

## Introduction

If I were to ask you, "What would an ideal leadership training culture look like?", what would you say?

It would look like the way Jesus made disciples who became leaders in the church.

How did Jesus raise up leaders?

Jesus raised up leaders...

### 1. By the apprentice model of discipleship, a.k.a. "The Hebrew rabbi method"

From Practicing the Way, E1 by John Mark Comer

#### *Write on the board*

- About 60 times Jesus is called Rabbi
- Rabbi - meaning teacher
- A Rabbi went around teaching his yoke. His rule of life, to his disciples or apprentices.

## Mark 1:17-18

**17** And Jesus said to them (Simon and Andrew), "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." **18** And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Mark 8:34- To all his disciples he said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must take up his cross and follow me". Come and be my disciple.

The call of Jesus was "come and follow me". Come and be my disciple. The English word that best describes this word is "apprentice".

When we talk about being a disciple it is torn out of its first-century context. Discipleship was the apex of the Jewish education system. The Jewish education system had **three levels**.

1. **House of the Book**; kind of grade school where you would learn to read, math, memorize most, if not all of the Torah (Gen.-Duet.). You were done by age 12. If you are female you would get married. If you were male you would apprentice in the family business.
2. **The House of Learning**: learn from a full-time paid teacher; learn and memorize the rest of the OT.
3. The best of the best, the elite would become a **Talmidim** in Hebrew which is translated "disciple". You would be grilled by the Rabbi. If he thought you were smart enough, had

the work ethic, etc. He would say come and follow me and be my Talmidim. You had three goals:

- a. **a) be with your Rabbi.** All day, every day. Eat, sleep, etc. at his side.
- b. **b) become like your Rabbi.** Fishers of men was a well known Hebrew idiom. A great Rabbi was called a fisher of men because his teaching would capture people's minds. Copy his every move.
- c. **d) Do what he did.** The hope was that after a few years as an apprentice, your Rabbi would say, go now and make disciples. Be a Rabbi.

So **our goal as disciples is to...**

1. **Be with Jesus.**
2. **To become like Jesus.**
3. **To do what he did.** To carry on your Master's work is the goal.

Being a disciple can't be a hobby. Dabbling as a disciple doesn't yield the life Jesus offers. It only makes sense when it is the whole point of life. Your whole life is about an apprenticeship with Jesus. The invitation of Jesus to come and follow him.

It all starts with "abiding". Jesus raised up leaders by abiding in the Father.

## **2. By abiding in Christ**

Jesus was continually abiding in the Father. In the same way, we must abide in Christ. We must be drawing life from Christ, just as he did with the Father.

Our greatest need as church leaders is to abide in the Vine. Jesus told the disciples in John 15: 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

From our abiding in Christ flows abundant fruit, answered prayer (7), obedience to his word (10), joy (11), and love for others (17).

If we want to raise of leaders of Jesus, we must abide in Jesus. There is no other way!

From the apprentice model of discipleship, we can draw out these additional practices of Jesus.

Jesus raised up leaders...

## **3. By invitation and challenge**

*An Invitation* is "Encouraging someone to feel welcomed to join into an event, cause, or relationship.

*A Challenge* is “Being faced with an opportunity that needs great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully and therefore tests a person’s ability.

Jesus had a constant rhythm of invitation and challenge. He would invite them into his life rhythms. The disciples would have special access to Jesus. He would pour his life into the disciples 24/7. But he was also continually challenging them to obedience and responsibility.

#### INVITATION

- Come follow me and I will make you to become (Mark 1:17)
- Take my yoke upon you and learn from me...For my yoke is easy (Matthew 11:29-30)

#### CHALLENGE

- If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross (Mark 8:34)
- Peter, get behind me, Satan
- Peter, do you love me?
- Go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19)

Jesus raised up leaders...

#### **4. By both organized formal training and organic informal training**

Ask, How did Jesus carry out formal, organized training?

- As they traveled from village to village, they would go to the Synagogue to read Scripture, pray, and teach.
- On the Jewish holidays, they would worship and celebrate.
- Jesus would regularly gather a crowd and teach, like at the Sermon on the Mount.

How did Jesus carry out informal, organic training?

- They ate meals together
- They traveled together
- They worked together
- They did all of life together

In our Jesus Saturation training, we referred to this as **all-of-life discipleship**. In the American church, we are great at the formal aspects of training. We run people through a series of classes and call that leadership development. We do the “D” and “E” of the DEEPER model; demonstrate and explain. But it takes the informal, more organic settings to experience, practice, expose, and reflect to reach the goal of replication.

The best training happens in the context of “relationship”: our relationship with God and with one another.

At New Community, we've tried to keep our ministry model as **simple** as possible so that it can be transferred and reproduced. We've emphasized a more **decentralized** church so that all of us can take up the call to be apprentices of Jesus who eventually become rabbis who make more apprentices. We've tried to minimize the organized aspects of our discipleship so there is **space for the organic**.

All of us here are discipling people to follow Jesus. It's something we can't do on our own. We must abide in the branch, in Christ. Apart from Him, we can do nothing. But as we abide we will bear much fruit. In this is our Father glorified. In this, we prove to be His disciples.

Hopefully, this vision of equipping leaders like Jesus has encouraged you to think differently about your discipleship and, more importantly, stirred you to take action. Let's take some time to process and reflect on how we can equip leaders more like Jesus.

## Group Discussion Questions

1. What are the tensions you are feeling between Jesus' way of equipping leaders and your current practice?
2. What is at the heart of these tensions? Think about the 4Gs. Is there any unbelief/belief about your identity or God's identity that you need to confess?
3. Are you regularly and intentionally calling people to the next challenge in their walk with Christ? Share what has worked for you and what needs to improve.
4. Are you giving people access and invitation into your life? Think about everyday life activities such as meals, recreation, ministry, family activities, recreation, and hobbies, etc. Share what has worked for you and what needs improvement.

## Take Action

1. Jesus invested the most in those who were responsive to his invitation. The more people leaned in, the more he invested. There were the crowds, the disciples, the 12 apostles, and the inner circle of Peter, James, and John. Who is leaning in, a fast-growing shoot?

Record their names in the chart below.

2. What vehicles or opportunities, or invitation and challenge might you provide? i.e. ministry roles, responsibilities, discipleship groups, a Huddle group (a.k.a. worker team).

Record the vehicle/opportunity or invitation/challenge in the chart below.

Who is leaning in?	Opportunity/Vehicle?	Invitation/Challenge?

3. What adjustments will you make to be more in line with the way Jesus equipped leaders? Think simple, transferable, and reproducible. Think what's next Holy Spirit.

## Possible questions dump

1. What are the tensions you are feeling between Jesus' way of equipping leaders and your current practice?
2. What adjustments do you need to make to be more in line with the way Jesus equipped leaders?
3. Are you regularly, and intentionally calling people to the next challenge in their walk with Christ? Share what has worked for you and what needs to improve.
4. Who in your house church is ready for a new invitation or challenge? What would that look like?
5. Are you giving them access and invitation into your life? Think about everyday life activities such as meals, recreation, ministry, family activities, recreation, and hobbies, etc. Share what has worked for you and what needs improvement.
6. Jesus invested the most in those who were responsive to his invitation. The more people leaned in, the more he invested. There were the crowds, the disciples, the 12 apostles, and the inner circle of Peter, James, and John. Who is leaning in, a fast-growing shoot? What kind of invitation and challenge can you invite them to?
7. What action steps might you take to create discipleship groups and a Huddle group (a.k.a. Worker team) for people to experience more challenge and invitation?
8. Does your house church have opportunities and vehicles to provide invitation and challenge for each group (i.e. crowd, disciples, inner circle, etc.)?
9. In what ways have you been fruitful in integrating your discipleship with the regular rhythms of life (i.e. meals, celebrations, recreate, listen, story, bless)?