

Compendium of Local Church Exercises to Help us Grow in the Lord

A Discipleship Survey

What: This survey is comprised of 25 questions that a respondent replies to by ranking himself/herself on a scale of 1-5 for each question. Twenty-one of the twenty-five questions can be grouped into three general areas: A) cultivating our relationship with Christ B) Cultivating our love for God and neighbor C) Knowledge of God and our life in Him. A further four questions are ‘Yes/No’ responses to: 1) I have asked Jesus to forgive my sins 2) I have been baptized 3) I have consecrated my life to Christ and have asked Him to be Lord of my life 4) I have grown as a disciple of the Lord this year. The survey ends with a final exercise: if a respondent answers ‘Yes’ to the previous question about having grown as a disciple this past year, then a few blank lines are provided to note what the respondent believes to be the major contributing factors to this growth. If the respondent answered ‘No’ to the question about having grown as a disciple this past year, then a few blank lines are provided to note what the respondent believes to be the reason why no growth has been experienced.

Pictures:

Caroline Church of the Nazarene - Survey

Please mark the following statements with a number according to the following scale:

1—This statement is currently not true in my life
2—This statement is not as true in my life but I would like for it to be
3—This statement has some truth in my life (now or in the past) but I have not grown/changed in this area for a long time
4—This statement is true in my life and I am now experiencing a little bit of growth/understanding here
5—This statement is true in my life and I am currently experiencing some good growth/understanding here

Cultivating our relationship with Christ

1. ____ I spend time in prayer each day or a number of times each week
2. ____ I spend time reading God's Word each day or a number of times each week
3. ____ I have intentionally scheduled a time(s) of solitude in order to praise God (time to God) in my life
4. ____ I have experienced the presence of God in corporate worship recently
5. ____ I have been used of God in other than weekly
6. ____ I see the Fruit of the Spirit growing in my life
(love/peace/patience/kindness/goodness/fairness/gentleness/self-control)

Cultivating our love for God and neighbor

7. ____ I have expressed love for my neighbor in a tangible way recently
8. ____ I intentionally seek ways to obey God's Wordings and to express my love to God
9. ____ I look forward to spending time with God in prayer for others
10. ____ I look forward to spending time in Scripture
11. ____ I look forward with anticipation to corporate worship
12. ____ I am moved with compassion by the needs or struggles of others and I seek to help to get to them
13. ____ I act on the belief that I am God's steward of the resources entrusted to me
14. ____ I believe the days of my life on earth are called to Kingdom purposes

Knowledge of God and our life in Him

15. ____ I am seeking to know and obey the commands of Jesus through living out what I discover in His Word
16. ____ Often I am hearing new things in the Word
17. ____ I am learning to hear God's voice as he speaks to me directly or through His Word
18. ____ In conversations with others, a Scripture verse will come to mind and I will look it up in my Bible
19. ____ I can find most Scripture references without using the index in my Bible
20. ____ I have memorized a passage(s) of Scripture this past 12 months or attempted to memorize a passage(s)
21. ____ I am familiar with the basic story of God as expressed through the Old and New Testaments

Yes / No

22. ____ I have asked Jesus to forgive my sins
23. ____ I have been baptized
24. ____ I have consecrated my life to Christ and have asked Jesus to be Lord of my life
25. ____ I have grown as a disciple of the Lord this year

If you answered # 25 with a 'Yes,' what do you think are the major contributing factors to this growth? If you answered 'No,' why not?

Why: The reasons behind creating and implementing this discipleship survey are manifold: the survey identifies important elements to our Christian journey, it promotes the idea that growing up in our faith is important, it guides aspects of spiritual self-evaluation, it helps to establish a baseline to move forward from, it presents four critical yes-no questions and it presents a final exercise that helps to identify contributing factors to growth/non-growth. There is a biblical basis for the idea that we are to grow towards maturity. It is clear in the Bible that we are to intentionally posture ourselves to grow up in our faith. Although growth in discipleship is not easy to measure, the difficulty of measuring it should not dissuade attempts to do so. Our mission statement [Making Christlike Disciples in the Nations] is powerful and biblical. Everything that we are, and do, comes under this mission. As such, making a direct or an indirect attempt to measure where we are at, can be a very useful exercise. As a local church pastor, I found the survey results and ‘growth trigger responses’ of great importance as we sought ways to shape the way forward for our church.

How: If you present a written survey and send people home to complete it, it is unlikely that you will ever see the responses. Instead, we discovered excellent participation when we presented this survey within the scope of a regular Sunday message. During the message, each question was displayed up on the video screen at the front of the church. We slowly moved through the entire survey. Respondents did not write their names on their completed surveys. The completed surveys were collected within the time of the same Sunday message. There was very little push-back from our congregation, even though we are sometimes inundated with surveys in regular our day-to-day lives. People will better embrace such a discipleship survey if there is lead-up and rationale presented – perhaps even commencing the promotion of it a few Sundays ahead. Analyzing the numerical responses is greatly aided by a pre--prepared Excel spreadsheet. The results can help to identify a congregation’s overall strengths and weaknesses [for example, we discovered that our body in Caroline ranked themselves lowest for the questions related to navigating around in the Bible and simply locating pertinent verses of Scripture – Discovering this led us to subsequently undertake other exercises in order to improve in this area].

Resources available: The Discipleship Survey / Excel file for analysis

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