

THE FOUR CORNERED ROOM - A Simple Discipleship System, Part 2 - DM101 Module 3

S = Service Corner Readings

Teen Developmental Level

PRAYER OF ST FRANCIS

Lord, make me *an instrument of your peace*, Where there is hatred, *let me sow love*; Where there is injury, *pardon*; Where there is doubt, *faith*; Where there is despair, *hope*; Where there is darkness, *light*; Where there is sadness, *joy*. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, *as to console*; to be understood, *as to understand*; to be loved, *as to love*. For it is *in giving that we receive*. It is *in pardoning that we are pardoned*, and it is *in dying that we are born to Eternal Life*. Amen.

STAGE 3: SERVE WITH ME IN A SMALL GROUP

(A Team has a Target.)

THE FOUR CORNERED ROOM ... the right hand side of the room is comfortable for us ... *it's like using our right hand (if we are right handed)*. But things become challenging on the left side of the room ... *it's like using our left hand*. It feels awkward and uncomfortable for us to move away from the *familiar, institutional ways of doing ministry and serve as Jesus did*.¹

¶126 of the 2012 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church states the goal very clearly: "Every layperson is called to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20); *every layperson is called to be missional*." Just as Jesus was sent, *now we are also sent to serve* (John 20:21).

As lambs become sheep, they enter a time of adolescence. *Usually there is a life changing rite of passage involved*. Adolescents discover and improve their gifts while considering a life career that utilizes their talents. *So do missional Christians*. Adolescents remain in their nurturing families *but bond with a peer group to serve together*.

Reading #1: Moving into the left handed side usually involves a Rite of Passage.

People typically cross from the right hand side to the left hand side of the four cornered room because of a dramatic, life changing *Rite of Passage* experience which disconnects us from *"the way we have always done it before"* and fills us with new excitement and enthusiasm.

In a Rite of Passage, there is *detachment and separation* from the normal, *a new set of priorities* and *a new peer group*, characterized by a *high commitment to a clear purpose*. Facing hardship together creates a *powerful, tight group bond*. Children leave home to experience a *rite of passage* and *return as adults ready to assume adult responsibilities in the community*.² The rite of passage begins *when Jesus says "Follow Me" and leads us away from ordinary life*.

¹David Kueker, "A New Way of Making Disciples: Using the Left Hand", <http://www.beadisciple.com/blog/a-new-way-of-making-disciples-using-the-left-hand/>.

²"Rite of Passage," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rite_of_passage. Cf. Sebastian Junger, *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging* (Hachette Book Group, 2016).

*Reflection Question: What discipleship “rites of passage” are familiar to you? Four examples:
Mission trips to foreign countries? The Walk to Emmaus?
“No Greater Love” Mardi Gras trip? Academy for Spiritual Formation?*

Reading #2: Moving to the left hand side of the room means discovering and using our gifts.
Mark 8:31 And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. **32 And he said this plainly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.** 33 But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter, **and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men."**

Reflection Question: Why does the church exist? If you could only check one, which would it be?
___ Choice #1: to meet my needs and the needs of my family. (89% of laity)
___ Choice #2: to seek and save the lost and set the oppressed free. (90% of clergy)³

When is Choice #1 a healthy choice, in your opinion?

Mark 8:34 And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, **"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.** 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it; **and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.**

Reflection Question: What is your cross, and whom does it help?

1 Cor 12:7: To each is given **the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.**
This way that the Holy Spirit clearly and obviously works through you for the benefit of others **is your cross to carry.** The Body of Christ made up of specialized parts of many kinds; **each person is different, yet all remain in touch.** A family systems psychologist would say that **the members of the Body of Christ are intended to be highly differentiated.**⁴

In some churches, people try to control each other; **this creates anxiety and a dysfunctional church family.** In other churches which are more differentiated, **people are free to use the gifts that God gives them and free to be whom they are.**

Reflection Questions: How free are people to be “who they are” and “do what they do” in your church? How difficult is it for a lay person to get approval to do something new and unusual?

Reading #3. The Bishop’s Mistake: Bishop Kenneth Carder, who leads the church's Mississippi Area, shared with members of the Board of Discipleship the story of a once-prominent, 100-year-old United Methodist Church in his state. **The church had dwindled in size from 1,000 to 17 members, despite its location in a neighborhood full of people and in a town with a**

³Win Arn, from Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 82. Cf. Luke 4:18, 19:10.

⁴Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation To Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (New York: Guilford Publications, Inc., 1985), 3, 23, 228-249. Cf. Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in an Age of Quick Fix*, eds. Margaret M. Treadwell and Edward W. Beal, New ed. (New York: Seabury Books, 2007), 158-186, 239-247.

population of 50,000. Now it was closing. Noting that the church used official United Methodist resources, rituals and curriculum, had won an award for evangelism and was Methodist to the core, the bishop wondered why it was closing and what it had missed. ***The answer, he said, was that the church was in a neighborhood in transition and had not reached out to the people around it.***

Reflection Question: Consider the last statement ... is the Bishop wrong? If so, what is the Bishop's Mistake?

Reflection Question: As we move around the four cornered room, what do we need to leave behind in order to follow Jesus?

(Ask your instructor to explain the "Institutional Two Step" dance.)

Bishop's Mistake Hint: Mat 22:39 And a second is like it ...

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H = Harvest Corner Readings

Spiritual Parent and
Grandparent Level

Reading #1. The Strachan Theorem: In the mid 1950s the Latin American Mission, worried about the failure of churches to grow, *studied three diverse movements that were rapidly growing in their context: Communism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Pentecostals.* With the message and values of each group so different, the commonalities would reveal what was causing growth. *"Each had successfully mobilized their entire constituency in continuous outreach.* Latin American Mission put their findings together in a concise statement, the so-called Strachan Theorem: *the successful expansion of any movement is in direct proportion to its success in mobilizing and occupying its total membership in constant propagation of its beliefs."*⁵

Reflection Question: Would it be better if everyone in your church was making disciples?

Reading #2. The Harvest Worker corner ... is empty. No one hangs out here. Why?

Harvest workers are "fishing for people" as Jesus called it - they are out fishing. *The transition to spiritual maturity involves moving from an exciting but comparatively shallow ministry in mission to many people to calm, deeply nurturing relationships with just a few people who have names. These people with names are our disciples.* Relationships take time.

2.1 When a person discovers their gifts, and becomes responsible in using it, serving God becomes somewhat like a career. *Frequently you will find harvest workers busy in the other corners, helping people by using their gifts.* *Reflection Question: Which corner are you drawn to in order to use your gifts?*

2.2 Harvest workers are sometimes busy developing "side doors" - *entry points into activities into one of the Four Corners from the outside.* *Reflection Question: Why would this be an advantage? What would be a good side door for your church to open up?*

2.3 Harvest workers are often outside in the community, using the Prayer Tool (This is the topic of Module 4.) to develop relationships of spiritual influence. *At the right time, they will invite that person to come with them to church.* (This is the topic of Module 5.) *Reflection Question: Natural Church Development research indicates that the average Christian has 8.5 conversations in a typical week with a non-Christian. Who were yours in the past week?*

2.4 Harvest workers are monitoring and mentoring their people *as they transition from one room to the next.* *Reflection Question: What would be the sign that would tell you that someone is ready to graduate to the next room?*

2.5 - Sadly, the main reason that this corner is empty *is that people don't move into it.* They do not graduate from missional service *into personal disciple making.*

⁵Richard Peace, *Small Group Evangelism - A Training Program for Reaching Out with the Gospel*, 25.

Reading #3. Parable: The Orphanage. (http://disciplewalk.com/parable_Orphanage_M.html)

The young couple looked with adoration upon their first child, a little boy.

"You are so beautiful," they cooed.

They looked up from their baby to the lifestyle to which they had become accustomed. Two high paying jobs and exciting, demanding careers. A very expensive home and two brand new Porsche sports cars. Vacations in Cancun, Broadway plays and season tickets to all the professional sports teams in their city. Workouts at the health club to stay slim and trim; dinners out at expensive restaurants.

"We have been blessed," they said. "God has been so good to us."

"God has answered all our prayers."

"Our baby is going to need our church's help to grow up in faith."

"I totally agree."

"I see a problem with our independent lifestyle and raising the baby," one said.

"I see the need for things to change now that we have a baby," the other said.

"Raising this baby would mean we would have to grow up, and give up our self-indulgent lifestyle."

"You're right. This baby needs mature parents who will love him with all their hearts."

"Raising this baby would mean that we would have to put a priority on parenting and let the other things be less important. We'd have to change and put the children first."

"That's the sort of parents our baby needs, honey. I totally agree."

"We're so active in our church ... leaders in so many ministries."

"So much of God's work depends upon us."

"We would have to cut back on our church activities and put the baby first."

"But we gain so much enjoyment out of what we do for the Lord! How can we give any of it up?" They looked at their calendars, and they were sad, for they were exceedingly busy.

"I know what we should do. We'll go see the pastor."

"Honey, I totally agree. Our pastor is so smart, so mature, and knows all about raising kids and being responsible."

"Exactly. Our pastor will be able to help us with this challenge of fulfilling our ministry and caring for our baby."

They bundled up the baby and got in the Porsche. They looked with love upon the baby the whole trip to the church. "You are so beautiful," they cooed. **They left the baby on the pastor's door step, rang the doorbell and sped away.**

The pastor opened the door and saw the baby. "Another one!" the pastor thought, picking up the baby. "You are so beautiful!" the pastor told the baby, carrying him through the door into the church. **Through the door one could hear all the other babies crying.**

Reflection Questions: Is your church a spiritual orphanage? Why or why not?

Who in your church ... besides the paid staff ... are intentionally parenting baby Christians?

Were you abandoned by your spiritual parents?

***The key issue for this corner is to realize the important of equipping the laity to finish the Great Commission by raising their new disciples up to become disciple makers and fulfill Matthew 28:20 as well. Disciple makers acting as **partner-mentors help growing Christians move around the four cornered room until they, too, can make and raise their own disciples.** Sheep make sheep; **only sheep can help lambs to grow up to be sheep.**