

Message Discussion Guide

THE CHURCH FOR THE NATIONS

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

November 21, 2010

Acts

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite a few learners to share about a person in their life as a child or teenager who made a big impact on their walk with Christ today. Encourage several learners to share. Explain that part of our discussion today will center around the importance of discipling the next generation.

Option 2

Encourage learners to discuss their answers to the following question:
Why is it important that we, as a church body, be flexible when it comes to discussing changes related to leadership, bylaws, and staff positions in our church?

Explain that today we will discuss the purpose behind some changes that will be occurring at The Church at Brook Hills. The changes are designed to help us more effectively fulfill the Great Commission and our responsibilities to one another as a Faith Family.

Review the Message . . .

The New Testament Church...

- Making _____ disciples _____.
- Multiplying _____ leaders _____.
- Mobilizing _____ churches _____.
- Magnifying _____ God _____.

Making Disciples...

- The foundation...
 - We are a faith _____ family _____.
 - We have been entrusted with a great _____ commission _____.
 - Make disciples of all nations.
 - Make disciples of succeeding _____ generations _____.
- The question...
 - How can we most effectively make disciples among the next generation?

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- Empower _____ parents _____...
 - Strengthen and support _____ marriages _____ and _____ families _____.
 - Equip them to make disciples...
 - _____ In _____ their homes.
 - _____ Through _____ their homes.
- Establish a _____ process _____...
 - That maximizes other _____ members _____ in the church.
 - That intentionally _____ trains _____ children and students in the church.
- The position...
 - _____ Next Generation _____ Disciple-Making Pastor

Discussion

- Enlist learners to read Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, 3:42-47.
- How did Luke, the author of Acts, describe the relationship between the members of the body of Christ in Jerusalem in 3:42-47? How were they like a family?
- Read Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8. What was the mission Christ gave His followers when He left them?
- Enlist a reader to read Psalm 78:1-8. What did the psalmist indicate was so important about the family's responsibility in the discipling of future generations?
- Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Considering this passage and Psalm 78, who has the primary responsibility of discipling future generations? Why? What is the Faith Family's responsibility?
- How does the church's mission and parent's responsibility go hand-in-hand?

Application . . .

- Considering aspects such as persecution, abandonment, and humiliation that many Christian brothers and sisters around the world face from their physical families as a result of their conversion to follow Christ; how is their Faith Family more of a family to them than blood relatives?
- Which family system will last beyond the grave?
- How is the church supposed to be like a family?
- Who do you know in your small group or our Faith Family who need the church to be their family in Birmingham?
- How have we often shirked our family responsibility to disciple future generations?
- How have we often shirked our church responsibility to disciple future generations?
- Why should our Faith Family be concerned with healthy marriages and families?
- How can we, in our small groups and as a Faith Family, help to grow healthy marriages and families—before and after they begin?
- Why must we not rely wholly on church programs to fulfill our responsibilities to our families?

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Multipling Leaders...

- The responsibilities of elders in Scripture...
 - Lead under the authority of Christ.
 - Elders belong to the church.
 - The church belongs to Christ.
 - Care for the body of Christ.
 - Nurture the flock.
 - Protect the flock.
 - Teach the Word of Christ.
 - Know the Word extensively.
 - Communicate the Word effectively.
 - Model the character of Christ.
 - In his personal life.
 - In his family life.
- The need for more elders in our faith family...
 - Elders who are shepherding this church.
 - Elders who are multipling this church.
 - In our context.
 - In other contexts.
 - Under-reached contexts in North America.
 - Unreached contexts in the nations.
- A proposal for more elders in our faith family...

Discussion

- Enlist a learner to read Acts 20:28-35, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5: 1-5 and Hebrews 13:7. What are primary responsibilities of elders/pastors/overseers according to these passages from Paul and Peter?
- Who are they responsible to? Who are they accountable to?
- Why did Paul indicate that their role was so important in the health of the body?
- Why was their personal character of importance in their role?
- What would have been the benefit of having multiple elders, as Paul indicated, in the fulfillment of their role in leading their body of believers?

Application . . .

- How can we best be stewards of our responsibility to follow leaders and our responsibility to hold each other accountable?
- Why must we measure our leaders by God's Word and not our personal preferences or by personality traits or by abilities/gifts?
- How can, and why do, we tend to rebel against authority in our lives? In our churches?
- What does this tendency toward rebellion indicate about our relationship with Christ and our spiritual maturity?

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- In adding more elders to our leadership, is there a danger of which we need to be aware regarding ignoring our own responsibility for ministry to one another?
- Do elders replace our own responsibility to make disciples of all nations?

Mobilizing Churches...

- The situation...
 - Others are listening.
 - We are _____ learning _____.
- The challenges...
 - Stay _____ focused _____ on how we can most effectively make disciples of all nations.
 - Steward influence God entrusts to us to mobilize others to make disciples of all nations.
- The solution...
 - Disciple-Making International
 - A _____ resource _____ ministry designed to awaken a passion for the glory of God in all nations by encouraging and equipping Christians and churches to accomplish the Great Commission.
 - Providing resources here and around the world.
 - Mobilizing Christians and church leaders here and around the world.

Discussion

- How could the church in Jerusalem have been distracted from their mission by the needs of the church and the discipleship growth all around them?
- Explain that it basically took persecution after the stoning of Stephen to send the church in Jerusalem to “the ends of the earth.” How were they not good stewards of the gospel entrusted to them before then?

Application . . .

- How can the attention that Pastor David and The Church at Brook Hills are getting due to his book and speaking opportunities distract us from our mission?
- How can just focusing on our own needs also distract us from fulfilling our mission?
- How can we help to keep our focus on Christ and God’s mission for us and not the massive amounts of attention that surrounds our local church body?
- How can we best be a part of the mission and not a part of any hype?
- Because we know that others are watching, why is it highly important that we seek to exhibit Christ-like behavior always in our lives and decisions?

Magnifying God...

God, give us the _____ nations _____, and do it in such a way that only You get the glory.

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- Read Acts 9:31. What was the purpose of the church in Acts?

Application . . .

- What should always drive our ministry at The Church at Brook Hills? Why do we do what we do?
- Why must this always be the purpose of everything we do?
- How can the proposed bylaws changes, leadership expansion, and new staff positions help us to accomplish this mission?
- What are our individual responsibilities to the mission, especially as relates to these changes in 2011?