

# DISCIPLE-MAKING IN A LOCAL CHURCH CONTEXT

*“Discipleship is the intentional training of disciples, with accountability, on the basis of loving relationships.” (Bill Hull, The Disciplemaking Pastor)*

*“A disciple is a learner, a follower, a reproducer or a lifestyle characterized by obedience, love and fruitfulness.” (Howard Hendricks)*

*“There’s nothing more exciting than helping another person become a Christian – except helping that person into an exhilarating experience of discipleship.” (Lloyd John Ogilvie)*

*(Vision is) “an act of seeing – an imaginative perception of things, combining insight and foresight. ...It is a deep dissatisfaction with what is and a clear grasp of what could be.” (John R.W. Stott)*

Acts 11:19-30 provides a template for church based discipleship.

<sup>19</sup>Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews.

<sup>20</sup>Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup>The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

<sup>22</sup>News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. <sup>23</sup>When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. <sup>24</sup>He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

<sup>25</sup>Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, <sup>26</sup>and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

<sup>27</sup>During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. <sup>28</sup>One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) <sup>29</sup>The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. <sup>30</sup>This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

## DISCUSSION

1. What does this passage say about evangelism and its place in the ministry of the local church?
2. What other core values for a local church do you see in Acts 11:19-30?
3. What principles of discipleship do you see in the examples of Barnabas and Saul?
4. What does verse 26 say about the results of their disciple-making? (See also verses 27-30 and Acts 13:1-3.)
5. Glance briefly at Acts 15:1-2 and Galatians 2:11-14. In general terms, what do these scriptures prepare us to expect if we approach ministry the way they did at Antioch? What hindrances have you seen in local churches?
6. In what ways might the church at Antioch be an example of what a local church should be? (See also Ephesians 2:14-3:12 and Acts 13:1.)
7. Discuss the role of the Holy Spirit in the disciple-making ministries at Antioch. How does this influence your own approach to discipleship?