

Ten Principles of Growing Disciples

St. Paul's Summerville

1. People grow best as followers of Jesus when they are building open honest relationships with others.

The norm: we have relied on a classroom model. A teacher teaches and people learn.

The reality: the best teacher for followers of Christ is the experience of being in relationship with others – like the model Jesus used living life with his disciples.

2. People grow best as followers of Jesus Christ when they have to wrestle with applying the truth of God's Word to their lives.

The norm: a lecture or Bible study where one teaches and others listen.

The reality: insight comes through reflecting together on how it's going putting God's Word into practice in my daily life.

3. People grow best as followers of Jesus Christ when others in their group are dissimilar in background, experience, and how they think.

The norm: we prefer a group where everyone is just like me and we affirm each other.

The reality: "life rubbing against life" sharpens us - when we are challenged to think about what we believe and why we believe it and how we live out what we believe.

4. People grow best as followers of Jesus Christ when they hear each others' faith stories.

The norm: we are private about our faith and the last thing an Episcopalian wants to do is give his or her testimony.

The reality: the power of the Holy Spirit is unleashed in giving testimony.

5. People grow best as follower of Jesus Christ when they spend time learning to pray together, and supporting all they do with prayer.

The norm: in most gatherings we get prayer over with quickly at the beginning, and run out of time for it at the end. We let one person do the praying for the whole group.

The reality: it is in praying together, hearing others, practicing, bathing what we do in prayer that we learn to pray and experience the power of prayer

6. People grow best as followers of Jesus Christ when they invest considerable time – consistently, daily, weekly, monthly and yearly.

The norm: We are very busy people.

The reality: our two natures – the worldly and the spiritual – are at odds. The one we feed is the one that grows.

7. People grow best as followers of Jesus Christ when they experience discomfort.

The norm: We generally think of discomfort as something to be avoided and the signal to stop doing whatever is causing the discomfort.

The reality: being pushed and pressed and challenged to deal with things we don't want to deal with is what causes us to think, to wrestle, to hear and see ourselves in relation to the truth of God's Word.

8. People grow best as followers of Jesus Christ in the midst of *doing* ministry.

The norm: we think you have to be trained and know a lot in order to do ministry.

The reality: you don't have to be a "mature" Christian to do ministry – doing ministry is an important catalyst for becoming one.

9. People grow best as followers of Jesus Christ when they are held accountable.

The norm: Most of us dislike being held accountable only a little less than we dislike having to hold someone else accountable.

The reality: we need the support, encouragement and truthful feedback of brothers and sisters in Christ to continue overcoming our sinful nature and the pull of the world.

10. People grow best as followers of Jesus Christ when they invite others to meet Jesus.

The norm: We think we have to have a gift, or be knowledgeable, to share the good news of the Gospel with others.

The reality: The Holy Spirit takes our willing efforts and uses them to draw others and at the same time, to grow us in the ability to share Christ.

At St. Paul's we are implementing all 10 of these principles for growing followers of Jesus Christ.