

Discipleship Happens In Relationships

Because “relationship precedes task,” investing my life in the building relationships is vital to building an effective discipling ministry. I have always told my students that “the quality of our life is directly dependent upon the quality of our relationships” and I have sought to exemplify that by my life. First, of course, in importance is the fountain of life found in a fresh walk with Christ. Then, a loving and caring relationship with my wife and children sets an example and pattern for students to follow. Then comes the relationships that are vital for an effective collegiate discipling ministry.

I seek to get to know as many students as I can, beginning with those who have chosen to be a part of the ministry or have shown interest. Over the years I have seen that “tending” to my leaders is the most effective way to “take care” of the whole group. I spend more time investing in them, so they can minister more effectively to ministry participants, future leaders, and those outside the ministry.

Of course, I seek to get to know students who are not a part of the ministry as well. I seek to meet one student on campus every weekday. I have intentionally chosen not to begin a relationship with an “invitation to BCM.” Sometimes the conversation goes there, but most of the time, I just focus on getting to know them.

I have begun my own personal research project on how to reach “campus people groups” who are not as involved in the BCM ministry. I am finding students who are a part of “unreached” groups and “picking their brain” about their perceived needs and ways to help them, not just to get them in BCM. We are doing a much better job of reaching girls in sororities and in reaching cadets, but men in fraternities and athletes are our some of our “unreached people groups.” We have had a few at times, but no effective multiplying ministry. I am finding students who are “willing to talk” when asked the right questions.

Here are some Questions for students in ‘unreached groups’:

What do you think are the greatest needs among [Athletes/Frat Guys/Etc.]?

What problems are evident among [Athletes/Frat Guys/Etc.]?

Where are [] hanging out when not busy?

In what ways do [] have help to . . .

...have spiritual needs met?

...make wise decisions?

...be effective/happy in relationships?

...plan their future?

...deal with past/present problems?

How would you/they respond to a study of what the Bible says about these areas?

What would make you even happier than you are now?

What would be the response to a chaplain among [Athletes/Frats/Etc.]

How could I make it known that I am [and resources are] available to them?

I believe spending time with students I am not as “comfortable” with will keep me sharp in ministry.

Every year I plan to spend more time on campus, but find myself over time retreating more and more to the center to “take care of business.” I enjoy spending time with students that “like me” and are eager to learn and grow. But, I must also be where my target group is. And my target group is all students!

I also plan in the coming years to spend more time visiting faculty and administration. That has been my plan for the last two years, but has not lasted beyond September. What will make the difference this year and following? I’m not sure, but this plan is bound to help!