

8-October-2023 | Discussion Questions

A Biblical Concern for Discipleship and Growth | 2 Timothy 2-3 | 9marks.org (Pr. Mark)

1. Why is the local church such an essential part of our Christian growth?
2. How does our own growth relate to the growth of other Christians?
3. What are different responsibilities a congregation bears toward its pastors?
4. What responsibility do you think is the most dangerous if neglected?
5. Some people question whether a pastor should be paid. How would you argue that it is appropriate for a congregation to support its pastor?
6. What are ways you can improve in growing in Christ and in helping others to grow in Christ in your local church?

Lesson Notes: A Biblical Concern for Church Discipleship and Growth

A. The local church is the incubator of our spiritual growth.

1. Discipleship and discipling go hand in hand.

- a. Discipleship is the process of following Christ.
- b. Discipling is the process of helping others follow Christ.
- c. Discipleship cannot be done without discipling.

2. A healthy church is filled with people who follow Christ and help others follow Christ—this is the model of the New Testament church (2 Tim. 2:2).

B. The local church is the pastor's natural arena for discipleship.

1. Pastors disciple people with the Word of God.

- a. The Word is as central in the work of a pastor as it is in the work of the Spirit at conversion (Acts 2, 10; Rom. 10:17; Ezek. 37).
- b. The Word is our sustenance, and God equips Christians through those He has gifted to teach it (Deut. 8:3).
- c. Jesus taught with the Word and the disciples taught with the Word, understanding its role in teaching and training men.

2. Pastors cultivate an environment for discipleship to flourish.

- a. Discipleship is publicly proclaimed in baptism and the celebration of the Lord's Supper.
- b. Discipleship is done on a ground level through church membership, pastoral care, and church discipline.

3. Pastors are called to provide an example.

- a. Paul appealed to his own example (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17).
- b. In the same way, a pastor's life should be an example particularly for those they are called to shepherd (Heb. 13:7, 17).

4. Pastors must give an account one day.

- a. Pastors must give an account for their teaching (James 3:1).
- b. Pastors must give an account for their people (Heb. 13:17).
- c. Pastors must make decisions about doctrine and membership while counselling individuals from the Word, praying for their congregations, and ensuring that people are being equipped to grow in Christ.

C. The local church is the congregation's natural arena for discipleship.

1. Congregations have a responsibility to the work of their pastors.

- a. A congregation must acknowledge its elders as gifts from Christ to the church.
- b. God accomplishes the mission of the church through a congregation's prayers and support of its pastors and the work of the ministry.

2. Congregations should pray for and pay their pastors.

- a. Prayer is foundational to the work of the local church; the New Testament is filled with requests for prayers (Heb. 13:18).
- b. Pastors who labour in preaching and teaching should be paid so that they can devote themselves to the ministry (1 Tim. 5:17).

3. Congregations must hold teachers accountable.

- a. Congregations must be willing to reject false teachers, working to remove pastors who are not faithful to the gospel (Gal. 1:8).
- b. Congregations that remove false teachers actually spare them from greater judgment (James 3:1).
- c. Congregations that allow serious false teaching are responsible for it (2 Tim. 4:3-4).
- d. Congregations must seek teachers who are faithful to the Word of God so that they will know the will of God.

4. Congregations have a responsibility to love one another, stirring one another up to love and good works (Heb. 10:24).

D. The local church is the individual's natural arena for discipleship.

1. Individuals have a responsibility to the congregation as a whole.

- a. Individuals need to be respectful of the congregation's stewardship.
- b. Individuals do this by praying for others, loving others, and counselling others; we must read Scripture and trustworthy books so that we may help others grow in Christ.

2. Knit with the congregation and pastor in an environment of discipleship and growth, individuals play an important role in making a healthy church.