become an “inviter” by asking these friends to

attend worship or other outreach ministries where they can hear the Gospel clearly presented by an effective “Teller.”

- **“Closed” Small Groups called “Growth Groups”:** Jesus said, “Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.” We provide accountability small groups for the purpose of “following Jesus” and becoming “fishers of men.” We use Jesus’ model to help establish believers in their relationship with God and in the basic habits of the Christian life (the “Follow Me” phase): developing Christian character, spiritual habits, caring relationships, personal outreach/evangelism and accountability. Children, youth and adults all have groups where participants can grow spiritually and serve together. These groups commit to meet for at least nine months before becoming ongoing accountability groups.

Going for Christ:

We will recognize service gifts as being equally important as leadership gifts in building a healthy, disciplemaking church. We will be a church that not only reproduces disciples, but also develops new disciplemaking churches and equips existing church leaders for intentional discipleship, starting in our own community and extending throughout the world.

➤ Ministry Teams:

1. **Ministry Teams—Serving:** We form ministry teams to meet needs within our church, our community and around the world. Some are ongoing (choir, ushers, greeters, children’s workers) while others may form for a specific community outreach event or a short-term regional or international missions trip.
2. **Ongoing Accountability Groups:** We will provide ongoing accountability groups to help maturing believers serve together as they deepen their relationship with God and maintain the basic habits of the “Follow Me” phase, while developing new habits and character qualities included in the “Be with Me” and “Remain in Me” phases. Each member is held accountable to serve on a ministry team and with the small group.
3. **Disciplemaker’s Leadership Community:** The Leadership Community is composed of apprenticed disciplemakers who have been selected on the basis of their character, faithfulness and giftedness. The Leadership Community will gather regularly as a large group and in ministry-specific small group huddles for the purpose of vision casting, skill enhancement, leadership training, nurturing and accountability. We multiply and train our new disciplemaking leaders through “on-the-job” apprentice relationships prior to their participation in Disciplemaker’s Leadership Community.

Defining Roles in a Disciplemaking Church

Though there are some unique roles listed below, Elders, Staff, Lay Leaders and Members are all expected to maintain the four core commitments that relate to our purpose, values and process: 1. to attend worship (Seeking); 2. to connect in a group (Loving); 3. to be a living witness (Sharing); and 4. to serve in the church or community (Serving).

- **Senior Pastor:** The senior pastor's role and commitment is primarily to seek God, spend time in prayer, impart God's vision, give direction, train leaders, mentor pastoral leadership, teach the Word and model evangelism and discipleship. *"Follow me as I follow Christ."* (1 Corinthians 11:1, NKJV)
- **Ministry Staff:** The role of ministry staff should follow the same pattern as that of the Senior Pastor: to seek God, spend time in prayer, impart God's vision consistent with the church leadership, give direction, recruit, train and mentor leadership, teach the Word and model evangelism and discipleship within that staff member's life and area of ministry. *"Follow me as I follow Christ."* (1 Corinthians 11:1, NKJV)
- **The Elders:** Members of the Elder Board demonstrate personal integrity and model evangelism, discipleship and Christian service. Their primary function is to set broad policies, macro-manage the business affairs of the church in keeping with the statement of faith, by-laws and this philosophy of ministry. They provide support and accountability for the Senior Pastor and, in cooperation with the Senior Pastor and Ministry Staff, seek and affirm God's vision for the church.
- **Disciplemaking Lay Leaders:** The role of our disciplemaking lay leaders is to model evangelism and discipleship, to grow in ministry skills, to apprentice new disciplemakers and to equip the rest of the congregation for ministries of service in order to fulfill God's vision for the church.
- **Partners in Ministry (Members):** The role of those who have made Brooklyn Park Evangelical Free Church their church home and have become Partners in Ministry (Members) is to grow as disciples in the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow in the spiritual disciplines and qualities that Christ exhibited, and to be trained to use their gifts and abilities to directly minister to the needs of Christians and non-Christians within the church or in the community.