



St. John's, Hartford

121s

Round 1 - Autumn 2010

Thank you so much for signing up for a 121 discipleship partnership.

Disciple partnerships are for people who are serious about their spiritual growth and who want to commit to praying and reading the Bible with somebody else. Thank you for taking on this responsibility, it is a vital part of the ministry of the Church.

Your partner is:

It is our prayer that as you meet and read the Bible and pray together, the growth and the blessing that you experience will spill over to bless and benefit the whole Church. Very exciting stuff !

The purpose of this leaflet is to:

- ♦ remind you of the vision and purpose of 121s,
- ♦ give you some advice and handy hints about how best to arrange, prepare for and use your time together,
- ♦ suggest some resources you might like to look through, either with your partner or on your own.

The vision and purpose of 121s

‘Discipleship’ is about continually developing and learning. We should begin with the mission of Christ and our place in it.:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28: 18-20

Christ commissioned his disciples to make disciples who would make disciples. That is what we are: disciple-making disciples. Disciple-making is not just about evangelism, making disciples in number, though we all have our part in that. It is about growing too. It is the process of encouraging one another to grow in spiritual maturity.

Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever! Amen. 2 Peter 3: 17 - 18

As a member of the church you are not an expendable unit in an organisation or an institution, you are a vital part of a living organism - a body. We have a responsibility to each other to encourage one another to grow. That is why the writer to the Hebrews is so serious about meeting together and encouraging one another daily. We are charged with the responsibility of encouraging each other in Christ's mission; growing ourselves in order to grow God's church. As we mature spiritually we don't become more independent, we become more united. And this in a serving and supporting way. We should long to grow, but actually even more than that we should long to see each other grow.

Our purpose as Christ's disciples is to grow in him for his glory.

Reading the Bible together

As we meet with other Christians, we want to grow in understanding and be challenged to respond. God's Word is the water of life, if we digest it we will grow. We need to get into God's Word interactively and apply it specifically. God is not an information service. He is a person. We need to grow in our relationship with Him and 121 partnerships are a really great way to do this. It is vital that you use your time with your 121 partner to read and study the Bible together.

Praying together

Reading and prayer go together in the growth cycle of Christian discipleship. Prayer is vital for growth and flows from the waters of the Word draughted deeply into the soul as we engage in it on a personal level. Discipleship partnerships encourage the discipline of reading and reflecting on God's Word in prayer. After you have read the Bible with your 121 partner, do pray through passages and ways in which you can see it applies specifically to your lives.

Talking things through

We encourage one another in spiritual growth by speaking to one another. Iron sharpens iron, as the proverb goes. In order to see growth - even just in ourselves - it is vital to share at a spiritual level. It will be really helpful if you can let your 121 partner know exactly where you are at spiritually - where you are at with your commitment to church, where you are at in your prayer life, where you are at in reading the Bible on your own. At close quarters you will be able to see and encourage growth in one another. Try and be really honest about where you are in your walk with Christ and listen carefully as your partner shares with you. The last thing the devil wants us to do about sin is confess it to someone else and pray together about it. That is such a powerful weapon his lion's roar is reduced to a pipsqueak. But to do this takes time and trust. You might not feel ready to share these things at first. Make sure you are a trustworthy discipleship partner - this is not an excuse for gossip! - and allow the relationship to develop gradually as you feel able to share more and more.

Advice and 'Handy Hints' for 12ls

Here are some things you might like to discuss as you begin:

- ♦ **When** will you meet? How frequently? - weekly or fortnightly is best. For how long? - 45 minutes to an hour and a half is best.
- ♦ **Where** will you meet? Is one person's house easiest? Do you need to consider childcare? Will you always try and meet in the same place? Where will there be fewest distractions? - it may be that you could arrange to meet in the Church Centre if this would be helpful.
- ♦ **What** will you do? - suggestions below! Please always try and make sure Bible study and prayer are the main part of your time together.
- ♦ How much **preparation** will you each do beforehand? - it might be that one person is able to do more than another - this is absolutely fine. It is always best if you decide in advance what you will study, just so that preparation can be done if desired.
- ♦ At the end of each meeting, arrange the 'when', 'where' and 'what' of your next session together..
- ♦ Do stick to time! But allow for prayer and some general chat.
- ♦ We are asking that people commit to these pairings for the duration of this academic year. We will offer new pairings this time next year.

Suggested Resources

We are suggesting that you study:

**Women of Faith from the Old Testament by Mary Davis
(Good Book Company)**

Other good reads would be:

- ♦ One-to-One by Sophie Peace
- ♦ The Trellis and the Vine by Colin Marshall and Tony Payne
- ♦ The Jesus Way by Peter Walker
- ♦ Counterfeit gods by Timothy Keller