

PERSONAL REVIEW



DISCIPLESHIP, VOCATION AND MINISTRY TEAM DIOCESE OF GUILDFORD

'FAITH4LIVING'

***'Go therefore to all nations and make them my disciples . . .'* Matt 28.19a**

Background

Following the Bishop's reorganisation of Departments, the newly created DVM Team now includes Adult Learning and Spirituality.. The Team spent some time together revisiting how discipleship might become more of a central issue in our work. We talk a lot about lay discipleship but the national Church provides no real financial resources for training or educating lay people. Most parishes offer a whole range of opportunities. Some are quite programmatic and organised with groups for every stage of belief and belonging; others have a less formal approach. Some allow almost anybody to do anything and others guard areas of ministry and church life quite closely.

It's relatively easy to get access to a range of courses, books, websites etc (and the diocesan list of courses and resources is on the website.) Jo Walker and a cross-departmental group have produced an interesting discipleship course '***Living your Faith***' and this is available in hard copy or electronically. The Summer School offers an annual opportunity for a range of short sessions open to all.

Discipleship Review Tools

As part of a range of discipleship resources, we are producing two sets of self-review guidelines for use in places where Christians meet – primarily congregations in parishes. One is for individual use (though it might then be shared with others) and one is for community use e.g. PCC, Home Group. The review forms will be available in all kinds of media.

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It is important to know that this resource is **NOT**

- a data gathering exercise
- a test
- a sneaky way for 'the diocese' to check up on you
- a requirement
- a suggestion that you aren't 'doing discipleship' in lots of ways already
- something which needs to be sent back to somebody
- a statistical analysis
- a full and comprehensive list of everything there is to know about discipleship
- a new course with lots of right answers

This resource **IS**

- an initiative to support the Bishop's 'Common Purpose' ie growing in numbers, growing in spiritual depth and growing in community engagement
- an offering as another way of thinking again about discipleship to supplement what you already do
- some starters for discussion, reflection and thought (individually or communally)
- brief and generalist
- an opportunity to see where you or your Church might grow, eg are you hot on scripture but not so hot on interpreting scripture for the workplace?
- a balanced look at being a disciple based on 4 key areas (with lots of overlaps)
- a process owned by all of Bishop's Staff

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Whatever your context or tradition, this is an offering for you to use as you choose. Of course, we'd like to hear how it works out for you and others and we'd also be more than willing to come to any event to develop it with a group; but primarily it's meant to be a jumping off point for further development. Once you have thought about any/some/all of these questions (and it's probably most productive to focus on one session at a time) – you may find that you have another set of questions which have been prompted by your reflections. Why not find a friend or two, or a group and share your thoughts with them?

We have tried to be holistic and present discipleship as something which affects every part of our lives including worship, prayer, study, work life, leisure and relationships etc - but we have simplified this into 4 themes. Of course, there is a lot of overlap but it has helped us to think about balance and how to open up conversation.

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The 4 themes are

Rooted Faith: how can we be a disciple unless we study scripture, understand how the Church came into being, know something about the Church of England (if we claim to be an Anglican) or Methodism , and engage in regular prayer and worship.

Working Faith: however we spend our days – in employment, unemployed, volunteering, job seeking, studying, retired, at home with children – and the list is endless - disciples need to be disciples all the time. Does our faith ‘work’ when we are at work? Do we see our ‘secular’ lives as separate?

Responsible Faith: the environment, social justice, fairness, equality, stewardship, food production . . . how do we behave responsibly if we believe that God’s world is a gift?

Sharing Faith: being a disciple means witnessing to our faith whether that’s by telling stories, having a chat, engaging in direct evangelism, writing articles , being creative – and embodying Christ so that people see our faith and want to share in it.

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A. Rooted Faith

1. Do you have a regular time for daily/weekly prayer; and has your way of praying changed over time?
2. How often do you read the Bible – and do you use the same series of notes or approach? Would you consider new formats / approaches to Bible reading?
3. How important do you think that corporate worship is, for a disciple?
4. Do you ever discuss your discipleship with a soul friend/prayer partner/spiritual director?
5. What efforts have you made to learn about the opinions and views of Christians from other churches – and/or of those of other faiths?
6. Have you considered joining a reading group/film group to broaden your experience?
7. Would you consider learning more about the way the Church has developed through the centuries – and how its structures work?

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B. Working Faith

1. Does your faith impact on how you behave at work or in the kinds of work you do? In what ways?
2. Would your colleagues/friends know you are a Christian?
3. What connections do you make between what you do all day (work, home, parenting, retired) and discipleship?
4. How do you manage any conflicts between your faith and how you conduct your life?
5. Does your faith help you to make ethical decisions? Can you think of an example of when this was so?
6. Does your faith motivate you to volunteer, take on extra roles or activities (in or out of Church)?
7. How does God's love for you – and your love of God – affect your relationships with your neighbours?

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C. Responsible Faith

1. What connections do you make between what you buy / consume and your faith - including what you eat and drink? eg do you buy strawberries in winter?
2. How broadly do you think about the stewardship of your gifts – money, possessions, talents, time, investments?
3. Do you believe that ‘all things come from you, O Lord, and of your own do we give you.’? What effect does this have on you?
4. Does your faith affect how you interact with the environment and the resources of the world, from a local to a global level?
5. Is it important for a disciple to take an active part in citizenship and politics – if only to vote at every election?
6. What is your Christian approach to the way you spend your free/leisure time? Do you manage a good work/life balance?
7. How do you view and engage with our information / IT society and knowledge economy? Does this raise issues for Christians?

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D. Sharing Faith

1. Do you look for and take opportunities to share your faith on a one-to-one basis?
2. Would you think about praying for an individual to come to faith/grow in faith?
3. Have you ever been conscious of influencing another person's faith journey?
4. When was the last time you spoke about your faith outside of a church context?
5. How does the way you live your life commend your faith to others?
6. How important is it to listen to others' experience of faith/non-faith?