

10 Reasons Leaders Don't Disciple the Way Jesus Did

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Jesus preached to the crowds, but He invested in the few: 12 disciples overall, three with whom He spent more time (Peter, James, and John), and perhaps one with whom He spent even more time (Peter). Many church leaders don't operate that way, though – and that's a problem. Here are some reasons I've observed that explain this omission: We've taught discipleship as a large group exercise more than one-to-one mentoring. As I grew up, discipleship was always oriented toward classes. In fact, the more "students" you had in a discipleship class, the better. Working with the few made little sense.

1. **They fear being accused of favoritism.** Somebody probably will say something if you spend more time with 1-3 people than you do with others. That's a risk you take if you disciple like Jesus did.
2. **They don't know where to start.** Most often, they've never been a part of this kind of discipleship, so it's all foreign to them.
3. **It's time-consuming.** You'll use up precious hours each week if you choose to invest intentionally in some other believers – and who has extra time?
4. **It's risky.** Spending time with somebody else means he has opportunity to look more deeply into your life than you might like. Most of us prefer discipling from at least an arm's length distance.
5. **They wrongly assume their only job is to study and preach the Word.** Both Jesus and Paul proved that's not the case.
6. **They focus on their present tense ministry without serious regard for the future.** Many leaders say, "The measure of my ministry is really what takes place after I'm gone," but they then do nothing today to raise up leaders for the future.
7. **Some have been burned in the past.** Some leaders have invested in a young leader who turned out to be Judas. That's enough to make you reconsider doing discipleship the same way again.
8. **They disconnect the concept from their ministry.** They see this kind of discipleship as an "add on" to a busy schedule rather than a "plus" to their work when carried out well. They forget they're raising up leaders they can put to work now.
9. **Nobody's ever really challenged them to disciple the way Jesus did.** Well, I am challenging you now with this blog post. I believe church leaders must be intentionally and strategically pouring their lives into a few other believers – like Jesus did. Get started with at least one person.