

What Is Your Church's Discipleship Ratio?

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Definition

A "discipleship ratio" is defined as the difference between those who are part of the church family (on the books as members and people just attending) in comparison with those who are actively involved in fruitful ministry. This ministry may take place inside the church building on Sabbath. But it also must include those who are actively reaching lost people outside the building. They are called to ministry in their neighborhood, at their workplace, in their family, and in the community where they live.

High Value Principles

- **Equally Valuing Every Person that God Sends to Be a Part of Your Church Mission Team**

God values each of His children and calls them to active witness: young children, young adults, and older ones, women and men. Pastors are called specifically to invite each disciple into fruitful, active ministry based on their spiritual gifts. They join God in fruitful ministry as He gifts them and helps the leadership team to equip the church family members for outreach. The church's leadership role is lived out through mentoring, encouraging, and supporting ministry initiatives. The ultimate goal is for each disciple to become disciple-makers multiplying the gospel army. There is nothing more beautiful or profound than being part of the baptism of a new disciple of Christ you had a part in as they join the Adventist movement. When a disciple studies with a new believer, they draw closer to God themselves. The joy they experience in that witness causes them to reach out to others over and over again. True revival and fruitfulness begins through this active involvement.

- **United Prayer**

"Let Christians ask in faith for the promised blessing, and it will come... God has instructed me that our workers need to experience the deep moving of the Spirit of God... In response to the fervent prayers of these humble men [and women] they (heavenly influences) descend with power to co-operate with human agencies" (*Praying for Rain* p.1-2).

The goal of united prayer is to come into one accord so the Holy Spirit can fill us. In addition, we've been instructed to pray unitedly so God's power can be unleashed and the Great Controversy ended (*Praying for Rain* p. 4-5).

Here is a sample of a United Prayer time (prayer meeting, small group prayer, Sabbath school, or church) could look like:

- Welcome/Introduction
- Adoration/Praise
- Confession
- Supplication
- Thanksgiving

“While the prayer leader opens and closes the prayer and makes transitions from one theme to the next, the leader does NOT do all the praying. This is UNITED prayer, and the goal is to allow as many to pray as possible. We encourage brief prayers, but people should pray as the Holy Spirit convicts them” (*Praying for Rain* p.5). The goal is for all the hearts to be focused in prayer. It is coming together to pray, not just talking about praising or petitioning God on behalf of a ministry or other need, but praying that praise or need.

- **Knowing My Savior and Becoming Equipped to Join His Salvation Mission**

God calls together a church family and works through its ministry for His salvation purposes. No one, actual member, semi-regular attender, or guest, is in attendance at your church by accident. God placed your church or ministry (school or institution) in a specific community because He is at work there and He has called you to be part of His mission team. *“No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain”* John 15:15,16.

Each person that makes a commitment to Jesus Christ is anointed by the Holy Spirit with spiritual gifts. This anointing is to equip them for active, fruitful witness on behalf of Jesus’ salvation mission. They are called to ministry in their neighborhood, at their workplace, in their family, and in the community where they live.

“If you would go to work as Christ designed that his disciples should, and win souls to the truth, you would feel the need of a deeper experience and greater knowledge in divine things, and would hunger and thirst after righteousness. You would plead with God, and your faith would be strengthened, and your soul would drink deeper draughts at the well of salvation. Encountering opposition and trials would drive you to the Bible and to prayer, and then you would go forth as laborers together with God, to open the Scriptures to the people. You would grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the truth, and your experience would be rich and fragrant. Upon every converted soul rests the responsibility of laboring for the salvation of men. It is your privilege to visit your neighbors and become light-bearers to your community. This personal effort will accomplish a precious work, and will meet the approbation of Heaven” (RH, March 13, 1888).

Each church and school of the Man-Sask conference is an evangelism school to teach people how to use their spiritual gifts to join God in His mission.

- **Mentoring**

The church does not just invite people to follow Jesus. It has been commissioned to *“make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, [and] teaching them”* (Matthew 28:19-20) to be disciple-makers too.

Mentoring is a form of teaching where we come along side a person. It is a relational experience in which one person empowers, encourages, teaches and shares experiences and

resources with another person. Mentoring seeks to establish friendships, short or long term, which will help maximize the personal growth and spiritual growth of the mentee. The relationship involves companionship, camaraderie, correction, and simple friendship. Mentors are helpers. They befriend, teach, and inspire. It is a relationship in which a mentor helps a protégée reach her/his God-given potential as mature disciple-makers for Jesus Christ.

- **Supporting New Disciples to Become Successful Disciple-Makers**

A critical component in our discipleship journey from bystander, to fully committed followers, is to become an active, vibrant witness. Then we take the ultimate, and next natural step, to becoming a disciple-maker. This is what Jesus was asking of the first disciples: that they become “fishers of men.” God does not use our voices to yell out an invitation and then run away. He asks us to be “His friends” using His methods. He cared for people and THEN invited them to follow Him. A deep, authentic relationship was formed. Trust was developed. When He invited them to follow Him as His friends, they were willing because the relationship was real.

When we mentor new disciples, we give them more than a teaching relationship. We do more than share information and instruction. We support our new disciple-maker. This means they become part of a team (having a small group structure for your church is an ideal example of intentional ministry team building). We pray together and celebrate when God allows the new disciple-maker to meet another new disciple who they will mentor.

We also protect and guide those we mentor. The devil sends his attacks. These attacks may even come from members of the church who don’t understand that new disciples are learning, even making mistakes as they grow in their faith and witness. The role of the mentor as well as guiding the new believer, is to “speak up” for that new disciple.

Would you like the Discipleship Ratio of your church to grow?

When we hold Bible studies with a new spiritual friend who is learning to know more about Jesus, we follow God-given principles. These include:

1. Watching for where God’s Holy Spirit is working in a friend or associate’s life.
2. Joining their spiritual journey as an authentic friend, part of a growing relationship.
3. Being ready to speak a spiritual word as He prompts us.
4. Being the voice of invitation to accept Jesus as a personal Savior as we recognize God’s timing in our friend’s life.
5. Facilitating the new child of God into active ministry for the gospel mission.
6. Mentoring the new disciple into mature witness as a disciple-maker.
7. Sending them out to join God as He works to call more new disciples to Himself.

Our churches are made up of a called together people who are at different stages of this growth in spiritual maturity. Each one must be involved in actual, high value ministry (not just ‘busy work’). What is the Discipleship Ratio of your church? How can we join you in growing that number? Please contact us and let’s continue the journey together!

Total Member Involvement Website: Man-Sask [Total Member Involvement](#) webpage