IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE MAXIMUM BENEFIT, PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING BEFORE THE WORKSHOP AND ANSWER THE FEW SHORT QUESTIONS AT THE END

BASIS OF DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM

**PHILOSOPHY**

1. The major focus of the “Great Commission” is beyond just evangelism. The focus is principally to make disciples out of the believers who will then in turn evangelize and disciple.
2. There are many believers but few disciples, those that abide in the Word of God. Jn 8:32
3. To disciple is to mold the character of the believer so as to permit the character of the Lord to shine through. Discipling is also the preparation and the equipping of the believer for the ministry that God has prepared for him/her in the church.
4. The discipleship has to be based on the Bible and its principles and the changes must come from the vital relationship between the Lord and the believer.
5. The success of the discipleship depends more on the developing of the believer’s character to reflect the Lord’s character than on the believer’s ability and biblical knowledge. Christians now much more of the will of God than they practice.
6. Since the process of developing character is the most difficult part of discipleship, the program is prolonged (6 years for 3 levels plus mutual accountability for life) to permit a maximum time for the achievement of necessary changes in the believer’s character and the bettering of his ministering abilities to better serve God and His church as a leader.
7. The knowledge of data and biblical information is NOT the goal of the program so we follow the motto **"Nothing is taught until it is learned and nothing is learned until it is practiced."**
8. The goals of each subject should be these:
9. Biblically solid while and adjusting to the life of the disciple to Word of God
10. Measurable or visible, so that the believer can clearly know what needs to be done and when it has been accomplished with God’s help.
11. Personal, so as to avoid cookie-cutter mistake and to allow for the different parts and ministries within the Body of Christ.
12. Challenging to the disciple´s will and not something that is out of reach intellectually, physically or his giftedness.
13. Segmented and sequential so to lead the disciple to maturity in a measured and logical progression.
14. The process of discipleship is better done in groups where the believer can learn:
15. to relate with the other believers in their local church.
16. to trust the Lord work through him as well as other believers.
17. that being a disciple includes being integrated and discerning member of the body of Christ.
18. **Proverbs 27:17** *“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another”*. **NIV**
19. Discipleship is the process of maturing in the faith and becoming a Christ-like servant. As this is a lifelong process, the levels offered are meant to give a solid base for the disciple to continue on past the three levels. Many people need the structure and commitment to a group to maintain faithful and active in their relationship with others in the congregation. It is necessary for those that finish the three levels that:
20. The church leadership reviews and encourages in a personal meeting with each disciple at least once a year.
21. The disciple have a plan for continued growth that includes well defined goals and actions.
22. The disciple have an established relationship with another person in the congregation for regular accountability.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

1. The main goal of the discipleship program is that the disciple be a strong, fruitful part of the congregation. The disciple should have a solid base of his faith that continues to grow, reflecting God´s character. **The goal is not to simply complete the tree levels.**
2. For every concept, characteristic, and ability taught, there will be specific written goals of performance and patterns of accomplishment. These will be communicated in clear and measurable terms to the tutors and the students.
3. What is to be accomplished in each level is clearly defined, adapting every experience of that level towards that goal.
4. The students have to identify orally with concrete examples of what they have experienced because of the instruction received.
5. The focus is on oral communication of the truth and testimony since this is the usual way of communication in the churches.
6. The instruction is started at the simplest level so as to assure that all the basic disciplines and developments of character are thoroughly completed before advancing to higher levels of discipleship.
7. The student will eliminate himself from further discipleship by not doing the required work or at the point where he realizes what his part is in the body of Christ and that he doesn’t have the gifts to acquire higher levels of leadership. A rate of dropouts unfortunately occurs as the first level progresses due to a lack of a serious desire by many to grow and adjust their lives to the Word of God.
8. In every class these three areas are emphasized; **biblical knowledge, ministerial capability and spiritual character**. Every evaluation is done taking these three areas into account.
9. The instruction is progressive - each class, trimester, and level is based on the one before.
10. The instruction is flexible so as to permit the regional, cultural, and economical differences.
11. The instruction is limited to only the areas needed to disciple the student into a servant-leader in each level. More education and instruction will be given to those who are recognized leaders.
12. Trimesters are usually 9 to 14 weeks long with some time in between so as to permit the students a rest and a time to fulfill other responsibilities.

# GROUP DYNAMICS

1. A mixed and cross-generational group will stimulate learning, compassion and understanding between generations, subcultures and vocations.
2. The group should create and maintain an atmosphere of love, forgiveness, cohesiveness, encouragement and exhortation.
3. The group size is limited to between five to 10 people, so participation can be encouraged.
4. The group consists of students from the same church so the trust needed to produce spiritual maturity in each member can be easily obtained.
5. Since it is often the case that the tutor is aware of what is occurring in the life of the disciple, the disciple should go to the tutor first for advice or help. If the tutor considers that the situation is beyond them, then the tutor along with the disciples should approach the church leadership for help.
6. The discipleship group is a closed group so that there is greater trust and accountability. This also encourages greater commitment on the part of the disciple to put into practice God’s Word, to participate transparently in the discussions and to be punctual. For these reasons visitors and Christians that just want to attend and listen are not allowed.
7. At the beginning of each trimester, each person renews the covenantal commitment to participate, be mutually accountable, study and implement God’s Word in his life

# ORGANIZATION

1. The organization of the program is kept as simple as possible, it’s only changed to make more efficient.
2. The director or ministry coordinator has to have a vision and passion to train leaders in every level of the local church.
3. There should be some freedom on behalf of the director towards the tutors so the tutors can develop their talents to disciple within the limits of the program.

# TUTORS

1. The tutor is highly encouraged to develop a friendship with the disciple and his family outside the group. This helps them model their faith and observe the changes and the development of character.
2. Before being a tutor, the disciple should have completed at least two trimesters.
3. The tutors are instructed through different workshops that are organized in between each trimesters.

# QUESTIONS

1. From what you have read here, what concept or idea is the most needed in your church?

Most needed in you?
2. From what you have read, what is either new to you or has been practiced little in your life?
3. What are the attitudes you would have to change to become a part of such a discipleship group?
4. What would be the changes in the use of your time that need to take place for you to faithfully participate in a discipleship group and grow as a disciple of Christ? (Be very specific about the changes)
5. What questions do you have about such a discipleship ministry described above?