

Discipleship Intensive Invitation Letter

The goal of every Christian is to grow in our thoughts, words, and actions in the way of Christ. This happens as we live life, as we make commitments, and as we devote ourselves to means of grace such as Scripture reading and prayer, to name two of many. Not only is it important to us personally, it is vital to us as a people called Christians. As we grow in Christ we grow as a church.

Are you ready to make an intentional effort to grow in your faith? Are you ready to play a larger role in partnering with God to build the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth? If so, keep reading.

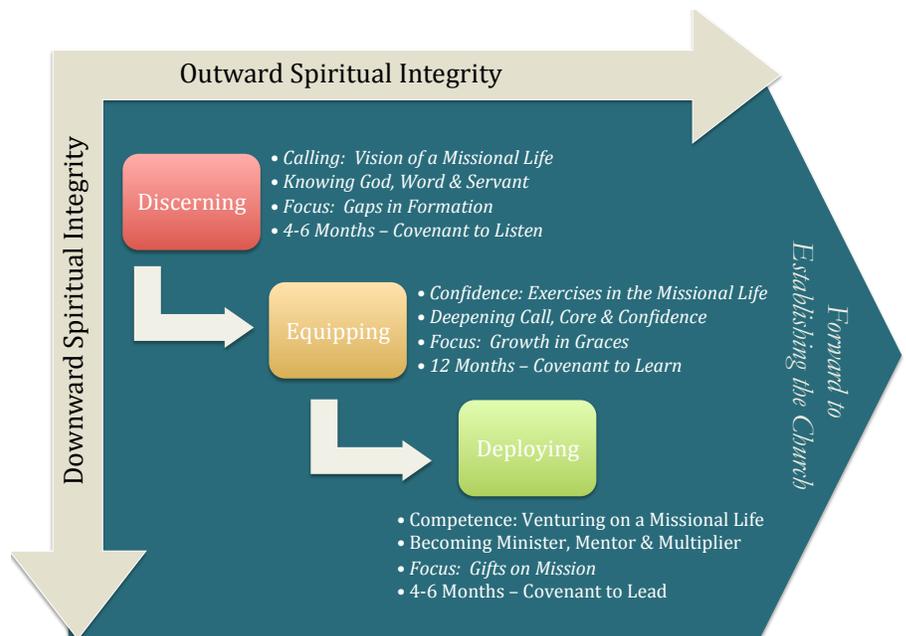
The pastoral staff across First Church has designed a discipleship journey for those who are ready to go deeper and further. It will be part small group study and sharing, part one-on-one shadowing the pastoral staff and others, and part outside reading. The commitment is high and the potential for growing we believe is equally as high.

Here is the journey:

Phase 1 - 3 months total, 8 hours per week—a weekly 2-1/2 hour meeting, 1 monthly one-on-one with pastoral staff person, 350 pages of outside reading, other “bring-back” work

This phase focuses on the introduction of calling and Christian vocation by reading and discussing Os Guinness’ book *The Call* and understanding

what God asks of us and how we can become prepared to meet the needs around us. We will also introduce and practice Inductive Bible Study (IBS), which is a method of biblical interpretation based upon a close reading of Scripture. We will also introduce the practice of Spiritual Disciplines by reading and discussing Richard Foster’s book *Celebration of Discipline*. At the end of this phase, participants will have the opportunity to continue the journey by participating in the rest of the phases.



Phase 2 - 9 months total, 8 hours per week—6 months of weekly 2-1/2 hour meetings, monthly one-on-one with pastoral staff person, 700 pages of outside reading

The remainder of the first year will focus on developing a solid understanding of theology, the Bible as a whole, and further develop key tools for interpreting Scripture to make a difference in your life and the lives of those around you. In addition to a heavy dose of Scripture, we will also finish reading Richard Foster's book *Celebration of Discipline* and discovering, practicing, and discussing a variety of spiritual disciplines that are the building blocks for our faith.

Phase 3 - 6 months minimum, 8 hours per week—a monthly 2-1/2 hour meeting, monthly one-on-one with pastoral staff person, 1,000 pages of outside reading

Phase 3 is a hands-on shadowing experience with our pastoral team and other leaders in order to develop a well-rounded idea of ministry within and outside the church walls. You will have a chance to walk with leaders during funeral and wedding preparations, hospital visits, teaching and preaching preparation, and a host of other areas. Group meetings will reinforce and continue developing our Scriptural interpretation skills as well as dive into a variety of leadership skills. You will learn how to not only interpret scripture but how to interpret the culture around us in order to begin thinking scripturally about our world.

Phase 4 - 6 months minimum, 8 hours per week—a monthly 2-1/2 hour meeting, mostly one-on-one with pastoral staff person, 1,000 pages of outside reading

This phase is self-directed based on your leadership interests. You will work with a pastoral staff person to design a set of readings and experiences to equip you to launch into the area you've identified as your calling.

The backbone of the journey is the regular meetings with a small group facilitated by the pastoral staff. We believe that the power of the process will be our dialogue together as we learn from, challenge, and support one another. It is important that we come prepared and ready to share at each meeting time.

Three key mindsets will be important.

- The first is humility. This is not for the person who has things already figured out. This is for anyone seeking to grow and willing to entertain new ideas and pathways.
- Secondly, this is for the person who is committed. There will be a limited number of absences acceptable over the course of the journey. We can't say it enough, the small group meeting is where much of the growth will take place as we process together how God is working with each of us. Therefore, as stated previously, coming prepared will be paramount to the success of the journey for you and others.
- Lastly, this is for the person who senses a call to a greater leadership role with God's people. The goal of our journey is for each person to come away with a distinct competence, confidence and credibility to lead in the church. You decide 'what,' 'where,' and 'when' based on your calling. We work with you to provide the 'how'.