

christ church  
moreton

MAKING DISCIPLES

GROWING DISCIPLES

BEING DISCIPLES

CHRIST CHURCH  
HOME-GROUPS  
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2015

Let your light shine before others  
that they may see your good  
deeds and glorify your Father in  
heaven.

*Matthew 5:16*

Last year our P.C.C. spent some time asking “Why is Christ Church here?” What is God’s purpose for us as a church? And as you will know, the answer we came up with is that our reason for being here can be summed up as:

- Making disciples
- Growing disciples
- Being disciples

We should be making disciples – sharing the good news of Jesus and seeking to bring others to know and follow him. We should be growing disciples – those who come to faith should find the help they need at Christ Church to grow in their knowledge and love of God. But discipling isn’t just something we do to others – no matter how long each of us have been Christians we should be growing ourselves as disciples in our work with the Lord. We should all be being disciples.

# 1. Making disciples

## WELCOME

What do you get most enthusiastic about?

## WORSHIP

Psalm 145 tells us some wonderful truths about God – and also encourages us to tell others about him (v.4-7) Praise God for the things this psalm tells you about him – and pray that he will help you to *proclaim his great deeds* to others.

## WORD

In one sense, making disciples is something that no church can do. Ultimately it is God's work to do that – Jesus said *'All those the Father gives to me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.'* John 6:37, and *'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them.'* John 6:44.

But it is also true that Jesus' last command to his disciples was: *'go and make disciples of all nations'* Matthew 28:19. God uses his church to bring about his work of making disciples. It is us who have been entrusted with the gospel, without which no-one can ever begin the journey of discipleship.

## Read Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus told his disciples that they should be doing good deeds which others around can see. He also said that they should let their light shine – there should be something which would show that those good deeds were done for God's glory.

- What sort of good deeds are Christ Church involved in?
- What light is needed in order for these to bring praise to God?
- Why might we be tempted to hide our light?

## Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

*We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. (verse 3)*

Faith, hope and love are three hallmarks of Christian faith. Paul mentions them again in 1 Thessalonians 5:8, and in 1 Corinthians 13:13. He also links the three together in Ephesians 4:2-5, Colossians 1:4-5, Galatians 5:5-6, Romans 5:1-5.

- Why do you think these three things are so central to the Christian faith? (It might help to look up the passages listed above.)

Here Paul says that the mark of authentic faith, hope and love are that they lead to action.

- Why is it important that work in the church flows from faith, rather than from any other motive?

*They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the true and living God. (verse 10)*

That is the starting point for discipleship – turning from following false gods to following the true God. And our society is full of false gods which people worship – money, sex, leisure, their gardens. But because these things are ordinary elements of everyday life, it can be much more difficult to realise when they have become *idols*.

- Are there things which you once used to worship, which now you have turned your back on because you are a Christian?

*The Lord's message rang out from you. (verse 8).*

These Christians were active in many ways, but they were also proclaiming the good news. Not only were they doing good deeds, their light was also shining.

- In what ways is the Lord's message ringing out from Christ Church?
- Are there more things we should be doing?

*And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. (verse 7)*

I guess that at this point, we could ask, 'and how does Christ Church shape up to that model?' But instead, let's ask the question about ourselves as individuals – the people that make up Christ Church.

- Do you have the sort of faith, hope and love which the Thessalonians had? What could you do to strengthen these things in your life (and thus in Christ Church)?

- Has the gospel transformed your life?
- Are you a model for others to imitate, or are there things about your life which you would want to keep hidden from others?

*Read Colossians 4:2-6*

- What are the connections between prayer and evangelism?
- What could 'devoting ourselves to prayer' mean for us?
- What do you think Paul means by saying we should be 'watchful and thankful' in our prayers?
- What does it mean to be 'wise in the way we act towards outsiders'?

#### WORK

In Ephesians 6:19, Paul says *Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.* Are there people who you would like to share the good news with? Pray for opportunities, and pray that when those opportunities arise, God will enable you to use them wisely.

## 2. Growing disciples

### WELCOME

Would you rather live in the city or the countryside? Why?

### WORSHIP

Psalm 62 is a reminder of the importance of maintaining our relationship with the Lord – when we drift away from him we lose the source of all that is good in life. Use this psalm together to thank God for the rest that we can have in him, and to ask him to keep us 'in him'.

### WORD

One of Jesus' most famous parables was about The Sower. The seed was sown on different types of soil, with different results.

*Then he told them many things in parables, saying: 'A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Matthew 13:3-8*

The first type of soil was completely unproductive – the seed didn't even begin to grow. But the next 2 soils were different; in each case growth started, but then stopped:

*The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. Matthew 14:20-22*

Making disciples is only the start. Because as a church we are responsible for those who do come to faith – we have to help them to grow into mature disciples of Jesus.

### *Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12*

*Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. (verses 7-8)*

Paul was no 'hit and run' evangelist, even though he had been forced to leave Thessalonica so early. He had a real passion for these young Christians.

I guess that in our context we might rewrite this to say 'We loved the new Christians at Christ Church so much that we delighted to share with you not only our Sunday mornings, but our lives as well.'

- What things in our society make it difficult for us to share that depth of relationship with others in the church?

- How can we have that sort of love for people we find it difficult to get on with?
- How can we build the sort of relationships with new people that will help them to go on and grow as disciples?

### *Read 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5*

*I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labours might have been in vain. (verse 5)*

Paul was clear that the church is in a spiritual battle, and that we do face temptations as a church, not just as individuals. His key passage on this is *Ephesians 6:10-18*.

- In what ways does the devil tempt young Christians away from the Lord?
- How can we help them stand firm?

### *Read Hebrews 10:19-23*

- *How is it possible for us to draw near to God? What has Jesus done to make it possible?*
- *How can we have full assurance of faith?*

- *Why should realising this make us want to 'spur one another on towards love and good deeds'?*
- *Why should looking forwards to the return of the Lord Jesus (the Day, v.25) make us want to meet together and encourage one another?*
- *What would you say to a Christian who said that they don't go to church because they don't get anything out of it?*
- *Do you find times of meeting with other Christians encouraging? What should be involved in being an encouraging community?*

### *Read Matthew 18:1-6*

We have a responsibility to nurture young Christians – to help them grow as disciples. But that responsibility includes the children within Christ Church – we need to help them to grow into mature disciples of Jesus.

- *What sort of things practically might be involved for us in welcoming children in Jesus' name?*
- *How might we cause one of these little ones to stumble?*

### 3. Being Disciples

#### WORK

Not all of us are outgoing extroverts who find it easy to make friendships. But we do all have a part to play in being a church committed to growing disciples.

- Do you have those in your group who do have the necessary gifts for nurturing new Christians? Or those who could work with our children / young people? How can you as a group support them in doing this?
- And if you don't feel you have anyone like that, pray that God will be raising such people up in Christ Church.
- Whilst not all of us are good at building friendships with new people, we can all actually speak to someone new, if only to say that it is nice to see them! So – will you take up the challenge of this Sunday saying 'hello' to someone you've never spoken to before, and helping them to feel that you are glad they are there?

#### WELCOME

What was your ambition when you were young?

#### WORSHIP

Psalm 27 encourages us to focus our eyes on the greatness of the Lord (v.4) Use the psalm together, asking that in this study you will all see Jesus more clearly.

#### WORD

What comes into your mind when you hear the word 'Lord'? In our society it is an increasingly uncommon word – we have the House of Lords, but as we occasionally see, the Lords have no actual power – if the Commons decide to pass legislation ultimately the Lords cannot prevent it.

So the title 'Lord' is essentially a ceremonial one, a title of respect, maybe, but not one with any real clout. And because that is the situation in our society, it is all too easy to have the same attitude to Jesus. We call him 'Lord', but that can just be a title we give him that has no real content.

It would have been very different for the early Christians. They lived in a society where 'lords' had absolute power. To acknowledge someone as your lord meant that you were their servant, or their slave. You did what they said. And if we are disciples of Jesus, that is

our relationship with him. He is our Lord, therefore we are his servants.

### **Read Mark 12:28-44**

Our relationship to Jesus as Lord is not a relationship of fear; we are not called to serve him because he forces us to (he doesn't force us to do anything) but out of love for him.

The instruction about loving God (taken from Deuteronomy 6:5) is, of course, very well known. It might be that talking of heart, soul, mind and strength is just a way of saying 'all that you are', but in practical terms, what might it mean to love the Lord

- with all your heart?
- with all your soul?
- with all your mind?
- with all your strength?

In Deuteronomy 6:5 the original command is linked to there being only one God - *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one*. So there is no-one else worthy of the absolute love and devotion which is due to God.

- How does what Jesus says in Mark 12:35-37 show that such love is also due to him?
- How does the action of the widow in Mark 12:41-44 show what it means to love the Lord?

### *Read John 15:1-17*

Jesus' instruction to his disciples in this passage revolves around three symbols – the vine, the gardener and the branches.

- Why does Jesus call himself the vine?
- What does it mean for us to be branches?

Instead of commanding us to bear fruit, why is Jesus' only command 'Remain in me'?

- What does it mean to remain in Christ?
- What are the things that can work to prevent us from remaining in him?

The fruit produced by the branch is sometimes viewed as referring to new converts. But branches produce grapes, not other branches.

- What other possible meanings are there for the fruit?
- What is the relationship between remaining in Jesus, and effective prayer?

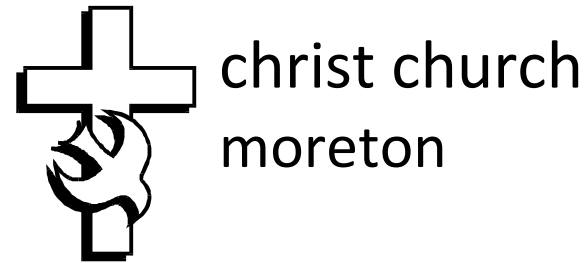
The Father prunes fruitful branches to make them more fruitful. In what ways does God prune us?

- Have you had experience of the Father's 'pruning' in your life?
- What were the results?

## WORK

We sometimes sing: 'Jesus, all for Jesus, all I am and have and ever hope to be.' That is the right attitude of a servant to their Lord – but it is not always easy to sing such things with integrity. In what areas of your life are you most aware of the challenge of Jesus being Lord?

Jesus isn't our Lord solely as isolated individuals – he has given us one another, so that we can be disciples together. Are there ways in which as a group you can encourage one another in the areas of life where we struggle to receive Christ Jesus as Lord?



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**making disciples, growing disciples,  
being disciples**

# CHRIST CHURCH, MORETON

We want to be a **W**elcoming Church

*Because Jesus welcomed all who came to him*

an **E**vangelising Church

*Because we believe that everyone has the right to hear the  
Good News of Jesus*

a **L**oving Church

*Because Jesus commanded his followers to love one  
another*

a **L**earning Church

*Because we are in the business of making disciples, and  
disciples must always be learners*