

Self Feeding – The Word and Prayer

If we are going to be disciples that multiply, we have to be self-feeding. In other words, we should learn to be a producer, and not just a consumer of spiritual things. Many people go to church to be fed, spiritually, but that is not the primary purpose of meeting together. According to Ephesians 4:11-12, the purpose or the primary job of leaders in the church is to equip those in the church for ministry.

There are four primary ways we focus on doing this:

- Interpreting and applying scripture
- Prayer
- Body life
- Persecution and suffering

In this training, we will focus on scripture and prayer.

Interpreting and applying scripture

Read Joshua 1:8

⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Question: What do we learn about the importance of reading the Word?

Now read 2 Tim 3:16-17.

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Question: What do we learn about the Word?

Read Psalm 1:1–3 (NIV)

¹ Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.

Question: What do we learn here about the Word of God?

Here are some tools we teach to promote reading the Word in our movement:

3/3rds and Scripture

During the 3/3rds time, we learn the skills of interpreting and applying scripture. We interpret what we read and hold each other accountable to obeying it and passing it along to others. In a 3/3rds group, with the help of others, we go deeper in the Scripture.

25-30 Chapters a Week

In addition to this, though, everyone is encouraged to read 25-30 chapters a week in the Bible. This is about what you would need to read to go through the Bible in a year. For some of us, that'll be a big jump, and so we encourage you to start with at least one chapter a day and work up from there. In the 3/3rds group we go deeper on a Scripture; however, when we're reading 25 chapters a week we go much broader. You'll begin to develop a sense for the great themes of Scripture, the key concepts. The Holy Spirit will transform the way you think about everything and your mind will be transformed. It's one of the most powerful disciplines on earth.

The SOAPS tool

We have another tool to help you go deeper in your personal study called "SOAPS Journaling." For those of you unfamiliar with that tool we'll be training on it soon.

Prayer

Read Acts 2:42 and Colossians 4:2

Question: What does it look like to be devoted to prayer like the early church practiced and Paul commanded?

Read Jesus' words from John 10:27

Question: How are we able to follow Jesus?

We follow Jesus by listening to his voice. Prayer is a good time to learn to recognize the voice of Jesus.

Prayer is a key tool God uses to grow us into the likeness of Christ. In prayer we speak to the Lord, hear from His heart and mind, minister to both believers and unbelievers, and more. Prayer is a teaching tool and an evangelism tool. The Bible has a great deal to say about prayer and how to pray.

It's no coincidence that those with the most fruit pray the most. Ying Kai is a man who managed to start a disciple making movement that led to 1.7 million baptized believers (as of 2016) using DMM principles. He had big callouses on his knees and deep groves in the wood floor because every morning he would pray for 3 hours before he set foot outside to start ministering. He was unassuming and not attractive, but God knew him and honored him.

Another man started a Disciple Making Movement a few years ago with over 10,000 churches and 200,000 professions of faith in a difficult environment. He was a man of prayer of 2 hours a day. All leaders and members of the movement are regularly practicing fasting and prayer. This is typical of large growing movements. Prayer is the cornerstone of the movement we want to see.

Prayer Wheel

Ying Kai did not start out praying three hours a day. It took him years to get there. The prayer wheel is an excellent tool for growing in our capacity for prayer. It has 12 sections with 12 different kinds of prayer. By dividing prayer into 12 shorter sections, it is easier to pray more.

The prayer wheel also helps people to realize that we need to take time to listen to God. During this time of listening, we learn to hear and recognize his voice. Listening to God is critical to being his followers. We need to first learn to hear his voice in Scripture, but also through the ministry of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. This is how he can guide us to walk in the works that he has prepared beforehand for us to walk in. We need to know the principles of his will and his ways, but we also need to know the specifics of his will for us.

Prayer Walking

Prayer Walking is a simple way to obey God's command to pray for others. It is just what it sounds like - praying to God while walking around. Instead of closing our eyes and bowing our heads, we keep our eyes open to the needs we see around us and bow our hearts to ask humbly for God to intervene.

In 2 Corinthians 5:7, Paul says, "for we walk by faith, not by sight". We should strive to see our current situation from a spiritual perspective and not just physical. Prayer walking is a good tool to help us to do that. In prayer walking, we pick up clues in the environment that prompt us to pray and see the situation as God intends it to be. It also helps us to live in an attitude of prayer like Paul describes in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 when he says to "pray without ceasing."

Prayer walking is also a good tool for evangelism. When prayer walking in the community, you might approach someone and say, "I'm or we're out here praying for this community. Is there something I can pray for you about?" If they share something, you can pray for that, but you can also pray for their health, financial situation, their relationships, and their spiritual life. People are not used to someone who is not their friends and family being concerned for them, so they will be grateful. Often this opens a spiritual conversation and can result in a chance to share the gospel.