

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this series about sharing from our quiet times you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will share from what they have learned from their quiet times. Every day during the past week we had a quiet time from a passage in the New Testament. Once a week we come together to share with one another what we have learned. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. We will first explain how to have a quiet time. Then we will share the important truths and lessons from our quiet times and try to answer some difficult questions. Today's topic is A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM MATTHEW 8:1-11:24.

(S) **POINT 1. HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME AND SHARE**

Have a time of fellowship with God or quiet time every day of the week from one of the seven assigned Bible passages. An easy quiet time method is called "The favourite truth" method. It has 5 steps. Step 1. Pray and ask God to speak to you. Step 2. Read one of the seven assigned passages. Step 3. Choose your favourite truth. It is the truth, verse or passage through which God is speaking to you, stimulating your thinking or touching your heart. Step 4. Meditate on your favourite truth. Meditate by doing the following four things. First. *Think* about the meaning of words. Second. *Ask* God what he intends to say to you. Third. *Relate* your favourite truth to your life by making a practical application. Fourth. *Write* the most important thoughts of your meditation in a notebook so that you may share them with others. Step 5. Pray your favourite truth for yourself. Then pray your favourite truth for someone in your family. Then pray your favourite truth for someone nearby. And finally, pray your favourite truth for someone far away. When you meet together with one friend or with other Christians in a house fellowship or discipleship group, take turns to share the meditation of one of your quiet times. You may also try to answer some questions from the assigned passages.

(T) **POINT 2. SHARING FROM MATTHEW 8:1 – 11:24**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from Matthew 8:1 – 11:24. Now we will use our quiet time notes to share truths and lessons from the assigned passages and discuss some questions.

Sharing quiet times from Matthew chapter 8

(S) I want to share from Matthew 8:2-3 about touching a leper. People at that time believed that leprosy was the most terrible sickness of all sicknesses. People forced the lepers to live outside their town. When lepers saw people coming close to them, they were forced to shout, "I am a leper! I am a leper!" People even threw stones at lepers to keep them from coming close to them. Now a man with leprosy came to Jesus and asked to be cleansed. Jesus is different! He did not chase the leper away. Instead Jesus did something nobody expected. He *touch*ed the leper and healed him! Many times Jesus healed other sicknesses without touching the people. But this leper he healed by touching. This touch of Jesus proved to the leper that he was *accepted*, not rejected anymore. I see people around me who feel rejected by other people. I want to take the initiative and show acceptance to people, especially those who are rejected because of their race, religion, appearance or behaviour.

(T) I want to share from Matthew 8:21-22 about following Jesus unconditionally. A certain man said that he wanted to follow Jesus, but first he wanted to go home and bury his father. Jesus then said, "Follow me and let the dead bury their own dead." This seems to go against our culture. Is it not every person's duty to care for his or her parent's funeral? Don't forget that Jesus is the Sovereign Lord. Following Jesus means doing whatever Jesus commands, without any qualification, condition or reservation. This man was already following Jesus in the crowd, but now he wanted to become one of the close followers of Jesus, just like Peter and John. But this man also set a condition for following Jesus. He first wanted to go and bury his father who had died. Jesus wanted to impress on this particular man's mind the fact that he is the Sovereign Lord and must be obeyed completely and without qualification! This man needed to be reminded that Jesus asked complete commitment from his first group of close disciples. Remember that Jesus is saying this to a particular person and not to every one of us. Jesus does not say that believers must not provide for their parents or care for their funeral. But Jesus does say, that a believer must love Jesus *more* than his parents (Matthew 10:37). If Jesus asks me to do something, then I must obey him without any condition!

Sharing quiet times from Matthew chapter 9.

(S) I want to share from Matthew 9:10 about the tax collectors and sinners. Many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Jesus and his disciples. Jesus made friends with people from all walks of life, with learned people and with farmers, with business people and with people who lived in sin. I realise that I tend to refrain from associating with certain kind of people in my society. I judge them for *what they do*, but I ignore *what they need*. I am afraid that they will have a bad influence on me. Jesus associated with all kinds of people, especially with people who did not really know God. Jesus associated with people, not to receive their bad influence, but instead to have good influence on them! Therefore, I want to make friends with people who do not yet know God, so that I may tell them the good news about Jesus. Like Jesus, I want to be a friend of modern tax collectors and sinners.

(T) I want to share from Matthew 9:12-13 about Jesus calling sinners and not the righteous people. The Pharisees criticised Jesus for associating with unbelievers and even with outcasts of the society. But Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Before anyone goes to a doctor, he must recognise that he is sick and he must

be willing to receive the help, which the doctor gives. Before I can go to Jesus, I must recognise that I am spiritually sick. Also I must be willing to receive the help, which Jesus gives. If I am too proud to admit that I am spiritually sick or too proud to receive help from Jesus, then I can never be healed!

Many Pharisees think that they are righteous and good people. They believe that they do not need to receive anything from God. Instead, they think that they should give things to God. They want to be more generous than God: They don't need God's gift. Instead they give gifts to God! They bring sacrifices to God. They give one tenth of their income to God. They make pilgrim's journeys to Jerusalem three times a year. They think that this is pleasing to God and that God will reward them. They relate to God not *by receiving* things from God, but *by giving* things to God. They are wrong! And they are proud! Jesus says, that he did not come to *receive* the gifts and sacrifices of people, but that he came to *give* mercy and forgiveness to sinners. The sinners know that they have wronged other people and that they have nothing to give to God. Sinners relate to God not *by giving*, but *by receiving*! Sinners receive God's mercy and forgiveness. The reason Jesus came was to call sinners to repentance and give them mercy. Like the tax collectors and sinners, I want to relate to God by receiving his mercy, his forgiveness, his love, his promises and his help.

(S) I want to share from Matthew 9:15-17 about fasting. Are Christians required to fast or not?

First. In the New Testament, in Matthew 6:16-18 Jesus Christ teaches, "When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth: they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Jesus speaks of the fast as an expression of humiliation. He condemned the act the Pharisees were putting up, when they covered their faces with ashes and wanted all people to notice their piety. Jesus does not command his disciples to fast. Jesus also does not forbid them to fast. But if they fast, they must fast as inconspicuously as possible.

Second. In Matthew 9:15-17 Jesus Christ teaches, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them: then they will fast." According to 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5:32, Christ is "the bridegroom" and Christians are "the bride". Based on Matthew 25:1 and Revelation 19:7 and 21:9, some people teach that Christians should fast until the bridegroom returns and according to them that is at Jesus Christ's Second Coming. That is not correct. In John 16:16-22 Christ teaches that Christians would mourn and fast only while the bridegroom was dead for three days. After his resurrection they would see the bridegroom again and their joy would return and no one would take away their joy! In Matthew 28:20 Jesus says that the bridegroom would be with them until the end of the age.

Third. Christ then continues to say that people do not pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. They pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved. The new wine represents "the salvation and blessings" which Christ brings. The old wineskins represent "the fasting days and fasting practises" of the Jews. The new wineskins represent "the joyous gratitude, freedom and spontaneous service" of the Christians. "The joy of salvation" of Christians does not go together with "the mourning of fasting" of the Jews. The joy of salvation results in a new way of relating to God and serving God rather than the old way of fasting, which excluded joy completely!

In Colossians 2:14 is written that by his death, Jesus Christ cancelled the requirements of the Ceremonial Law, which includes *fasting*, sacrificing animals, bringing harvest offerings and tithes, eating only clean foods and circumcision. He took these requirements away from Christians! And in Ephesians 2:15 is written that Jesus Christ destroyed the ceremonial law, which brought separation between Jews and Gentiles, and abolished the ceremonial law forever from the Christian Church! Fasting is no longer a religious requirement for Christians and it may not be reintroduced as a religious requirement into the Church!

The first decisive Bible passage concerning fasting is Isaiah 58:6-12. It teaches that the kind of fasting, which pleases God, is abstaining from injustice, oppression and malicious talk. The second decisive passages concerning fasting are Colossians 2:14 and Ephesians 2:15, which teach very clearly that Christ has cancelled and abolished the whole ceremonial law, which included fasting. Christians may fast if they like, but they may not require other Christians to fast.

Sharing quiet times from Matthew chapter 10.

(T) I want to share from Matthew 10:7-10 about the workers in God's kingdom. In this chapter, Jesus trains his disciples to become workers in God's kingdom. Jesus says to his disciples that they should go out and preach the Gospel of God's kingdom and serve people in their needs. Jesus also says, "Freely you have received. Freely give!" All workers in God's kingdom should be content with the support, which they receive. They should not demand payment for their services! They should preach and teach freely and not for money!

But then Jesus also says to them that they should not take many things with them as they travel and preach the message, "for the worker is worth his keep." All the people who receive the workers and their message may not demand free service! They should support the workers. The workers should be supported with what they need for living. Jesus gives us this important principle - The worker may not demand payment and the receiver may not neglect to support the worker.

(S) I want to share from Matthew 10:18-20 about suffering caused by officials. Jesus says that his followers would be persecuted. They would be brought before governors and kings. Why? The answer is that Christ wants them to witness to their political leaders, their police, their judges and to other prisoners! And when they are arrested, they should not worry what to say or how to say it. At that time... the Spirit of God would speak through them. Jesus says that I should expect opposition to the gospel. Sometimes God allows his workers to get arrested and tried. But this will become an opportunity to witness for Christ. At that time the Holy Spirit will give me the right words to speak as well

as the authority and courage to speak the right words! In Acts 5:27-29 the apostles were arrested and tried. The authorities had given them strict orders not to teach about Jesus. But the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than man!" And then the apostles used this opportunity to preach the gospel to the government officials and judges! This passage teaches me one reason for suffering. God allows Christians to suffer arrest, trials, imprisonment and even torture so that as many as possible government officials and judges may also hear the gospel about Jesus Christ!

Sharing quiet times from Matthew chapter 11.

(T) I want to share from Matthew 11:12 about forceful people laying hold of God's kingdom. It says, "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it." Jesus says that from the time John the Baptist started preaching, the kingdom of God is moving forward with force. You can see it from the fact that the blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are cured, the sick are healed and many sinners are converted to everlasting life. But not everyone enters the kingdom. Many people refuse, other people resist. But many vigorous and forceful people enter into God's kingdom.

I asked myself, "Who are these forceful people?" They are people who dare to put God first in their lives and make God the king in their hearts. They are people who dare to break with wrong human traditions and only accept and obey God's Word. They are people who choose the narrow way and do not fear to be in the minority. They are people who take up the full armour of God in order to stand against the attacks of the devil.

The kingdom of God is not for weaklings, waverers and compromisers. The kingdom of God is not for the rich young ruler, who loved his possessions more than following Christ. It is not for Pilate, who wavered between the criminal Barabbas and Christ. It is not for Demas, who compromised with the materialistic world.

The kingdom of God is for forceful people. It is for Joseph, who resisted the temptation of a woman because he did not want to sin against God. It is for Ruth, who chose to follow the Living God even when her nation believed in idols. It is for Elijah, who followed God without wavering even when everybody else was following Baal. It is for Peter, who dared to say to the authorities that we must obey God rather than men. The kingdom of God is for forceful men and women like these people! With God's help I don't want to be a weakling, waverer or compromiser. I want to be a forceful person and enter the kingdom of God!

(S) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Divide Matthew 11:25 to 14:35 into seven passages. Every day have a quiet time from one passage. Record the meditations of all your quiet times in a notebook. Once a week meet with a friend or with a house fellowship or discipleship group and share from your quiet times.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and make disciples" and Internet on [www. etc](http://www.etc)

Third. Listen on short wave radio from SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to "Discipleship training on the air".