

The Philippians 1 Principles for Making Disciples

Philippians 1:12-20 illustrates the core principles of discipleship from the perspective of the one doing the discipleship. Paul gives an insight into his philosophy of ministry as regards discipleship. It is noticeable that for him discipleship is not primarily about him, the leader, producing people who can help fulfil his vision or goal. It is rather about him as a leader empowering others through his exercise of the grace, gifts, and internal authority God has entrusted to him so that others can get a head start in their own calling and vision and maybe even go further and be more fruitful than himself. Even as he sees others develop and be fruitful, he is not retiring but is happy to entrust his own next steps to God, knowing that as he hands things over, new doors of fruitfulness will open for him. Everyone wins! Discipleship is in essence a philosophy of multiplication, increase, and release of others with great generosity and faith in God's overall purposes and plans.

Mike Betts leads Relational Mission, a network of churches which is part of the global Newfrontiers family. He is the author of *From the Inside Out, Relational Mission: A Way of Life*, and a soon to be published book on corporate prayer. Mike is passionate about the church enjoying her inheritance in Christ, involving church planting, gospel expansion, corporate prayer, and seeing the next generation grow into all that God has for them. Mike is married to Sue, and they live in Lowestoft, Suffolk, UK. He is part of the eldership team at Lowestoft Community Church, which he, Sue, and a number of others planted over 30 years ago. At that time Mike and Sue sought help and advice from Terry Virgo, who had begun to serve emerging churches. Terry's work and relationships with churches became the start of Newfrontiers. In 2011, Terry handed over responsibility for Newfrontiers to a number of his spiritual sons, and Mike began to lead the network that is now Relational Mission. Relational Mission works predominantly in the UK and mainland Europe but with growing connections across the world. Its network includes some 70 churches of which 30 are church plant and pioneering situations.

I. The Goal of Disciple Making – v18 '*Christ is proclaimed*'

A. His efforts were not serving his mission, but serving the mission of God

1. Not a program but a life story
2. There is providence
3. Creates opportunities for others

B. His perspective is very big. A global mission of God is underway

II. Raising those who go beyond us v 14 '*much more bold*'

A. Many select only those that they themselves can continue to surpass

B. But our ceiling should be their floor

C. Would you be content with / Are you willing to put in the effort only for someone else to get the results?

- III. Protect the gift v 15-17 '*some preach...from envy & rivalry....selfish ambition*'
- A. Protect the gift wherever possible
 - B. Character is important but if they have a gift use it, whilst working on character.
 - C. A work in progress! Character does not need to be to a standard before the gift is used (use someone unless they disqualify themselves).
- IV. Empowerment Culture v 14 '*most...have become confident...through my imprisonment*'
- A. Paul provides shade, security, empowerment
 - B. Absence of procedure that blocks innovation
 - C. It is not about me, it is through me that I serve.
- V. Security in God above security in ministry v1 '*what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel*'
- A. See providence, not a problem
 - B. My identity is who I am, not what I do.
 - C. A light hold on ministry but a firm grip on the goodness and ambition of God
 - D. Fruitfulness from providence
 - 1. Need this to personally release others with security
 - 2. Internal not external authority affects discipleship
 - 3. Set an example in word, speech, how to handle difficulty

Suggested Readings:

Clinton, R.J. (2012) *The Making of a Leader: Recognising the lessons and stages of leadership development*. Pub: Navpress, Colorado Spring. 2nd Ed.