

“Discipleship On Steroids”

Our annual elder prayer retreat is coming up on February 5-6. Our theme is “Discipleship On Steroids”. We will dig into the Bible to discover what it teaches about the importance of making disciples, how to do that, and then discuss what this means for our congregation. We will also spend a significant amount of time in prayer and simply getting to know each other better. Please pray for us.

The theme of this retreat stems from my conviction that though the chief end of the Church is to glorify God and the main means of doing this is loving God and others, the primary path taken to this end is one of making disciples.

What this looks like is each Christian allowing someone else to come alongside them to encourage and equip them to walk with Christ. In turn, that same Christian comes alongside someone(s) else to introduce them to Jesus Christ and/or to help them grow in Him.

Our task at the retreat will be to pray through different ministries of the congregation to discern how we can more effectively and fruitfully equip others for kingdom life and work. We want to help each other serve Christ more effectively on our jobs, train our sons and daughters in the instruction which is from and about the Lord (Eph. 6:4), and utilize our spiritual gifts to His glory (1 Corinthians 12). Here are some ways this can already happen.

First, during the month of March I will preach a series of sermons entitled *The Trellis And The Vine*. This title has been borrowed from a recent book by Colin Marshall and Tony Payne. The main thrust of the series will be that the main ministry of the church is not to maintain and preserve the trellis (all the ministry structures). Instead, it is to grow the vine (make disciples through the work of the gospel). The trellis (the structures) is important only to the extent it is supporting the vine (disciplemaking).

Second, no Christian will make disciples effectively unless he or she is in the Scriptures regularly. If you are not, then I encourage you to make a commitment to read and study the Bible. One place you can start is by going to the *Resource And Links* page of our web site (mindenefc.org) and printing off **THE ONE YEAR BIBLE** reading list. Then, follow that this year. To

help with those readings I am daily writing a brief guide on my blog, *The Joyful Follower*: joyfullyfollowing.blogspot.com. I encourage you to take advantage of that.

Next, use the daily Bible reading and my daily guide in devotions with your spouse and/or your family. This is a great way to learn how to invest in those closest to you.

Finally, if you are interested in discipling someone right away, visit the *Articles And Index* page of our web site, print off, and follow the practical how-to guide, *Minden Evangelical Free Church Discipleship Overview*, under the *Discipleship* heading.

Please stay tuned for a great adventure this next year!