

There are many different ways a church develops a discipleship program, and each church is different depending on their location, parishioners, budget, and maturity of their leadership. Over the past few weeks I chose to attend the meetings and events for two discipleship programs, each of which had different desired results but both were intended to make long term disciples of Christ.

The first program was one called Voluntour. This is an ongoing program and process for this church, which is intended to be a launching platform for the “next step” in church discipleship for members and attendees. The development of the program, started and run by the church administrator, gives members a sense of where they might be able to plug in to the church, get involved in what the church is about, and take a extended tour of the church campus. This program is intended to be the very first step in the church’s discipleship process. It focuses on those who attend the event(s), on the spiritual gifts each person has been given by the Holy Spirit, and how they can use those gifts to serve the church. Ultimately it focused on what the current needs of the church are and will be in the future. The event is a time for evaluation on the part of the church and those attending to see where the best fit would be for service within the church.

At the time of planning the meetings for the program, which was done within the communications team division of the church, the times for this particular program were going into a transition. This program was held each Tuesday night at 6:30 and Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. The program will permanently shift to Sunday morning from 10:10 to 10:55, which will take place during second service of the morning, will encourage those who are already attending the worship service to participate. The program seemed to have moderately effective results and the administrator felt it would continue to grow as the third service was added this fall. Where it lacked in its

effectiveness to grow disciples was in the follow up of those in charge of the program and the commitment of those who attended the event.

The second event was a large collaboration between five different local churches called One Prayer, which took place as a community workday on the last Saturday in June. One prayer was designed for local churches to work together in an effort to go out into the local community and show support for their school system by cleaning, repairing, or general maintenance that each school principal indicated was needed at the time. Each church promoted the event over a one-month period of time in conjunction with a worldwide One Prayer program where 1700 churches participated. On June 28 all those who joined the program met in a local shopping mall parking lot to be disseminated evenly to each of the ten local schools to complete the work that each school principal determined needed to be completed.

Planning for this event started well prior to June and there were multiple meetings between the coordinator of the event (in this case the worship leader for one of the churches involved), and the other churches leadership, the churches and the schools, and those who were attending the event itself to do the work. The meetings I attended were for the final stages of planning the event but it was the first I could recall between many different local churches. The event itself was smooth and well organized. Each group of the ten groups was a mixture of members from all different churches and work at the school was completed as requested. This was the first year this particular program was started and the intention is for each year the event to grow and create a bond between local community and churches. Due to the nature and complexity of this program, I concluded that the effectiveness for growing disciples would probably not be met for a few years. This was a once a year event, that started this year, and although it was a great

experience to work with other churches and within the community it may take a while to grow and develop this program to the point of maturing disciples.