

TPC Discipleship Huddles

Overview:

Jesus departed earth with the following instructions:

*“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore **go and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* (Mt 28:18-21)

The word for disciple in the bible is *mathētēs* and literally means learner or pupil. This learning is not primarily an increase in head knowledge. It involves the re-orientation of ones entire life (heart, mind, soul and strength) around a teacher, in our case, Jesus Christ.

In the book Building a Discipleship Culture (2011), Mike Breen writes:

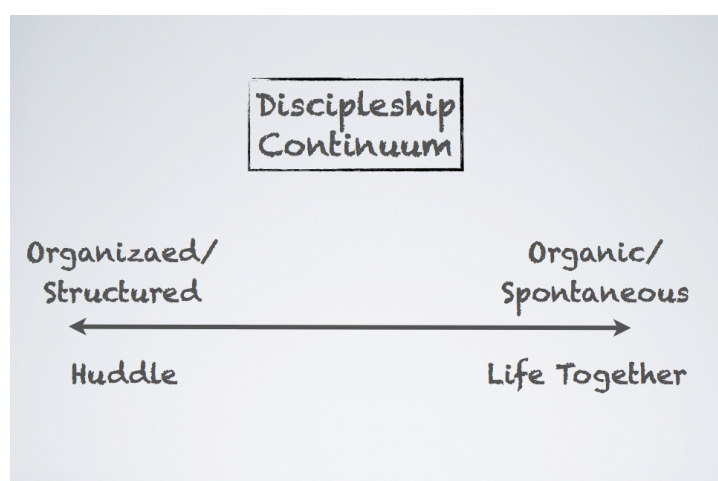
“We don’t have a missional problem or a leadership problem in the Western church. We have a discipleship problem. If you know how to disciple people well, you will always get mission. Always”

Making disciples, it seems, is at the heart of what it means to be a church.

What is a Huddle?

Huddle is a structured way to support the formation of a Christ-centred culture where people become disciples.

Huddle is not discipleship. It is a component of discipleship. Consider the following continuum ...



Jesus chose 12 ordinary people and spent significant time with them, reshaping their character through a dynamic interplay of teaching (passing on of information), apprenticeship (do and learn activity) and immersion (living life together).

Huddle is modeled on this approach and contextualised for our culture, providing a structured, predictable fortnightly rhythm where leaders spend intentional time with people they are discipling. It allows for purposeful training in the tools, practices and vocabulary of imitating the life and ministry of Jesus.

When combined with spontaneous, organic, impromptu activities of 'life together,' it can act as a powerful mechanism to equip people for spiritual life and fruitful mission.

In summary, a Huddle is:

- A group of up to 12 people (but usually 4-8 people).
- For current and future leaders (requires a willingness to learn to disciple others).
- Led by a leader (i.e. modeled on rabbinical discipleship where a person has a life worth imitating, rather than just skills as a coach or facilitator).
- A closed set (not something to bring a friend to; people invited by the leader).
- A place of high commitment (fortnightly meetings and honest environment).
- A place to learn a discipleship language (Life Shapes).
- Relaxed and fun.
- A place to receive encouragement and participate in honest accountability
- For a season only. Huddles usually involve a 1-1.5 year commitment and then disband, with huddle members starting their own huddles.
- Something that multiplies over time.

What is the commitment?

Huddle involves a high commitment. This is one of the reasons a Huddle is so successful in helping people become disciples.

It involves a commitment of time.

When someone decides to join a huddle they commit to attend most, hopefully all sessions. As a general rule when booking your calendar, huddles come first and other commitments are booked around it.

Obviously life circumstances will sometimes get in the way (i.e. a planned family holiday), but tiredness or general busyness is not considered a valid excuse for missing huddle.

It involves a commitment of the heart.

Huddle asks two simple questions to help people to look and act more like Jesus:

- What is God saying to me? And what might I do about it?

This is a rich and rewarding process but one that requires a willingness to grow.

Some people will decide that huddle is not for them. This could be because of the huddle structure, the leader or because the timing is simply not right. All of these reasons are 100% fine! Be reflective and honest with yourself before diving in.

In practice, a huddle commitment is as follows:

- 1.5 hours twice a month for 12 months (time & day decided by Huddle leader).
- Willingness to serve and be led, in the context of the Huddle format.
- Willingness to learn a new discipleship language (Life Shapes). This language isn't just head knowledge, but a language that is incarnated into how you live.
- Willingness to participate in a safe, honest environment of accountability, encouragement and challenge.
- Willingness to buy and read Building A Discipleship Culture by Mike Breen.
- Openness to spiritual challenge and transformation by the Holy Spirit.
- Openness to consider, down the track, the possibility of starting your own huddle to disciple others (or to lead others in another area of calling).

Interested in joining a Huddle?

New Huddles are started each year across TPC, based on demand, leadership and our capacity to disciple new people.

If you are interested in finding out more, then please let Ant or myself know... we'd love to have a conversation over coffee!

Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'DSH'.

Daniel Sih