

Becoming a Jesus Follower

“(1) A disciple is one who loves and follows Jesus (2) is becoming more and more like him in their attitude and actions, (3) and is helping others to do the same. “

Discipleship has 3 parts—all of which flow freely between them as we go through our life journey. All three parts permeate every relationship.

When we look back on our 28 year at Madison we see that discipleship occurs through many different avenues. In each of them when we brought ourselves and our love for Jesus, our desire to become more like him and to help others to do the same into each of these relationships, discipleship happened! Although we hesitate to name individuals, reflecting back on these 28 years, we share the following.

We have been privileged to be a part of 3 Care Groups that functioned in this way: one led by Neeodoi (Ed)Thompson and John and Kathy Holwerda, one by Terry and Susie Dixon and one by Bruce and Sharon Katje. In each of these groups a lateral rather than a top down leadership approach contributed to ownership and, thus, the building a Caring Community.

We have found that building a Caring Community happened not just through Care Groups but was a core part of Madison Ministries that we have been involved in. These ministry events provided opportunities for us to be discipled and to be a discipler. Many gave their lives to Jesus through large and small drama productions and worship retreats. Discipleship was also a part of smaller groups with a gift based ministry approach such as ushering, visual arts, choir and worship teams. Those involved were able to share their testimonies and pray for one another. An additional joy was that these groups were of various ages, races and cultures. Working together towards a common goal built a Caring Community.

Last, discipleship can flow through individual relationships. Jay’s tutoring of Tamarus Leonardo and Audrey’s coaching of Rodney Candler in public speaking built relationships in which discipleship flourished. The coaching of worship leaders Leslie Montgomery, Nick Hopkins and Shelli Fyneweaver built a Caring Community through a shared goal of learning how to create a Christ centered worship service. Finally, our ongoing relationship with our former neighbor who is

an unbeliever built a Caring Community through ongoing interactions and many opportunities to share the gospel.

We are all called to be both discipled and to be a discipler. Jesus said “ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go out and bear fruit-fruit that will last. This is my command: Love each other.(John 15: 16, 17 b)

To God be the glory,

Audrey and Jay Laninga