

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

Effective Pastoral Leadership to Catalyze a Disciple-Making Church

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The Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Leadership

by

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Liberty University School of Divinity

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Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project Abstract

EFFECTIVE PASTORAL LEADERSHIP TO CATALYZE DISCIPLE-MAKING CHURCH

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Most churches are in a current state of plateau or declining. Although there are several variables that contribute to this status, a lack of willing and qualified disciplers have contributed to it. Why is there a lack of willing and qualified disciplers? Do pastors understand their biblical role as equippers? Does the church understand their role in ministry? Through the result of this research, the researcher will propose a biblical-based discipleship plan as well as other biblical recommendations to ameliorate the areas identified with deficiencies to improve leadership as well as the discipleship-making process.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In our current modern era of the church, there is an issue regarding how believers are really maturing in Christ and getting involved in ministry work to promote health and growth for the church. Several studies have been conducted to measure how many believers are currently involved in a discipleship process in their congregations. Also, these studies examine whether these disciples are maturing and how involved they are in church ministry to others. For instance, Barna Group conducted research on several aspects of discipleship. One of these aspects was the measure of major obstacles on discipleship from the perspective of church leaders and Christian adults.

This research showed that most of the church leaders think that a major obstacle is the lack of commitment.¹ From the perspective of Christian adults, a vast majority said that busyness of life is a major obstacle for discipleship.² Likewise, church leaders pointed out that lack of qualified and willing disciplers is another major obstacle of multiplying disciples for Jesus.³ It is true that lack of commitment is a major setback for discipleship. Although this research, among others, discusses a multiplicity of factors for these issues regarding discipleship issues in our churches, this researcher hypothesizes that this lack of qualified and willing disciplers is related to the *pastor-centered leadership model* used by many pastors in the respective churches they serve, also known as the *traditional church model*.

¹ Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship* (Ventura, CA: The Navigators, 2015), 58.

² *Ibid.*, 59.

³ *Ibid.*, 58.

According to Dempsey, 80 percent of all churches in North America have reached a plateau or declining state and is related directly to the traditional church model or pastor-centered ministry.⁴ Even with these statistics, most churches continue to try and use the same approaches to solve this problem, not understanding that these approaches were responsible for causing this crisis in the first place.

In addition, several questions arise from this hypothesis. Why is there a lack of qualified and willing disciplers? Are the saints being equipped in order to become qualified and willing disciplers? Do pastors understand their biblical role as equippers? Does the church understand what is its role in ministry? In order to understand the lack of qualified and willing disciplers, these questions must be answered.

This researcher has experienced first-hand what the pastor-centered or traditional church model looks like and its effects on the church. *Pastor-centered* is defined as a pastor who is hired to take care of the congregation and do ministry for the congregation.⁵ Related to this term, a *traditional church model* is defined as a church where the pastor is responsible for overseeing the programs and ministries of the church and is viewed as a “professional” and the church members as “lay people.”⁶

Although there are tasks that pastors perform as an overseer, the biblical role of the pastor goes beyond of only being an overseer. The biblical foundation for understanding the role of the pastor it is found in Ephesians 4:11-12. When the church does not function in accordance with this biblical principle, a status of plateau or decline is imminent.

⁴ Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is...: How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2013), 242.

⁵ Bob Farr and Kay Kotan, *Renovate or Die: 10 Ways to Focus Your Church on Mission* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), 260, Kindle.

⁶ Earley and Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is...*, 230-31.

Statement of Limitations

This research will focus specifically on the correlation between the lack of qualified and willing disciplers, and the pastor-centered or traditional church model of leadership in the church. This research will not attempt to address the multiplicity of factors mentioned by church leaders in Barna's research that are obstacles on discipleship. Although these obstacles mentioned in Barna's research on discipleship play a crucial role on discipleship itself, the factors that contribute to a lack of qualified and willing disciplers, and how to address these, would be the main emphasis of this research.

Furthermore, this research will not address in detail the obstacles perceived by Christian adults on discipleship, discussed in Barna's research, as such investigation will produce indefinite results. Additionally, this research will not attempt to emphasize a church model as a correct or qualified model for discipleship. Rather, a biblical foundation will be analyzed to catalyze the acquisition and multiplication of qualified and willing disciplers.

Finally, this research will not attempt to suggest or to impose a methodology of discipleship. This research simply attempts to make a conclusion linked to the biblical foundation for creating equipped disciplers and clarifying the respective roles of pastors and the church.

Theoretical Basis

This research integrates the best patterns in the area of discipleship, the outcomes of the thesis investigation, and the biblical foundation to develop, to the utmost degree possible, qualified and willing disciplers. The theoretical basis of this research may be classified as academic and applied theory, as the principles above (patterns in the area of discipleship and biblical foundation) have been established. The research aspect of this thesis is an examination

into the correlation between the lack of qualified and willing disciplers and the pastor-centered or traditional church model.

The Scriptures provide guidance for a proper way of doing ministry in the church, specifically, the role of the pastor as an equipper, and the church to become qualified disciplers, for the appropriate purpose and development of the church. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus states, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And, behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

This passage, known as the Great Commission, is the foundations for creating or making disciples and can be called as the mission statement of the church. Likewise, Dempsey mentions that a healthy church exercises the full extension of Jesus’ command in Matthew 28:19-20.⁷ In further chapters, a more detailed explanation will be given for this verse, as well as others.

Statement of Methodology

This research will be divided into four chapters, each evaluating the factors that leads to a lack of qualified and willing disciplers. The first chapter has stated the purpose, limitations, and the theoretical basis for the investigation of discipleship obstacles, specifically, the lack of qualified and willing disciplers, as well as the review of literature relevant to the topic. This review of literature will include books, journal articles, and biblical references.

The second chapter will examine in detail the traditional church and pastor-centered model of leadership. This discussion will focus on defining this model according to the most recent studies and the consequences of executing this type of leadership in the church. Also, it will examine the detailed definition, explanation, and benefits of having a pastor-teacher or

⁷ Earley and Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is...*, 213.

pastor-equipper ministry. This explanation will establish the biblical foundations related to this role as pastor as well as the most current investigations made on this topic.

The third chapter details the foundation and defense for each question in the survey. Details of the most relevant results of the survey will be explained in light of the theoretical basis for a pastor-teacher ministry context. The fourth chapter will summarize the conclusion of these results obtained through the survey. Those results will be analyzed, and a model will be suggested, by which churches can exercise a more biblical role on discipleship.

Review of Literature

Published Books

Arnold, Clinton E. *Ephesians*. Vol. 10 of *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Zondervan, 2010.

Clinton's exegetical commentary on Ephesians offers a literary context, structure, and exegetical outline of this epistle. The exegetical outline will help look for a way to explain each passage, offering different points of view of several scholars. The incorporation of this exegetical commentary will enrich the research with valuable information regarding the interpretation of Ephesians.

Barna Group. *The State of Discipleship*. The Navigators, 2015.

Published in 2015, this research conducted by the Barna Group and commissioned to The Navigators presents the present state of discipleship across the United States. Two important aspects, among others, are under investigation. First, the research measures the spiritual health among Christian adults by investigating if Christians are growing spiritually. Then, the research attends the obstacles to discipleship, especially the lack of qualified and willing disciplers, the main focus of this thesis.

Barna, George. *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ*. WaterBrook Press, 2001.

George Barna presents new strategies for producing followers of Christ. Based on his research, these strategies help pastors and leaders to assess how they are fulfilling the Great Commission and becoming effective disciple makers. Barna presents several models and examples to equip leaders to increase their effectiveness.

Blackaby, Henry T., and Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda*. B & H Publishing Group, 2011.

The book presents the way of leading as spiritual leaders. One element is seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance. Blackaby mentions that the worldly way of making decisions is to evaluate the evidence, compare the pros and cons, and then take the necessary measures that make the most sense. Spiritual leaders must rely on the Holy Spirit's guidance, if the leaders want to follow God's will. Sometimes, the guidance of God can be considered, humanly speaking, as incompressible. However, no amount of reasoning and intellect can understand the mind of God. Only through the Holy Spirit's direction, we can know God's will and follow His plan.

Coleman, Robert E., and Paul Rees. *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Revell, 1993.

Coleman gives a thorough examination of the Gospels' accounts, revealing the prime objective of Jesus' ministry and strategy for completing it. He focuses on the principles set by Jesus' actions, and states that, by emulating Jesus' example, a leader can be ready to minister to the specific needs of the saints.

Earley, Dave, and Ben Gutierrez. *Ministry Is...: How to Serve Jesus with Passion and Confidence*. B & H Publishing Group, 2010.

This is an outstanding piece of work of church and ministry. Both authors focus on the ministry work of the church. Their discussion starts on defining ministry using the New Testament as a foundation for this definition. Then, their analysis moves to defining what a disciple is, using the historical context of the New Testament era. Finally, they emphasize the slow process of disciplining leaders who are multipliers, stating that this is the fastest way to fulfill the Great Commission.

Earley, Dave, and David A. Wheeler. *Evangelism Is...: How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence*. B & H Academic, 2010.

Earley and Wheeler examine evangelism, dividing it into four categories: motive, meaning, manner, and methods. With these categories, both authors explain in detail the right motive behind evangelism, what is the correct meaning of it according the Scriptures, the way of doing it, and a methodology. Their contribution to this topic is essential since is correlated to discipleship.

Earley, Dave, and Rod Dempsey. *Disciple Making Is...: How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence*. B & H Academic, 2013.

Spiritual leaders must understand their role in the church. Leadership evokes development. Equipping leaders are not only concerned about getting people to do what they order or what they want, but they are also concerned that people are being developed to reach their full potential in Christ. As part of an Equipping Ministry, equipping leadership must influence God's people to follow His plan for each one and become what God has called them for. Furthermore, equipping leaders teach, train, and develop by example. Jesus' way of ministry included servitude. He stated that He came to serve. As

disciples of Jesus, we are called by God to serve. Equipping leadership influences people to get involved in ministry.

Earley, Dave. *Pastoral Leadership Is...: How to Shepherd Gods People with Passion and Confidence*. B & H Academic, 2012.

This book discusses several aspects related to pastoral leadership. One essential aspect of pastoral leadership is how pastors are supposed to equip the saints. Earley discusses the role of the pastor as a teacher and an equipper, using Ephesians 4:11-15 as a foundation. In his analysis, he mentions that one of the reasons that many churches are not growing in maturity and in quantity is because the pastor has failed to equip them to do so.

Eims, LeRoy. *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*. Zondervan Corp., 1984.

Eims presents in this book a deep analysis of the disciple-making process and the importance of that process in the church. He states, “every believer in Jesus Christ deserves the opportunity of personal nurture and development.” Eims’ discussion on discipleship presents how the early church disciplined new believers, met the basic needs of a growing church, and identified and trained potential workers to become developed and godly leaders.

Farr, Bob, and Kay Kotan. *Renovate or Die: 10 Ways to Focus Your Church on Mission*.

Abingdon Press, 2011.

Farr and Kotan present a discussion and analysis of pastor-led versus pastor-centered model churches. What makes this an important work for effective pastoral leadership is the clarification of roles of both pastors and the church. They provide a strong biblical foundation for a pastor-led model church, using Ephesians 4:11-15 as a base, stating the importance of returning to a New Testament model for doing ministry and disciplining.

Henrichsen, Walter A. *Disciples Are Made, Not Born: How to Help Others Grow into Maturity in Christ*. Victor Books, 2002.

First published in 1974, this book is based on both experiences and biblical principles of discipleship. Henrichsen explains and illustrates the process of disciple-making that is found in the New Testament, which is modeled and taught by Jesus and the disciples. In this process, the author discusses the role of the pastor in helping others to grow.

Hull, Bill. *The Disciple-Making Pastor: Leading Others on the Journey of Faith*. Baker Publishing Group, 2007.

Here, Hull gets deeper into the discussion of what is the role of a pastor. He presents the function of a pastor as a teacher, trainer, and shaper of the vision of God into people's lives. He states that the gifts of pastor and teacher is the same, establishing that when Paul mentioned the gifts in Ephesians 4:12, these two are really one gift. Furthermore, Hull mentions that when pastors do ministry rather than training the people to do it, he fails as an equipper.

Hull, Bill. *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*. NavPress, 2006.

In his book, Hull presents a very important aspect of teaching in the New Testament era. During the time of Christ, there were several schools of religious thought. Among them were the Pharisees, the Zealots, the disciples of John the Baptist, and others. The first-century discipleship was characterized by a serious commitment of the disciple to his teacher. In order to summarize this, this discipleship had five characteristics: 1) deciding to follow a teacher, 2) memorizing the teacher's words, 3) learning the teacher's way of ministry, 4) imitating the teacher's life and character, and 5) raising up their own

disciples. Jesus used these characteristics or principles with His followers, and for them, He was both teacher and leader.

MacArthur, John. *Called to Lead: 26 Leadership Lessons from the Life of the Apostle Paul*. Thomas Nelson, 2010.

Using the life of the apostle Paul, MacArthur discusses what constitutes a leader and what characteristics he or she should have. His view is different from the leadership worldview by concentrating his analysis in what Jesus taught, and he shows that leadership demands service, sacrifice, and selflessness. These characteristics mentioned by MacArthur can be viewed as qualifications for those who seek to be leaders in the church.

Mounce, William D. *Pastoral Epistles*. Vol. 46 of *Word Biblical Commentary*. Zondervan, 2016.

The Word Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles provide a detailed discussion and interpretation of each one. By analyzing the original Greek language, as well as the context, the author helps us understand the message that Paul was communicating and how to apply that message to our current time.

Ogden, Greg. *Manual Del Discipulado: Creciendo y Ayudando a Otros a Crecer*. CLIE, 2006.

The Spanish edition for this discipleship manual provides the proposed courses intended to be implemented as a solution for what is under this research. Each course has been delineated to address different topics in the Christian faith, such as baptism, salvation by grace, the Holy Spirit, among other biblical doctrines.

Ogden, Greg, and Greg Ogden. *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God*. Zondervan, 2010.

Ogden starts his discussion mentioning the problem of having a pastor-focused ministry. In his argument, he states that there is a need to move away from this type of ministry focus. The issue is dependency. Ogden explains in his book that having a dependency model of leadership will eventually negatively affect the church and the role it has.

Putman, Jim, and Robert Harrington. *DiscipleShift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples*. Zondervan, 2013.

The authors of this book discuss the role of a pastor as an equipper. More than a disciple maker, the pastor has the task of leading the church, creating a system where he can teach others how to be disciples, and, to make disciples as well. The authors present the pastor as a teacher as well, using the New Testament as a reference for this statement.

Stedman, Ray C. *Body Life*. Rev. and Exp. Ed. Discovery House, 1995.

On numerous occasions, we have heard preachers and teachers referring to the church as a body. The New Testament, specifically the Epistles, describes the church as a body, using the human body as an example to compare it. If we look at our bodies, they are composed of different organs and systems with a diversity of functions. However, all body parts work in perfect harmony so the body can work properly. Like the body, the church is composed of different people, who have a variety of functions among the body. Here, Stedman mentions four major body systems for the proper functioning of the body: the skeletal and muscular framework, the nervous system, the digestive system, and the circulatory system, and compares them with the gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:12.

Academic Journals

Andrews, Roy A. "10 Commandments of Pastoral Leadership: A Theological Study of Pastoral Leadership in The Brethren Church (Ashland, Ohio)." *Ashland Theological Journal* 37

(2005): 77–88.

Andrews offers a theological analysis of the pastoral leadership, establishing what he calls “Ten Commandments.” In his analysis, he mentions several roles that pastors must consider. One of the commandments is “Thou shalt equip the saints.” Under this commandment, Andrews states that the pastor's role is to facilitate ministry, following the foundation of Ephesians 4:11-13.

Bilezikian, Gilbert. “Church Leadership That Kills Community.” *Priscilla Papers* 21, no. 4 (2007): 5–7.

Bilezikian analyzes the topic of leadership in the church. In his discussion, he presents a comparison between the secular model of leadership and the New Testament perspective on leadership in the church. He states that too often the leadership model that prevails in the church is constructed in the corporate world. Instead of incorporating this type of model, which creates a dependency environment in the church, church leaders must develop the self-leadership potential of the congregation to promote growth.

Bing, Charles C. “The Cost of Discipleship.” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 6, no. 1 (1993): 33–52.

In this article, Bing explains two concepts: salvation and discipleship. He starts by stating that discipleship is costly, which is going to be explained later. Here, he addresses the following issue, if the conditions for discipleship are also the conditions for salvation, then every Christian is, by definition, a disciple, making salvation costly. It is true that the price for our salvation was the life of our savior Jesus Christ. For Him, it cost everything. But, for us, is salvation costly or free? If it is free, then what is costly?

Bing, Charles C. "The Making of a Disciple." *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 5, no. 2 (1992): 27–43.

Are disciples made or born? Bing examines these two views in accordance with the Scriptures. The first view to be discussed is that disciples are born. Here, the supporters of this view claim that the call to discipleship is the call to salvation. This teaching proposes that a person cannot merely relate to Jesus as Savior, but the person also has to give total control of his life to Jesus as Lord and Master so the person can be saved. The supporters of this view emphasize that the term *disciple* consists of obedience and "costliness" of salvation, instead of a "cheap grace." Commitment and faithfulness are also essential to this point of view. There are some renowned supporters of this teaching. For instance, according to Bing, John MacArthur mentioned that the gospel preached by Jesus was a call to discipleship, to follow Him in submissive obedience. The opposing view, called "free grace" by Bing, holds that discipleship is a distinct matter of salvation. The supporters of this view state that this does not mean that there is no commitment discipleship. Rather, they state that there is a continuum of discipleship, that requires commitment, originating from one's faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

Bixby, Howard L. "Designing a Church Pastoral Staff." *Journal of Ministry and Theology*, 1, no. 1 (1997): 62–89.

In this journal article, Bixby explores two approaches when it comes to the pastoral staff. First, he clarifies that not all churches are equal in terms of structure, needs, or size. As he mentions, there are churches who have delegated all functions to one man, usually the pastor. However, he mentions that having a vocational-multiple-staff is beneficial for the

church. His analysis provides an approach that can be useful for pastors, especially when equipping others is a priority.

Bixby, Howard L. "What Is an Elder?" *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 9, no. 2 (2005): 5–23.

Bixby is the Vice President of Seminary Academics of Baptist Bible Seminary in Pennsylvania. In this journal article, Bixby offers a detailed discussion of the office of elder and the use of the word in the Scriptures. His discussion of the office of elder will provide necessary information for this research and the understanding of this office.

Cate, Gary L. "Christ As Teacher." *Central Bible Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (1967): 23–28.

Gray L. Cate discusses the role of Jesus as a teacher during His ministry and how people perceived Him. Cate, in his discussion, divided Jesus' role as a teacher into four points. First, he mentions how Jesus was perceived by His disciples and the people who listened to His teaching, as someone who has authority. The main focus of Jesus' teachings, as presented by Cate, was to guide people that they might know God.

Cowen, Gerald. "The Elder and His Ministry: From a Baptist Perspective." *Journal for Baptist Theology & Ministry* 3, no. 01 (2005): 56–73.

Cowen points to three main aspects related to the pastoral role. He divides these points into instructional, pastoral, and administrative duties. In his discussion, the instructional role of the pastor is the most important role of all three. According to Cowen, this argument is founded on Ephesians 4:11, where the apostle Paul mentions the gift of pastor-teacher. Under this role, the pastor-teacher is supposed to teach and train the believers until they become fully mature in Christ.

Del Birkey. "New Testament Limits of Authority and Hierarchical Power." *Priscilla Papers* 15, no. 3 (2001): 14–18.

Birkey, in his analysis of the role of a teacher in the New Testament, presents a theological analysis for this gift related to the pastor. In his discussion, Birkey mentions that in Ephesians 4:11-12, the apostle Paul points that Jesus Himself gave certain special gifts for leadership, that is, pastor-teacher. He also mentions that rather than an office, this is a gift given by God to a specific function, preparing God's people to serve in their ministry.

Finks, Frederick J. "Leadership Profile— New Testament Style." *Ashland Theological Journal* 16 (1983): 22–29.

An effective leadership is essential for church growth. Good spiritual leaders must show the necessary qualities that enable pastors to help develop believers. Finks, in his analysis, states that pastor-teachers are directly responsible for the care, shepherding, and equipping of the saints for the work of service. As in the New Testament it was necessary to have leaders who would perform this role, today there is still need of these types of leaders.

Gasser, William W. "What Is A Healthy Church?" *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 6, no. 1 (2002).

Gasser presents the popular discussion between the shift from growth to health. The purpose is to revise the description of what local churches ought to be. Here, Gasser explains three different approaches of what a healthy church looks like. These approaches focus on a blend of biblical principles, sociological codes, and expert observation.

Glasscock, Ed. "The Biblical Concept of Elder." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144, no. 573 (January 1987): 66–78.

Glasscock presents an essential discussion and explanation of the term *elder*, used in both Testaments in the Scripture. According to Glasscock, to Paul or any other Jew, an official elder was not just an older man. He was also a leader, an adviser who judged and counseled. The elders did not function individually, as did the prophets, but were always seen as a college or council. The qualifications for an elder, as mentioned by the apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9, include being able to teach (meaning to have the ability to instruct in doctrine), indicating how the teacher was perceived by the church community in the first century.

Glasscock, Ed. “‘The Husband of One Wife’ Requirement in 1 Timothy 3:2.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 140, no. 559 (July 1983): 244–257.

The Pastoral Epistles are an essential component in this research. The epistle provides the biblical role for leaders to work in the church to be disciple-makers, as well the qualifications that are needed for such a position in the church. Glasscock explores the qualification of being a husband of one wife. In his article, he reviews this family qualification and the importance of it to be considered as a leader in the church.

Kennedy, Tod. “The Shepherding Aspect of The Pastoring and Teaching Ministry.” *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 9, no. 2 (2003): 35–48.

Kennedy presents an important aspect related to the pastoral task of teaching the congregation. Part of taking care of the congregation involves teaching. As he explains the term *shepherding*, he states that as a shepherd, it is a responsibility to feed the congregation with the Word of God. Avoiding this task will have the consequences of having a congregation that is undernourished and susceptible to spiritual diseases.

Luter, A. Boyd. "Discipleship and the Church." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 137, no. 547 (July 1980): 267–272.

Luter mentions in his article that the Book of Acts and the Epistles provide a reservoir or material and resources on discipleship. All this information contained in the Epistles and the Book of Acts, provides rich information to help us understand the biblical view of discipleship and how it relates to the local church.

Mappes, David A. "The New Testament Elder, Overseer, and Pastor." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154, no. 614 (April 1997): 162–174.

Mappes discusses the elder-ship in the New Testament context. Here, he mentions that the duties of the elder-overseer-pastor can be summarized in two areas: giving oversight (ruling, guiding, caring for), and teaching or preaching. However, in his discussion, he mentions that there are some scholars who believe that there are two separate offices: some elders rule whereas others teach or preach. After a careful analysis, he offers a conclusion about this statement.

Miller, David W. "The Uniqueness of New Testament Church Eldership." *Grace Theological Journal* 6, no. 2 (1985): 315–327.

Miller, in this journal article, compares New Testament eldership with the Jewish and Hellenistic societies. In his analysis, Miller states that New Testament eldership is completely different from both Jewish and Hellenistic cultures. This uniqueness of New Testament eldership, as he states, is consistent with the uniqueness of the body of Christ.

Rogers, Cleon. "The Great Commission." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 130, no. 519 (July 1973).

Rogers, in this journal, explains the Great Commission in terms of more than preaching the gospel, but a teaching process that involved the apostles, as well as other individuals

mentioned by the apostle Paul in his epistles. Rogers mentions that the setting suggested is that of the rabbinical teacher-student or master-disciple relationship. This involves complete submission, devotion, and service to the Teacher as well as learning from Him.

Samra, James G. "A Biblical View of Discipleship." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160, no. 638 (April 2003): 219–234.

Samra expresses that "imitation, then is similar to discipleship in the sense that is the process of transferring one's lifestyle to the next generation." So, discipleship can be summarized as the process of becoming like Jesus Christ. This process includes two important factors: first, learning Jesus' teachings, and second, becoming an imitator of Him. Discipleship cannot be achieved alone. It is essential that the believer has an example, who can be seen and imitated, as the apostle Paul taught others to be imitators of Jesus. Samra mentions something important. All believers are disciples and are called to participate in discipleship. This is the only way to achieve spiritual formation and achieve godliness in our lives. The mature believer has a responsibility to educate and present himself as an example to other believers on how to be an imitator of Jesus Christ, in order to ensure that their Christ-likeness character is being passed to other believers.

Smith, Thomas N. "The Pastor as a Christian Thinker." *Reformation and Revival* 3, no. 3 (1994): 73–84.

Smith describes the pastor as a thinker for a very important reason. According to his discussion, he presents the pastor as a thought-shaper, explaining that by definition, the pastor is a leader, a teacher. In the lives of most evangelicals, there are few influences as powerful as the pastor of the local church they attend. The responsibility to use this

influence in ways that will cultivate thinking that is distinctively Christian is a very real part of his role as a pastor-teacher.

Weins, N A. "The Pastor as Church Educator." *Central Bible Quarterly* 6, no. 2 (1963): 1–8.

Weins make a powerful statement for the purpose of this paper. He states the following:

As the apostles and the prophets were from the foundation of the church, the evangelists for the extension of the church, so the pastors and teachers were given for the continuance of the church. Pastors and teachers represent, not two classes of office-bearers, but two aspects of one and the same office. The pastor as shepherd guides the flock and as a teacher instructs, and God knew that for the church to continue this would be necessary.

Young, Jerry R. "Shepherds, Lead!" *Grace Theological Journal* 6, no. 2 (1985): 329–335.

Young focuses on three elements that pastors must understand as their biblical roles for the congregation. First, he states that integrity and maturity should characterize the pastor before the congregation. This is essential since the pastor will be multiplying disciples in the church. The second role discussed by Young is supervision. The Scriptures refer to this as an oversight. The last role, and an essential one, is to lead and care for the sheep. Under this task, the pastor has a responsibility to teach the Word of God, equip the saints to do ministry, and guide them to maturity.

CHAPTER 2

DISCIPLESHIP STATUS

Effectiveness

A good question for church leaders to ask themselves is the following: How are churches doing when it comes to discipleship? Are people growing into fully mature disciples? Barna presents two different perspectives: the believer's perspective and the leadership's perspective. From the believer's perspective, 52 percent of the total Christian adults surveyed by Barna stated that their churches are doing a good job when it comes helping believers to grow spiritually, while 40 percent stated that their churches are probably doing the job, reflecting some doubts in this area.⁸

On the other hand, there is the leadership perspective for the discipleship effectiveness. One percent of church leaders agree that today's churches are doing very well at discipling others, both new and young believers. This is a surprising result based on the leadership perspective. Likewise, a considerable majority, 60 percent, indicates that churches today are not discipling too well.⁹ Why does a considerable majority of church leaders indicate that today's churches are not doing very well in discipleship? What are the main obstacles when it comes to discipling believers? Are disciples completely responsible for not doing very well when it comes to discipleship? Are church leaders responsible for this issue?

Obstacles

According to Barna's research, all audiences interviewed, including Christian adults,

⁸ Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 35.

⁹ Ibid.

church leaders, exemplars, and educators, come into agreement that the most significant barrier in discipleship or spiritual growth is a general busyness of life.¹⁰ As mentioned in Chapter 1, this will not be the main focus of this research; however, it is important to mention it and discuss it. Today, there are many reasons why people are too busy to care about their relationship with God through Jesus and their spiritual growth. Many people get involved in too many secular activities or having two or three jobs to provide for their homes.

Still, there is a significant variance between the perspective of this obstacle from church leaders and Christian adults. For instance, according to church leaders, the first obstacle to discipleship is lack of commitment from the church. This particular issue can be seen in the Scriptures. John 6:60-65 presents a situation with many disciples of Jesus. According to these verses, many disciples were troubled by Jesus' teachings, calling the teachings a "hard saying" (John 6:60).¹¹ As the biblical account continues, Jesus confronts the disciples about this statement.

Later, the biblical account states that many disciples "turned back and no longer walked with Him." So, the lack of commitment is an issue that can be observed even in the first century during Jesus' ministry. Church leaders will encounter people who will not commit themselves to Christ to achieve spiritual maturity.

Occupying the fifth place perceived by church leaders in general (this includes senior pastors and discipleship leaders) is the main focus of this research: lack of qualified and willing disciplers. Almost 60 percent of church leaders agree that this is a serious issue in churches. Why is there an absence of qualified and willing disciplers? Understanding the role of church leaders

¹⁰ Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 57.

¹¹ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the English Standard Version.

and the church can help properly address this particular issue. Is there a need for training believers to become qualified and willing disciplers?

The Need

According to Hull, a poll indicated that only 7 percent of 22 million church-going evangelicals had taken any evangelistic training, and 2 percent had presented another person to Jesus Christ.¹² The main reason for this lack of training among churchgoing evangelicals, according to Hull, is because pastors have not established the means of equipping people to do what Jesus had ordered for them. Also, there is a sense in the church that the clergy are responsible for doing ministry, while the laity acts as a passive audience.

The modern culture focuses on consumerism, and that includes emotional and spiritual needs. The main issue in this philosophy is that it is based on centeredness of the self. People will look only to satisfy their needs. Hull mentions that when a believer has a consumer-based mindset, their primary focus will be their need.¹³ Because of this type of mindset of many believers, the church is caught up in the same mindset, and it will begin to move to try meeting the needs of such believers. Is this the right mindset for a church to make qualified and willing disciples who will multiply themselves? What are the possibilities that the church, because of the fear of losing people, will get out of the worthy goal that Jesus has established in His church? If the church agrees to follow the consumer-based mindset, it cannot expect to produce believers who will be truly formed into the image of Jesus Christ.

The right mindset for the church leaders is to understand that they exist, not to meet

¹² Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor: Leading Others on the Journey of Faith*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 24.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 36.

superficial needs; rather, the church exists to serve others. This service must be concentrated to meet the real needs, like purpose in God, joy, and knowing that they are at peace with God through Jesus Christ.

The Right Mindset

Through the years, a lot has been said about disciple making. Almost every believer knows the Great Commission, and they can even recite the verses. Nevertheless, does the church, especially leaders, understand the importance of disciple making? Disciple making needs to be connected right at the center of the heart of the church in order to produce fruit-bearing disciples. Church leaders need to understand that a disciple is more than simply a convert. Understanding what a disciple is, and what it does, will help church leaders to establish priorities to accomplish this task.

Discipleship and Disciples

Barna mentions that discipleship is turning completely into a competent follower of Jesus Christ.¹⁴ To achieve this, Barna notes that there must be a voluntary submission to the authority of Jesus Christ, to become an imitator of Him in aspects like His thoughts, words, and actions in order to achieve godliness. Bing, in his definition of discipleship, is consistent with Barna. He defines *discipleship* as a journey of life of a human being towards the conversion into the likeness of Jesus Christ.¹⁵ Luter, Jr. indicates that the purpose of discipleship is achieving

¹⁴ George Barna, *Growing True Disciples* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBook Press, 2001), 17.

¹⁵ Charles C. Bing, "The Making of a Disciple," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 5, no. 2 (Autumn 1992): 27.

godliness.¹⁶ Hull describes a disciple as a reborn follower of Jesus.¹⁷ In Earley's explanation of the term *disciple*, he states that a disciple is a student or learner, describing a person who volunteers, learns, and follows his teachers' precepts and instructions.¹⁸

In order to become a disciple of Jesus, there must be accountability from the disciple and the discipler. The disciple should become available for developing and understand the accountability on this part. As part of his development, the disciple commits or devotes himself to the authority of others by being taught. An intentional effort is seen in the disciple to learn and submit to Jesus and others.

So, to summarize exactly what a disciple of Jesus is, a disciple of Jesus should 1) involve themselves with a small group for growing closer to Christ, 2) submit themselves to knowing what Jesus taught, 3) want to serve Jesus with their life, 4) follow Christ's example, and 5) lead others to Christ and teach them how to follow the Savior.¹⁹

Discipleship in the Scriptures

Discipleship is a derivative of the word *disciple*. It is not a biblical term; however, the term has been used for describing the Christian experience in a broader explanation. Hull states that "ship" is added to the word disciple in order to define what is the state of a disciple.²⁰ During the time of Christ, there were several schools of religious thought. Among them were the Pharisees, the Zealots, the disciples of John the Baptist, and others.

¹⁶ A. Boyd Luter, Jr., "Discipleship and the Church," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 137, no. 547 (July 1980): 271.

¹⁷ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 32.

¹⁸ Earley and Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is...*, 68.

¹⁹ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 68.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

First-century discipleship was characterized by a serious commitment of the disciple to his teacher. In order to summarize this, this discipleship had five characteristics: 1) deciding to follow a teacher, 2) memorizing the teacher's words, 3) learning the teacher's way of ministry, 4) imitating the teacher's life and character, and 5) raising up their own disciples.²¹ Jesus used these characteristics or principles with His followers.

However, Jesus' disciple making was very different from the religious leaders of the time. The gospel, in numerous occasions, registered when Jesus confronted and reacted strongly to the Pharisees' hypocrisy. Their teachings led to a crucial difference on how to relate to others, including how to relate to God. According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus set the differences between the religious leaders and them. The Pharisees loved to be recognized by people in public places and enjoyed that the people of the time called them *Rabbi* (Matt 23:7-12). When Jesus was teaching this to His disciples, He stated the kind of relationship that He expected, a relationship based on friendship and common respect, not a relationship based on pride and superiority, but equals, because they are brothers.

Another difference in Jesus' discipleship and the discipleship of the religious leaders was the purpose of it. Jesus accused the Pharisees to be, basically, an obstacle to the people because they shut the kingdom of God in people's faces (Matt 23:13). When Jesus was making disciples during His earthly ministry, He stated on various occasions that He came to save and rescue what was lost. In other words, His intentions were to reconcile the human race to God through His work.

Furthermore, the Scriptures mention the importance of discipleship. Matthew, in his Gospel, pointed out the Great Commission given by Jesus. The instructions of Jesus to the

²¹ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 63-64.

apostles were to go and make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe all that He had commanded (Matt 28:19-20). To achieve this Commission, the apostles had to preach the gospel to the people, so that they could receive salvation through Jesus Christ. Then, the apostles had to start a process of teaching these new believers, so they can put into practice Jesus' teachings and began a process transforming their lives through the Holy Spirit. This model can be seen with greater clarity in the epistles of the apostle Paul. Paul mentioned that it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe (1 Cor 1:21). He also urged its recipients to be imitators of Christ. Therefore, the Scriptures clearly point out the importance of discipleship in order to accomplish godliness (Eph 4:11-13).

For instance, one of Paul's closest disciples was Timothy. According to the Scriptures, Paul gave him an important instruction in 2 Timothy 2:2. The text says, "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." The historical context behind the text presents Paul near the end of his life. Timothy was entrusted to look for men of character to continue to teach the true gospel, preached by Paul and learned by Timothy, so he could leave Ephesus and see Paul one last time.²² The character of these men was imperative to protect the integrity of the message of the gospel. Since Paul in 1 Timothy 3:2 express that the elders had the responsibility to teach, these faithful men were elders.

As Hubbard and Barker explain, the historical interpretation of 2 Timothy 2:2 is not a formal institutionalization of the apostolic succession, but rather the preservation of sound

²² William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46 of *Word Biblical Commentary*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger et al. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 641, Kindle.

doctrine within the church.²³ Another way to see this verse is as a personal comment to a friend, entrusted to teach faithful men, who then will teach others. One important phrase in this verse is “διὰ πολλῶν μαρτύρων” (through or among many witnesses). One interpretation mentioned by Hubbard and Barker is that Paul was referring to a specific historical event, Timothy’s conversion.²⁴ The phrase contains some important aspects related to discipleship.

First, the event of Timothy’s conversion, baptism, and commission to ministry can be considered as a witnessed event. The witnesses mentioned by Paul in the text might suggest that the elders were present during this event in the life of Timothy. Likewise, it is possible that the elders have been witness of what Paul taught Timothy or the fact that the preaching and teaching of the gospel was entrusted to him.²⁵ This same phrase it is also found in 1 Timothy 6:12, which makes the same reference of Timothy’s confession among many witnesses.

Another important aspect to mention from this verse is the significance of the word “πιστοῖς” (faithful). The use of this word by Paul denotes that these faithful men were believers, in contrast to the Ephesian general population, who were pursuing myths. The emphasis on the character of these men, that they should be trustworthy, would guarantee in a sense the accurateness of the gospel as Timothy received it. The accurateness of the gospel of the elders will eventually produce good quality disciples of Jesus.

In the Old Testament, we see several examples of discipleship. One of those examples is Moses acting as a teacher to Joshua when he was in charge of the Israelites. Moses, by God's command, began to educate Joshua on matters of law, as well as encourage and strengthen him,

²³ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 641.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

so he could lead his people into the Promised Land.

Historical Discipleship and the Priesthood of the Believers

Throughout the history of the human race, there have been teachers, mentors, and spiritual guides who have taught their ways of life and their beliefs to their students. According to Hull, discipleship provided the following to human needs: 1) relationship to nurture, 2) apprenticeship for competence, 3) accountability for tasks, 4) submission for shaping, and 5) wisdom for decision making.²⁶ So, discipleship, even before Christ, had an important role in order to develop disciples.

Discipleship can be traced back to the Greco-Roman world. During this era, various teachers rose and made disciples. Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and other Greek philosophers were making their own disciples. Furthermore, religious leaders followed the same kind of activities.²⁷ Philosophers were pointing their own view of truth and other aspects of life to their disciples. Religious leaders in Jerusalem were guiding their disciples to God (Yahweh) and to the coming Messiah. Similarities exist in the way of teaching among philosophers and the religious leaders. For example, both had a close relationship with their disciples.

According to Hull, the Greek word *mathetes* was a person who adhered to his master, and the master himself decided how the disciple followed.²⁸ Socrates and Plato freely used this term to refer to their learners. In the Hebrew world, two words were used to refer to the disciples, *talmidh* and *limmudh*, meaning “taught one” and “accustomed to,” respectively. Both of these

²⁶ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 52-53.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

words indicate a close and personal relationship as the master teaches a disciple.²⁹ Jesus followed this type of discipleship. Hull provides an example using the relationship of Moses and Joshua. Basically, the relationship of Moses as a teacher to Joshua provided him the five characteristics of what humans need, as mentioned before.

During the time of Christ, there were several schools of religious thought. Among them were the Pharisees, the Zealots, the disciples of John the Baptist, and others. First-century discipleship was characterized by a serious commitment of the disciple to his teacher. In order to summarize this, this discipleship had five characteristics: 1) deciding to follow a teacher, 2) memorizing the teacher's words, 3) learning the teacher's way of ministry, 4) imitating the teacher's life and character, and 5) raising up their own disciples.³⁰ Jesus used these characteristics or principles with His followers. These characteristics can be observed in the Scriptures. For instance, when Jesus called Matthew, he decided to follow Him (Matt 9:9).

Another difference in Jesus' discipleship and the discipleship of the religious leaders was the purpose of it. Jesus accused the Pharisees to be, basically, an obstacle to the people, because they shut the kingdom of God in people's faces (Matt 23:13). When Jesus was making disciples during His earthly ministry, He stated on various occasions that He came to save and rescue what was lost. In other words, His intentions were to reconcile the human race to God through His work.

After the apostles, there were people who also followed what the apostles taught at their time. Hull mentions several examples of people who were willing to follow Jesus and set an example through their lives so that others would learn how to be a disciple of Jesus. For

²⁹ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 54.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 63-64.

example, Clement of Rome summarized his concerns of the spiritual life of the Corinthian church in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and he stated that this constituted the regular and essential structure of Christian spirituality.³¹

Monks, bishops, and the Reformers all shared principles of how to be a disciple of Christ. Through their lives, we can learn how to live in humility, show love through relationships and guide people to Christ, help the poor and other people who are suffering, live in fellowship with other Christians and worship with them, among other valuable teachings which are compatible with the true meaning of being a disciple of Jesus. Also, through the readings, we have learned that the whole body of Christ should be involved in ministry.

The Apostles as Teachers in the Great Commission

Understanding the Great Commission can give us a clear view of the role of a leader as a teacher. Matthew 28:19-20 says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And, behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Here, the Great Commission can be divided into two parts. The first part includes evangelism. Acts 2 presents Peter preaching the gospel, and the result of that preaching was that 3,000 persons received Christ as their Savior. However, the second part of the Great Commission includes teaching.

Jesus was considered a preacher. However, the gospels registered that the disciples, the people, and even the religious leaders of that time called Him *Rabbi* (John 1:38). Jesus dedicated His ministry to teach others, making disciples. The same was commanded to the apostles. The evangelistic part of making a disciple is the starting point of making disciples. But, the great part

³¹ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 75.

of making disciples includes teaching. Acts 2 presents the two aspects of making disciples. In the first sermon of Peter, he was evangelizing the people who were at the Pentecost. After that event, Acts 2:42 says, “And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” From this verse, we can see that the apostles, besides the leadership role that they had, were considered teachers as well.

Rogers, in his discussion of the Great Commission, explains that the commission should be considered as a rabbi-student relationship, which was common at that time.³² In this historical context, the teacher was considered to be a man of great authority and high esteem among his followers. As mentioned before, the students devoted their lives to follow their teacher, and they have a complete submission to his authority, indicating that a teacher in this historical context was considered a leader as well.

Elders as Teachers in the New Testament

Some suggest that the elder had an approximate age between 50 to 56 years old. However, an example of the community of Qumran establishes a 30-year minimum age to serve as an elder in the community.³³ Since the roots of this community are Jewish, and their existence is very close to the apostolic period, it is a reliable example of what the minimum age was for a position of leadership within this community. There is another reason to assume that minimum age to assume the position of an elder was 30 years old.

Luke teaches that when Jesus began His ministry, He was approximately 30 years of age (Luke 3:23). It is very likely that His age is not simply a historical fact, but it was the acceptable age to start a position of leadership and teaching within the community. Likewise, other scholars,

³² Cleon Rogers, “The Great Commission,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 130, no. 519 (July 1973): 263.

³³ Ed Glasscock, “The Biblical Concept of Elder,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144, no. 573 (January 1987): 67.

like Bixby, mention that the Old Testament use of “elders” refers generally to older, more mature leaders of families, tribes, communities, and religious activities.³⁴ Nevertheless, there is a distinction between the elders of the Old Testament and the New Testament. According to Miller, the elders of the days of Moses and Joshua were considered as representatives, with no initiative or governing power; rather, they were under Moses and Joshua’s leadership.³⁵

Later that period, elders continued to gain decision-making authority, even to demand a king, as 1 Samuel 8:4 states. However, New Testament elders were not representative of the people, nor did they follow an aristocracy structure. Their uniqueness strives for that they are selected by Christ, with a specific set of qualifications to equip the church. Why the question of the age if it is a position of leadership or teaching?

On the general use of the term *elder*, both in and outside of the Bible, the primary emphasis on age is related to wisdom and maturity, rather than simply an age. Considering the discussion above, there is sufficient evidence that a leader or teacher must be at least 30 years of age, since it was understood that the person had obtained some training or maturity to perform the position and function. To lead, educate, and advise others requires that the person has an understanding based on his wisdom and humility, which apparently age provided these qualifications.

Qualifications to be an Elder

Because of the change from a Jewish to a Gentile majority, Paul had to explain the concept and functions of an elder to the Gentiles, who were not accustomed to this type of leadership in their cultural context. For the Jewish community, this was part of their cultural

³⁴ Howard L. Bixby, “What Is an Elder?” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 9, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 13-14.

³⁵ David W. Miller, “The Uniqueness of New Testament Church Eldership,” *Grace Theological Journal* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1985): 317.

context, so, an explanation of what is an elder and his responsibilities were known among them. According to Glasscock, Paul mentions at least 22 qualifications, not necessarily for Timothy and Titus, but for future generations.

The apostle Paul mentioned in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) certain qualifications in order to become an elder in the Gentile churches. These qualifications can be classified into four categories: personal character, public testimony, family, and ministry. Some personal qualifications to mention are justice, devotion, self-control, not being a neophyte, among other qualifications. Some of the public attributes (the qualifications that can be observed by the society) include a good reputation, hospitality, having no behavior that is reprehensible to society, or being subject to any charge.

The family qualifications include being the husband of one wife, a good handler of their home, keeping their children under control (respecting the authority of their parents), and being believers. The quality of being a single woman's husband will be discussed in greater depth. Finally, the ministerial qualifications include having the ability to teach, being steadfast in doctrine, exhorting by sound doctrine, and refuting everything contrary to the Scriptures. These teaching qualifications are essential in order to perform as an elder in the Christian community. The elder, in order to become a worthy example to imitate within the local church, must have these qualifications.

Functions of the Elder

What was expected from the elder in the church? The New Testament provides several examples of the functions of an elder in the early church. In order to comprehend these functions, they will be divided into three categories: ruling, caring, and instructing.

Ruling

Elders are expected to be shepherds of the church. In the New Testament, the elders are seen ruling alongside with the apostles. For instance, the Scripture states, “And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question” (Acts 15:2).

In this particular reference, the apostle Paul, Barnabas, and others that were appointed went to the Jerusalem Council, composed by the apostles and elders, in order to discuss if the Gentile believers were required to observe the custom of Moses in order to be saved. As Luke presented this historical account, he mentions that the elders had a ruling position alongside the apostles. Verse 22 of this same chapter in Acts mentions that after discussing this issue together, the apostles and the elders had an agreement to resolve the issue mentioned. Also, Paul, mentions to Timothy that elders who ruled well were considered as worthy of double honor (1 Tim 5:17).

Caring

Besides the function of ruling, the elders also had to take care of the church as well. We can see in the Gospels how Jesus took care of people in several ways. For instance, Jesus, as a teacher or Rabbi, as He was called sometimes, fed 5,000 men, besides women and children. According to the Scriptures, Jesus saw a crowd that was following Him on foot, and Jesus had compassion on them (Matt 14:21). Also, the Epistles show several instances of the elders taking care of others, as well as their well-being. For instance, James 5:14-15 states, “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”

Instructing

Likewise, the elders of the church, besides the other two functions mentioned above, had a function of pastor-teacher. The important question here is, were the teachers in the New Testament also leaders? Several scholars agree that the Scriptures provide enough evidence of the leadership of a teacher in the New Testament. First, Ephesians 4: 11-12 states, “And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” Here, the apostle Paul mentioned the ministries or gifts that God gave to equip the saints. Each particular gift or ministry had a function to properly equip the saints. It is important to say that one ministry or gift is not above the other; rather, they are supposed to work in perfect harmony, as God intended.

The structure of these verses is essential to understand the main idea of what Paul is trying to communicate to the Ephesians. At the beginning of chapter 4 of the epistle, the first sentence communicates the idea of diversity, based on the sovereignty of Christ in the distribution of divine gifts among the church. The use of the Greek word *ἕκαστος* (each) strengthens the position of diversity in terms that the main focus is on individuals.³⁶

To each believer, God has given a gift through the Holy Spirit, with the main focus of contributing to the growth of each believer. By the expression in the first sentence of chapter 4, Paul is teaching that, based on the grace of Christ, each individual receives a gift to build up another in the body of Christ. Arnold indicates that this teaching is consistent with Paul’s discussion of spiritual gifts in other passages (1 Cor 12:12-31; Rom 12:3-8).³⁷

In the second sentence of chapter 4 (verses 11-16) of the epistle, Paul used the intensive

³⁶ Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, vol. 10 of *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2010), 6520. Kindle.

³⁷ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 6525.

pronoun *αὐτός*, which means “He” in this context, emphasizing the Christ has the authority to raise up leaders for equipping the church and give gifts to them. The sentence expresses that Christ has gifted certain individual in the community of believers to establish churches, minister the gospel, and equip others for an active role of service in the church.³⁸ It is imperative to mention that these individuals are elected by Christ and are not elected officials. The fact that Christ himself has elected them, enables these gifts.

The verses mention four gifts; however, for the purpose of this thesis, the main focus would be the role of pastor-teacher. Arnold indicates the grammatical construction of the sentence, that the Greek word for *pastor* (*ποιμένεζ*) is closely related to the Greek word for *teachers* (*διδάσκαλοι*).³⁹ As he continues his discussion of the grammatical composition of the verse, Arnold states that Paul used the masculine plural article and the conjunction *δέ*, which means “but, and, moreover,” then, connecting the word teachers closely with pastors with the simple conjunction *καί*.⁴⁰

Based on this information, Arnold mentions that some interpreters suggest that Paul is presenting the pastors and teachers as one same ministry function, rather than two separate functions or ministry. There is a probability that Paul expressed himself like this in order to convey that pastor are gifted as teachers.

Besides Arnold, others scholars agree that pastor-teachers refers to the same function and person, rather than two different. For instance, Mappes mentions that that there is an analogy in the office of apostleship. Clearly, the epistles mention that Paul was an apostle, but they also

³⁸ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 6770.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 6866.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 6871.

mention that he held the functions of a preacher and teacher, as mentioned in 1 Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 1:11.⁴¹ In other words, Paul was a leader of the early church, as well as a teacher.

Furthermore, Kennedy mentions that “pastors” refers to a man whom the Lord has gifted as pastor-teacher (Ephesians 4:11) and whom the Scriptures calls him as an overseer or elder, making the title of elder equal to a pastor-teacher.⁴² He also mentions that the pastor-teacher has two key functions that are equal to an elder. For instance, Kennedy says that the pastoring aspect of the ministry is focused on the care of the congregation, which includes the function of leading, feeding, guardian, comforter, rescuer, and healer.⁴³

The other function is of being a teacher or being able to teach. Why is teaching so important? Kennedy, using the analogy of a shepherd and the flock, explains that a shepherd must feed, lead, guard, and doctor the sheep.⁴⁴ So, a pastor-teacher has similar functions in comparison with this analogy. Teaching a congregation can be said to be similar to feeding a flock, which Kennedy mentions is the most important function of the shepherd. Biblical passages such as Ezekiel 34; Psalm 23, and John 21 have the same emphasis of the importance of the teaching role of pastoring. Other biblical passages using the analogy of the shepherd are Hebrew 13:20 and 1 Peter 2:25. Both texts use the word *pastor* as a title for Jesus. Arnold discusses that the use of the term *shepherd* conveys a great deal of care, concern, and Godly leadership.⁴⁵

Neglecting this function of being a teacher will have disastrous consequences for the

⁴¹ David A. Mappes, “The New Testament Elder, Overseer, and Pastor,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154, no. 614 (April 1997): 171.

⁴² Tod Kennedy, “The Shepherding Aspect of the Pastoring and Teaching Ministry,” *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 9, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 37.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴⁵ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 6893.

church; that is, the flock will not receive the food it needs to be healthy and alive. Pastor-teachers have a godly responsibility to teach sound doctrine to the flock, so they can discern what is dangerous and avoid the consequences of following false doctrine. Also, teaching equips the saints for ministry.

Kennedy explains that most pastors tend to neglect the teaching part of ministry and emphasizes the care of the congregation. However, Smith says that, by definition, a pastor is a leader, a teacher, a thought-shaper.⁴⁶ It is essential that a pastor-teacher have a balance of care and teaching.

Equipping Ministry

Dependency Model Description

Ogden starts his discussion mentioning the problem of having a pastor-focused centered ministry. In his argument, he states that there is a need to move away from this type of ministry focus.⁴⁷ Why it is an issue to have a pastor-centered ministry in the church? The issue is dependency. Three aspects are essential to analyze the issue. First is the self-expectations of the pastor. Here, the pastor is responsible for doing ministry, while the church members are grateful (or not) recipients of the professional care given by the pastor.⁴⁸ The pastor gives the care to the “unqualified” (meaning the church members). There is some truth behind this statement. It is true that a pastor gives care to church members. But the real question is, must the pastor have to give care to church members, alone, without any help from the body? Basically, this is what

⁴⁶ Thomas N. Smith, “The Pastor as a Christian Thinker,” *Reformation and Revival* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1994): 73.

⁴⁷ Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 1658, Kindle.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1716.

characterize the institutional model of church, or the Traditional Church Model.

The dependency of ministry only in the pastor creates an unhealthy system, which will lead to no spiritual growth or disciple making. Ogden says that in this dependency model, pastors are seen as parents who take care of the people of God as dependent children.⁴⁹ The result is that the children will remain children. But why do some pastors enter in this dependency model of ministry? Ogden mentions several reasons why some pastors engage in this type of ministry. I would like to focus on one that applies to the church I serve: distrust/control issues.

Ogden defines control as “holding onto power and making sure you get your way.”⁵⁰ When pastors have control and distrust issues, this becomes an obstacle to equipping the church for ministry, resulting in complete dependency, that will ultimately lead to no growth. This is why leaders must go through a process of maturing in Christ in order to become equippers. Blackaby mentions something very interesting related to leadership.

In his discussion, he states that leadership development comes through character maturation because leadership is a character issue.⁵¹ This process of building the character of a leader is a slow process and will include some painful events in their lives. However, this process enables the leader to put into action God’s agenda before anything else in their ministry. Vanity cannot be a source of vision to motivate leaders. The main source of a vision for leaders should be God’s revelation and guidance.

⁴⁹ Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 1729.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1780.

⁵¹ Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda*, rev. and esp. ed. (Nashville, TN.: B&H Books, 2011), 82.

Pastor-Centered Model

An equipping ministry starts with the pastor and the church leadership. If a pastor is not willing to lead the church, the church will not grow to the standards that Jesus has set in the Gospels. Likewise, if all the ministry service is the responsibility of the pastor, then an unhealthy church system is being practiced because of its imbalance: the pastor is trying to do the members' ministries creating members who are spectators. A pastor-centered church can be described as a church that has hired a pastor to take care of the congregation, entertain it, and do ministry for it.⁵²

In this particular church model, the pastor has a perspective that, as a hired minister, his role is to help find the way for the church. In other words, the church is the one who established the vision, rather than the pastor. When the church decides the vision, he simply obeys that view. Also, this model, as mentioned previously, the role of the church is to do just a little bit in every aspect of ministry.⁵³ In order for the church to become alive in Christ, the role of the pastor and the church should be aligned with Ephesians 4:11-15. This is the biblical foundation for an equipping ministry. When the church follows this model presented in Ephesians, the pastor's first responsibility is to lead the church to God's vision, sharing the responsibility with other leaders as well, so, as a pastor, he can start equipping the church.

When all three aspects work together, clear objectives and goals flourish, and the church is involved in ministry work, while the pastor equips others. This is why understanding the present reality in the church is imperative to assess the issues related to spiritual growth.

⁵² Farr and Kotan, *Renovate or Die*, 259.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 267.

Equippers

An equipping ministry can be described as the maturation of the “body by assisting the people of God to practice the ministries to which they are called.”⁵⁴ Ogden mentions that equipping pastors help the church members discover their spiritual gifts and develop them in accord with their God-ordained function. It is about empowering the church to do ministry, as the pastor’s role is about using his gift given by God for that purpose. In other words, an equipping ministry mends/restores, establishes/lays a foundation, and prepares/trains for ministry.⁵⁵

As human beings, we have struggled with sin since Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Our spiritual formation had become corrupted, establishing the necessity to be restored by God through His Holy Spirit. We need to be fixed because we are broken (in the spiritual context). So, part of an equipping ministry includes restoring people for God. Second, there is a need of a solid foundation to be placed in us. Ogden says that, in the biblical context, establishing a foundation evokes being strong, unshakable, solid, and firmly planted.⁵⁶ For us, that foundation is Jesus Christ. The role of the equipping pastor is to connect the body to the head equipper and solid foundation, Jesus Christ.

Third, there is the need to prepare/train. Ogden mentions that an equipping ministry is one that assists each member of the body of Christ, so it can function properly according God’s purpose for that body part.⁵⁷ Here, the Holy Spirit plays an essential role because He is the one who is giving the spiritual gifts to the body so it can be edified in Christ. Ogden says that

⁵⁴ Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 2014.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2067.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 2217.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 2333.

“equipping churches provides ample opportunities for people to discover their spiritual gifts and passion for ministry.”⁵⁸ This can be done by having classes so people can discover their spiritual gift under biblical teaching.

Who Does It and How?

Now, who is responsible for doing an equipping ministry? Here, leadership plays an essential role. When talking about leadership, there are some characteristics of leaders. For instance, Ogden mentions that equipping leaders have a recognition by the body that the proper spiritual gift is operating under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁹

Equipping leaders do three tasks: 1) restore people for God, 2) connect the body to the head equipper and solid foundation, Jesus Christ, 3) assist each member of the body of Christ, so it can function properly according God’s purpose for that body part.⁶⁰ By doing this, equipping leaders empower the church for ministry and set an example to follow, showing the proper spiritual gift they have under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Also, leadership evokes development. Equipping leaders are not only concerned about getting people to do what they order or what they want, but they are also concerned that people are being developed to reach their full potential in Christ.⁶¹ As part of an equipping ministry, equipping leadership must influence God’s people to follow His plan for each one and become what God has called them for.

Furthermore, equipping leaders teach, train, and develop by example in order to

⁵⁸ Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 2342.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 2926.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 2333.

⁶¹ Earley and Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is...:* 198.

accomplish the purpose mentioned in Ephesians 4:11-12. Jesus' way of ministry included servitude. He stated that He came to serve. As disciples of Jesus, we are called by God to serve. Equipping leadership influences people to get involved in ministry. As mentioned before, they help the body discover their spiritual gifts. This is very important. In contrast with a hierarchical leadership or traditional pastor-centered ministry, this equipping model is inclusive because all members of the body are encouraged to ministry for God. The pastor-centered ministry concentrates the power in the hands of few, creating passivity in those who are not part of the leadership structure.⁶² In order to avoid that, the leadership must change their role as only as a caretaker and become developers and equippers.

Stedman and Ogden use the four main systems of our body to explain this. Stedman used them in order to explain the function for each of the spiritual gifts and the foundation of discipleship and how all the body is involved in ministry, not part of it.⁶³ Ogden, presents the body of Christ, not as an institution, but rather as an organism, an interdependent, life pulsating people who are indwelt by the presence of a resurrected and reigning Christ.⁶⁴ He also uses the body systems in order to explain how the church is supposed to be working, stating that all believers must be served, not just a group of "elites." When only a few members are doing all the work, most of them get burnout, tired, and end up leaving what they are doing.

So, the role of the disciple-making pastor should be based on corporate maturity. Applying Ephesians 4:11-16 unlocks the potential for corporate maturity, effective evangelism,

⁶² Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 3395.

⁶³ Ray C. Stedman, *Body Life*, rev. and exp. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House, 1995), 97-129. Through these pages, he describes the four main system of the body and the function of the spiritual gifts in the church.

⁶⁴ Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 508.

and self-perpetuating growth.⁶⁵

Arnold, in his exegetical discussion of Ephesians 4:12, mentions that there has been a great debate on how to interpret this verse. One of the views regarding how to interpret verse 12, is the use of three prepositional phrases and establishes a strong separation between the clergy and laity.⁶⁶ The pastor-centered model presents a similitude with this view. As discussed, this model presents a distinction between clergy and laity. Following this view would promote a passive church, where only a few members are working in ministry, while the vast majority of the church would remain as mere spectators. Also, this view is held by Roman Catholic scholars, where this type of division exists between the clergy and laity.

This is why, according to Hull, the pastor and the church leadership have to begin having a perspective of themselves as specialists, that is, as equippers/teachers. By applying this model, the ministry work shifts from the pastor to the church to involving the entire body of Christ. This is the second interpretation regarding the three prepositional phrases. Arnold mentions that this second view consists in conveying the second and third phrase as dependent of the first, establishing that each individual in the body of Christ is responsible for the work of ministry.⁶⁷

He also indicates that there is evidence to favor the second view (involving the body of Christ) and the separation of the first view (clergy and laity). The first prepositional phrase sets the main purpose of the gifted leaders, equipping the church to work ministry. Arnolds states that this is the only time that the word *καταρτισμός*, which means “complete furnishing or perfecting,” appears in the New Testament.

⁶⁵ Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor*: 107.

⁶⁶ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 6929.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 6929.

Verse 13 states the main goal of this gifted people, the maturity of each believer in the church. The intention of Paul is a church unified, as well as mature as possible in Christ, to achieve godliness in their lives. The phrase ἄνδρα τέλειον denotes the Paul's passion for the church to become a "perfect man."⁶⁸ This expression made by Paul is consistent with Jesus' teachings in the Sermon of the Mount. Becoming a "perfect man" has to be understood as blameless, as God is blameless.

⁶⁸ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 7027.

CHAPTER 3

APPLIED RESEARCH METHOD, RESULTS/EVALUATION

As mentioned previously in this research, the applied research portion of this investigation includes an anonymous electronic survey used to assess the knowledge of pastoral/elder/deacon roles based on the Scriptures and to evaluate the discipleship making process of the church. Before completing the anonymous electronic survey, each participant completed an informed consent included in the electronic survey. Any participant that would not be interested in participating in the research, after answering no to the informed consent, was excluded automatically. The size of the sample was 9 participants (n=9).

Electronic-Based Anonymous Survey

The electronic-based anonymous survey provided participants an informed consent question, as a form of authorization, collected basic demographic information, making sure that the participant remained completely anonymous, and asked open and controlled-response questions to assess the knowledge of the biblical role of pastors/deacons/elders in the church, and the disciple-making process. Some questions provided the alternative of “I am not sure” as a response option, to indicate any level of indecision on the given question.

Survey Question 1: Introduction and Consent Form

In order to ensure the participant agreement with the consent form included in the electronic survey, Question 1 provided a brief explanation of the survey and how the information was going to be managed. All participants were required to respond affirmatively to the consent form before proceeding to answer the rest of the questions. The full text of Question 1 is provided below:

You are invited to be in a research study of discipleship. You were elected as a possible participant because of your role as a pastor/deacon/elder. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Juan V. Acevedo Maldonado, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this research is to determine how the church is providing a healthy environment for developing disciples and how are they getting involved in ministry. The study ultimately seeks to find why there is a lack of willing and qualifying disciplers, and how to address the issue by first, understanding the biblical role of Christian leadership, and developing a practical plan for addressing the lack of qualified and willing disciplers.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete an anonymous survey online, via Survey Monkey. This survey web form will not ask or collect your identity and will not collect your location data either, church name, or any other confidential information.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits:

Option 2: No Direct Benefits. Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Your participation is strictly voluntary.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report that I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study:

Anonymous Survey Research: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Juan V. Acevedo Maldonado. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him by calling at 939-249-5711 and/or emailing jacevedo11@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Rod Earls, at rdearls@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk

to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu. Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

1. I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.
 - Yes
 - No

The information included in the consent form ensured the participants had all the necessary information to make an informed decision whether or not to participate in the research.

Five Demographic Questions

The survey included five demographic questions (questions 14, 20-22, 28) with their respective controlled responses. The main objective of these questions was to better understand the uniqueness of the participants and the selected church for this research. No demographic data were used to identify any of the participants. For the purpose of clarifying any questions, here are the following demographic questions:

14. How many saints are currently involved in ministry in the church?
 - 0-10% of the church membership
 - 11-20% of the church membership
 - 21-30% of the church membership
 - 31-40% of the church membership
 - 41-50% of the church membership
 - 51% or more of the church membership

20. How long have you served as an elder/deacon/pastor?
 - 0-1 years
 - 2-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-15 years

21. My church age is:

- 0-1 year
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years

22. The size of the church is:

- 1-20 people
- 21-50 people
- 51-75 people
- 76-100 people
- 101-200 people
- 200+

28. What is your age?

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 or older

Of all the demographic questions, question 14 is the most relevant to the overall goal of this research. Knowing the uniqueness of the church in terms of how many saints are involved in ministry assists in giving a clear view on what the disciple-making process looks like and helps understand if this disciple-making process has been effective. Likewise, the demographic questions present an overview of the maturity of the church, in terms how old it is since its foundation, and the maturity of the pastors/elders/deacons, in terms of years serving in office. The results are presented as follows:

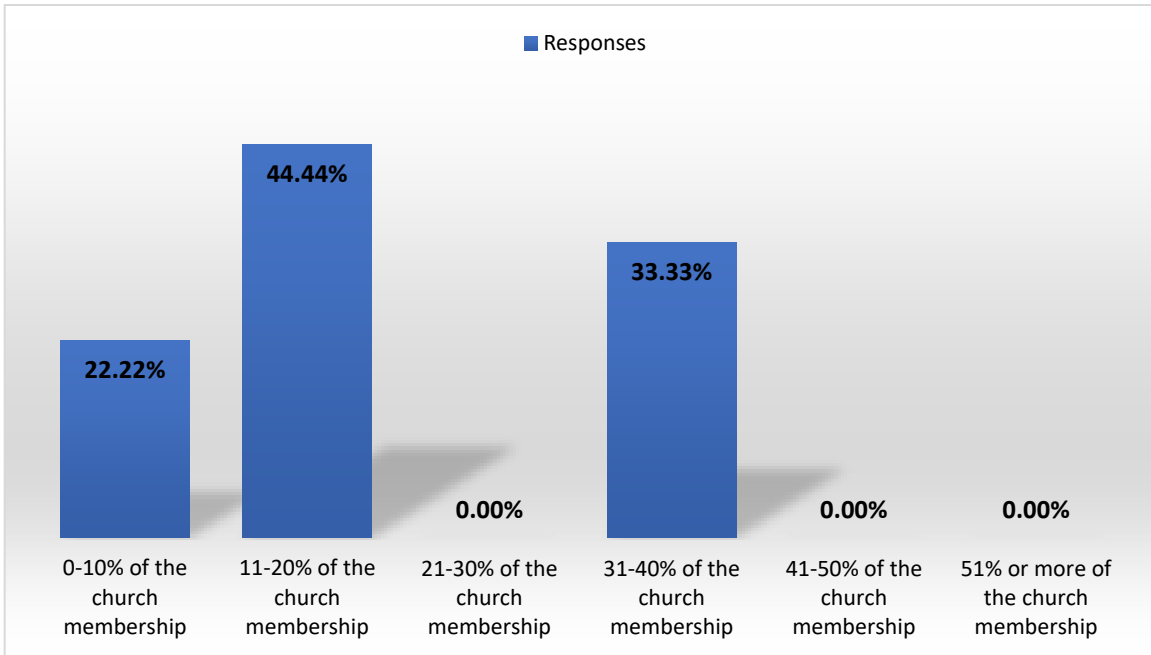


Figure 1. Question 14: How many saints are currently involved in ministry in the church?

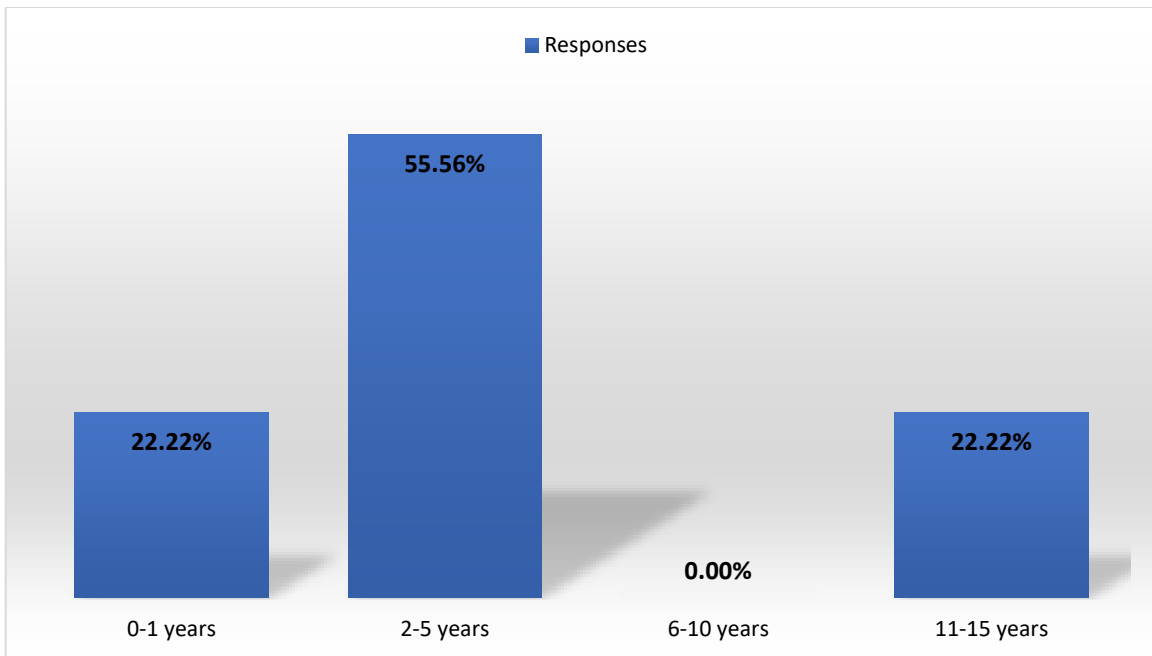


Figure 2. Question 20: How long have you been serving as an elder/deacon/pastor?

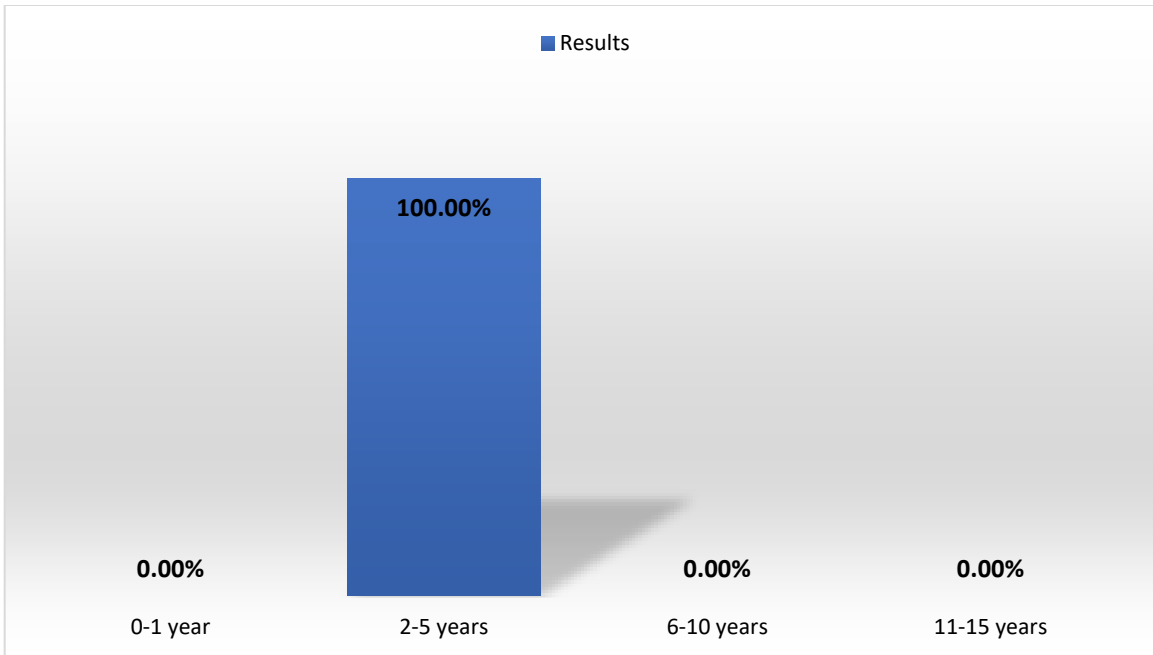


Figure 3. Question 21: My church age is:

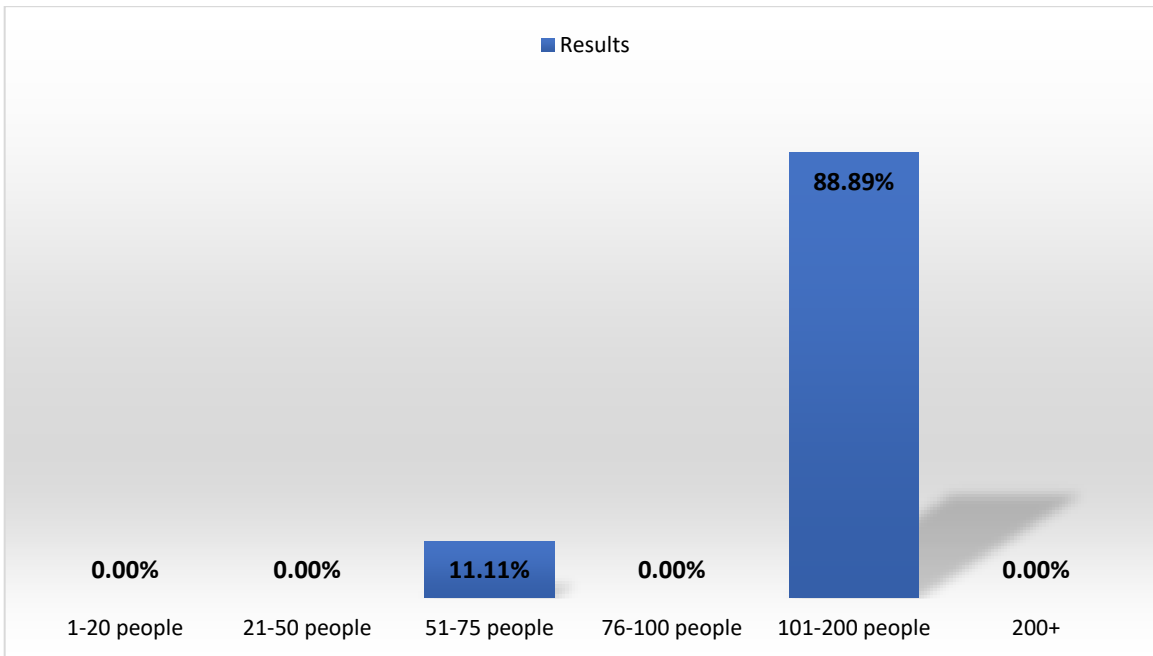


Figure 4. Question 22: The size of the church is:

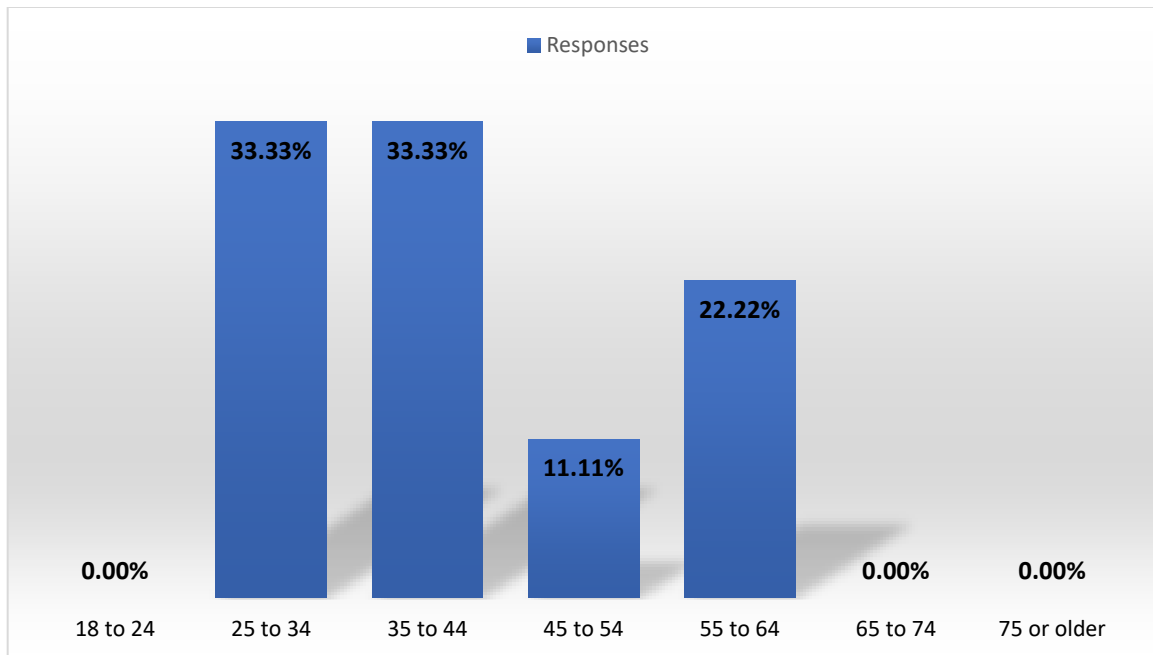


Figure 5. Question 28: What is your age?

Substantive Survey Questions

Questions 2-13, 15-19, 23-27, and 29-31 had the purpose of collecting information regarding spiritual leadership, biblical knowledge of the role of deacons/pastors/elders in the church, and evaluating the church growth in terms of how many disciplers are working together with the leadership of the church to develop disciples. Most of the questions are multiple choice questions, and there are some questions that are open-ended questions. These questions are provided below:

2. What is the goal of Christian Leadership?
 - Achieve the goals set by the church.
 - Obey and follow the pastor's goals.
 - Influence individuals to follow God's plan for their lives.

The understanding of the goal of Christian Leadership is essential to the purpose of developing disciples in the church. The questions had the purpose of getting the participants to express their understanding of the goal of Christian leadership. As far as for the understanding of

the participants of the goal of Christian Leadership, all participants (n=9) answered that the goal of Christian leadership is to influence individuals to follow God's plan for their lives. The results are provided below:

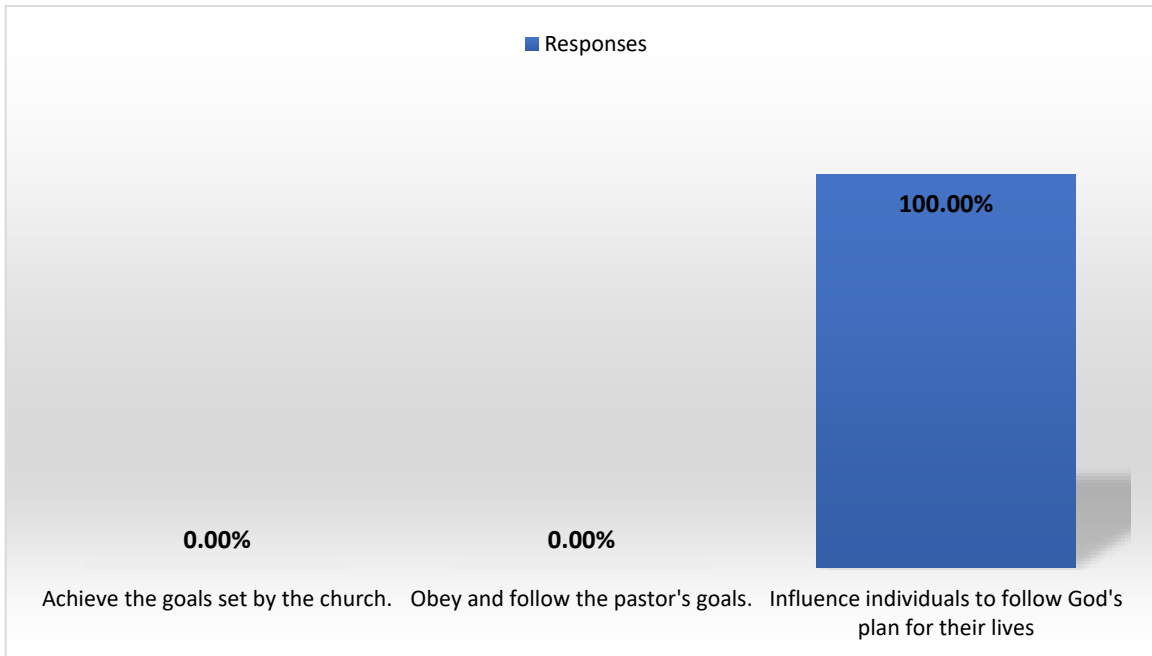


Figure 6. Question 2: What is the goal of Christian leadership?

3. As a pastor-teacher, my role in the church is:
 - Caregiver
 - Preaching
 - Supervise other leaders
 - Equip the church to do ministry

Following the same context of the role in Christian leadership, the question had the purpose of collecting the understanding of each participant regarding the role of a pastor-teacher. Over 88 percent of the participants indicated that the role of the pastor-teacher is to equip the church to do ministry. The results are shown below:

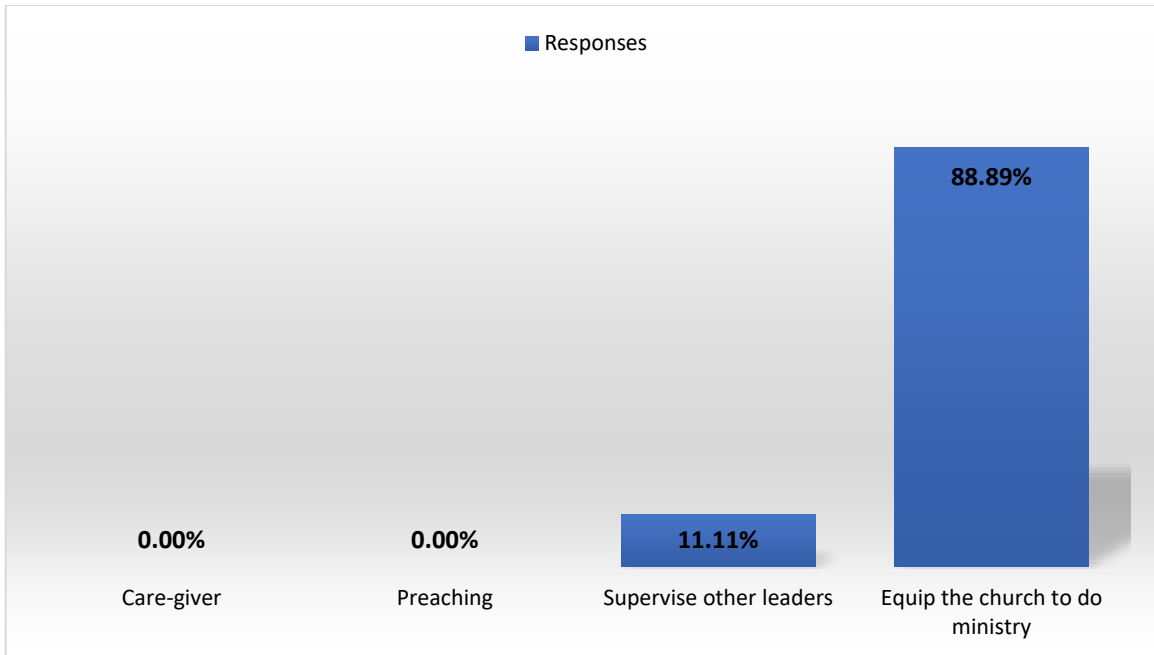


Figure 7. Question 3: As a pastor-teacher, my role in the church is:

4. The church has a description which outlines my duties / functions as a deacon/elder/pastor.
 - Yes
 - No
 - I am not sure

The relevance of this question is important in terms of the role of Christian leadership, specifically the role of the deacon/elder/pastor. The responses from the participants varied as follows: 44.44 percent indicated that the church has a description that outlines the roles of a deacon/elder/pastor; 22.22 percent of the participants specified that there is no description that outlines the roles; and 33.33 percent were not sure if there is a description at all. The results are shown below:

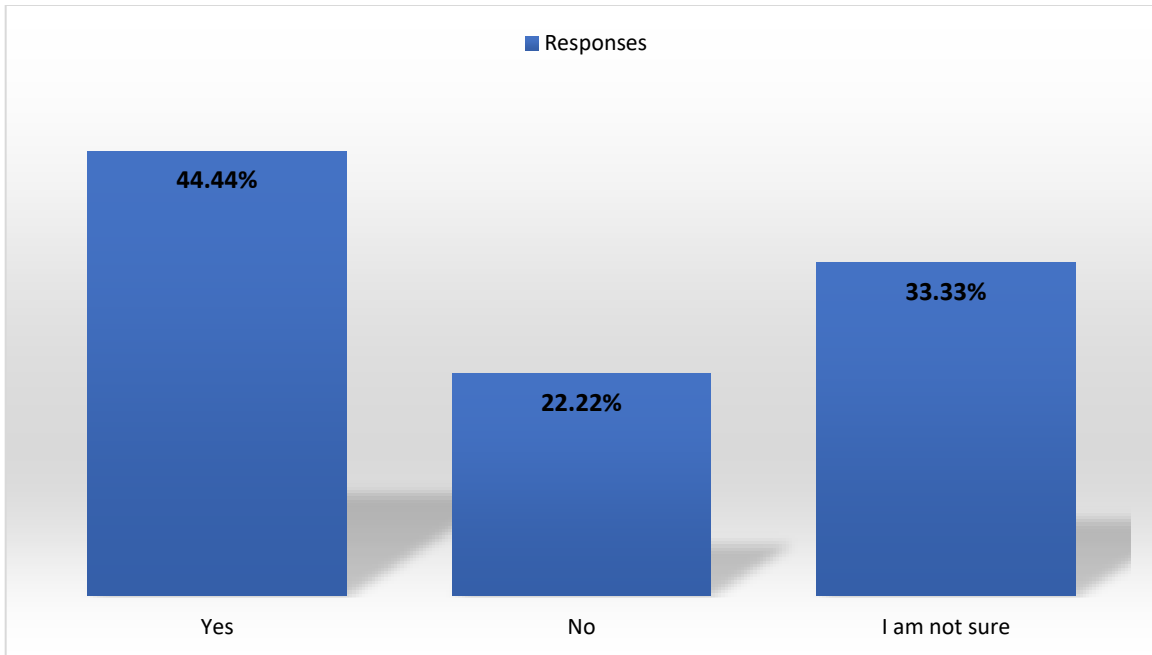


Figure 8. Question 4: The church has a description which outlines my duties/functions as a deacon/elder/pastor.

5. In my understanding, the primary purpose(s) of the deacon/elder/pastor in the local church is: (Mark all that apply)
 - Supervise the matters of the church, excluding finances
 - Supervise the matters of the church, including finances
 - Supervise the pastor and ensure he/she is accountable to the church body
 - Acts as a balance against an unstable amount of pastoral authority

Subsequent to the past questions, the purpose of this question in the survey was to gather the responses about how each participant perceives his/her primary purpose as a deacon/elder/pastor in the local church. The findings in the responses exhibited two main primary purposes for the deacon/elder/pastor: 88.89 percent answered that their primary purpose was to supervise the matters of the church, including finances, followed by 66.67 percent that indicated their primary role is supervision of the pastor and ensuring accountability to the church body. The complete results are shown below:

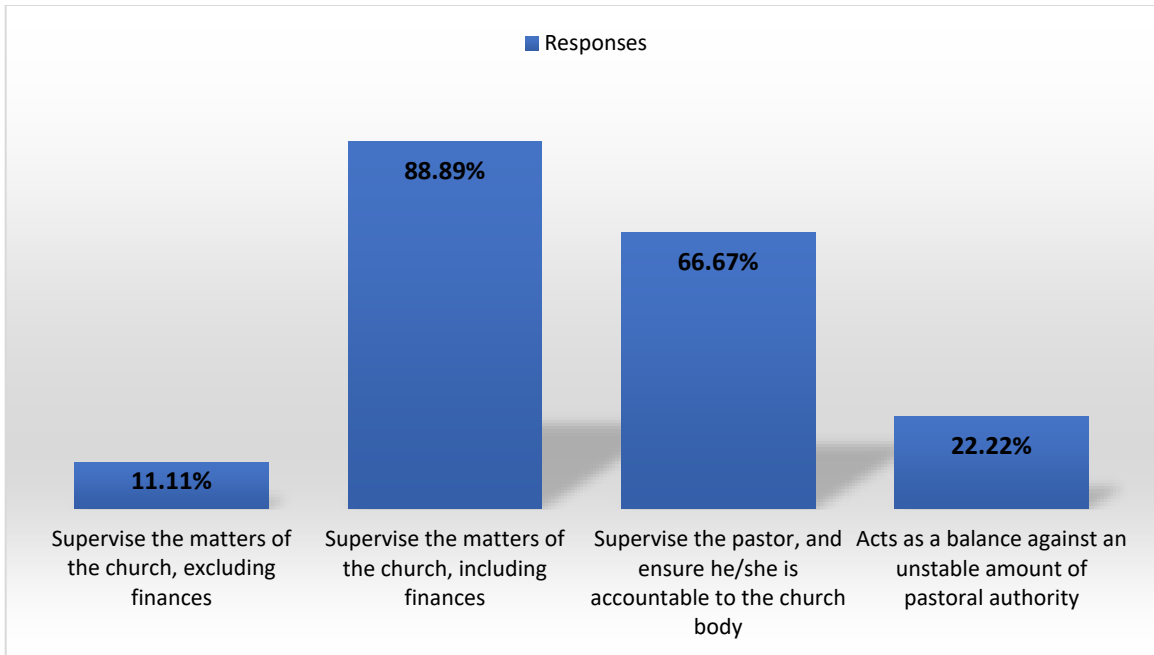


Figure 9. Question 5: In my understanding, the primary purpose(s) of the deacon/elder/pastor in the local church is: (Mark all that apply)

7. The Bible specifies that pastors are given oversight authority in and over the church?
- Yes
 - No
 - I am not sure

Information regarding biblical knowledge of the authority given in and over a church for pastors is vital to their understanding of such given responsibility. A clear knowledge of this authority will give direction and purpose for the leadership to be effective Christian leaders and exercising their role effectively. Among the participants, there appears to be a division on whether the Bible specifies that a pastor is given authority in and over the church. Both answers (yes and no) scored at 44.44 percent each. This is essential to follow up since being vital for the leaders to understand what authority is given in the Bible for them to exercise in the church. The complete results are shown below:

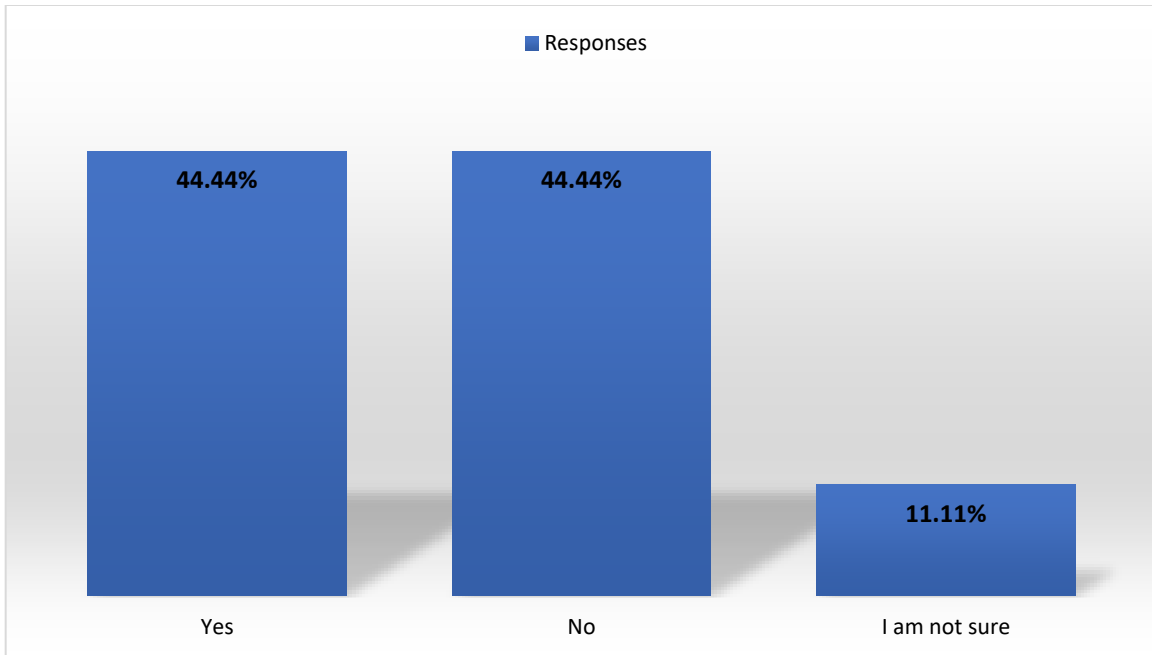


Figure 10. Question 6: The Bible specifies that pastors are given oversight authority in and over the church?

7. The Bible specifies that deacons are given oversight authority in and over the church?
- Yes
 - No
 - I am not sure

This next question is correlated to question 6. The main goal of the question is to better understand how the leadership perceives themselves as deacons and their authority given to them according to the Scripture. No biblical passage was provided to them in order to answer this question. Among the participants, the 44.44 percent answered that the Bible specified that deacons have the authority to oversee the church, and 55.56 percent of the participants indicated that the Bible does not give authority to the deacons to oversee the church or are not sure (33.33 percent indicated that the Bible does not specify oversight authority for the deacons, while 22.22 percent indicated that they are not sure). See results below:

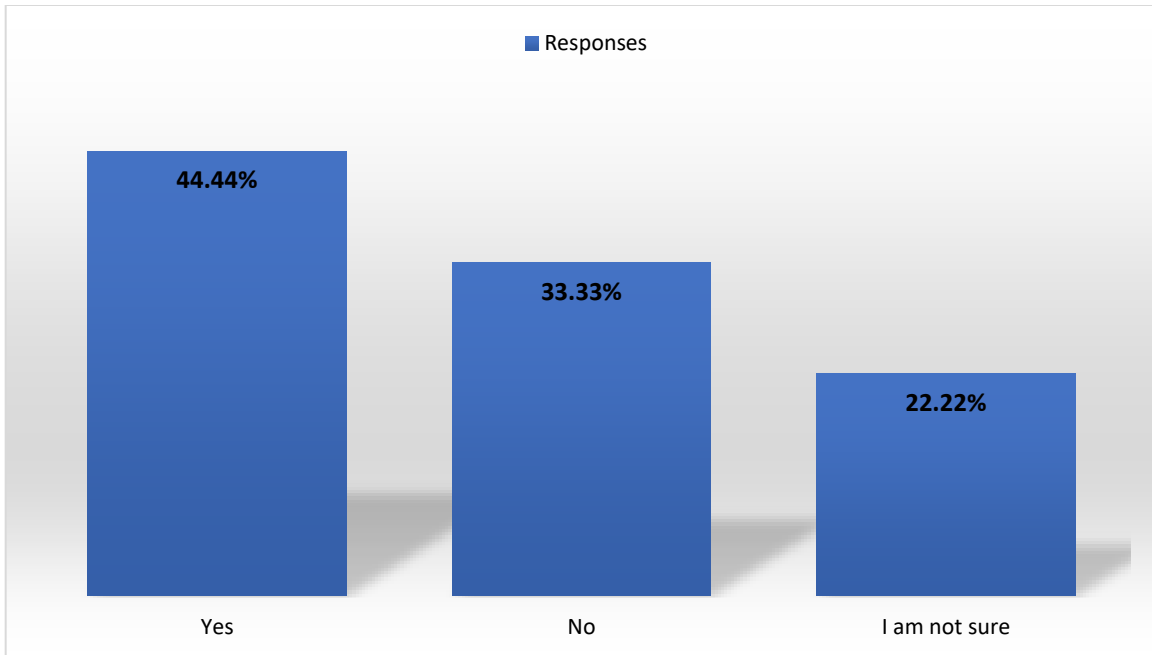


Figure 11. Question 7: The Bible specifies that deacons are given oversight authority in and over the church?

8. Who is responsible for leading, guiding, and teaching the church in spiritual affairs?

- Deacons
- Elders
- Senior Pastor
- A collective group of deacons/elders/pastors
- Group Committees

9. Who is responsible for the business/administrative affairs of the church?

- Deacons
- Elders
- Senior Pastor
- A collective group of deacons/elders/pastors
- Group Committees

These two questions are related one to another. Two aspects regarding the leadership of the church are asked, spiritual and administrative affairs, and who is responsible for both. The responses to these questions aim to determine if these affairs are handled by a single person, or there is a group of deacons/elders/pastors responsible for these. Answers for both questions seem

like to strongly agree that a collective group of deacons/elders/pastors are responsible for the spiritual and administrative affairs of the church. The results are presented below:

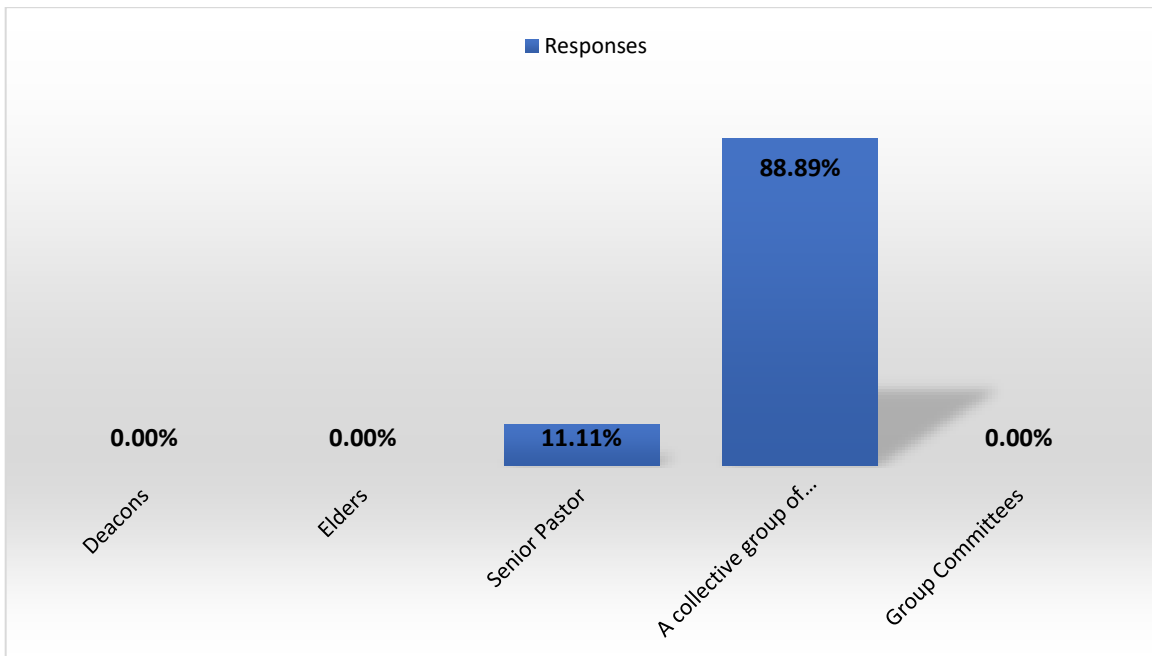


Figure 12. Question 8: Who is responsible for leading, guiding, and teaching the church in spiritual affairs?

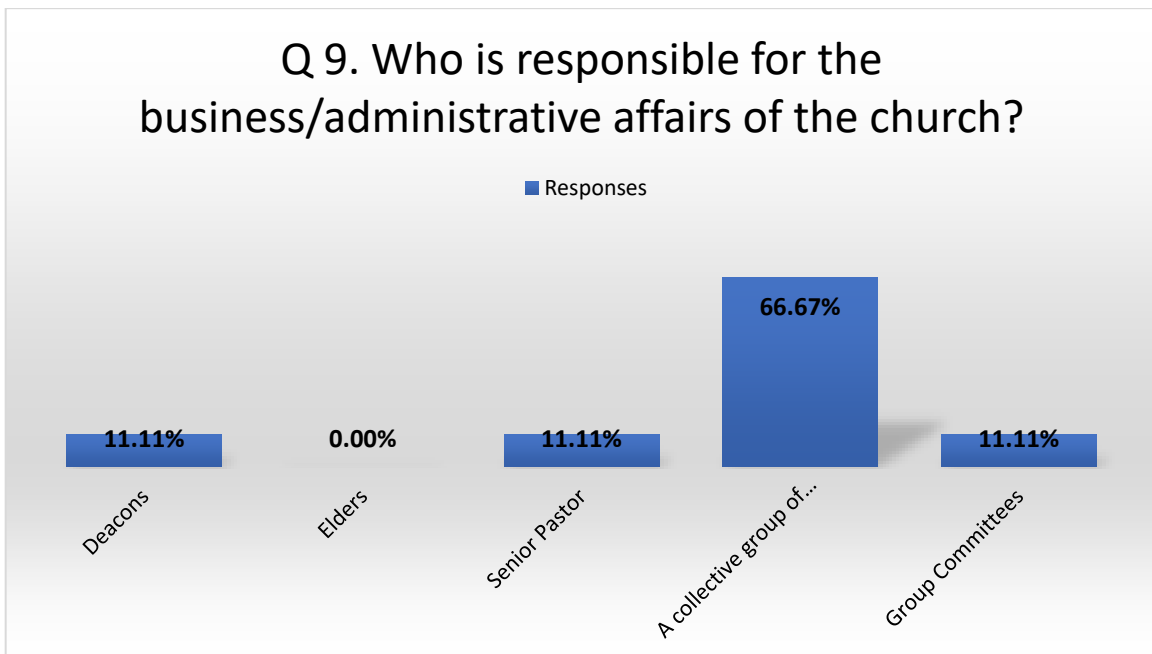


Figure 13. Question 9: Who is responsible for the business/administrative affairs of the church?

10. As a deacon/elder/pastor, I am elected by the church members to represent their interests in all administrative and spiritual affairs. As such, in church meetings, I will act as an advocate for the people I am representing.

- Yes
- No

This question has the purpose of examining the rationale behind this statement: a spiritual leader is expected to advocate the purpose of God for the lives of those who are being represented. Although, the statement might be true in some sense, it is essential to point out that the interest of the believers might not be exactly the interest that God has. Based on this, the primary representative is for the purpose of God for the church. With 55.56 percent of the participants indicating that they advocate for the interests of the church, 44.44 percent of the participants specified that they are not elected to advocate the interests of the church. The results are shown below:

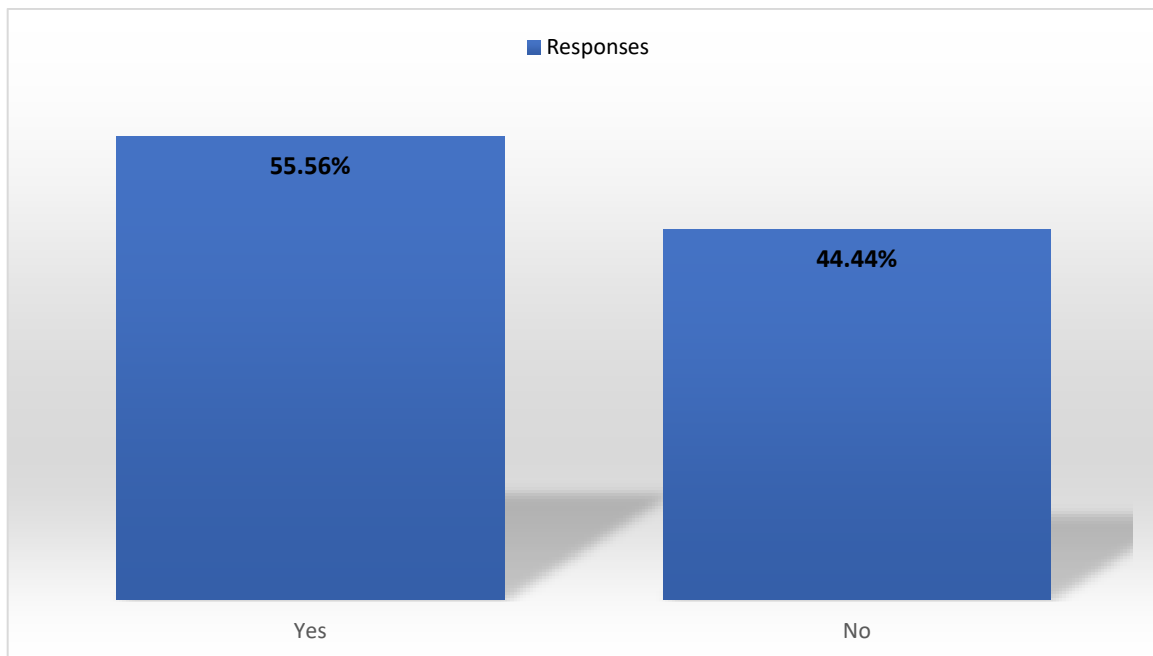


Figure 14. Question 10: As a deacon/elder/pastor, I am elected by the church members to represent their interests in all administrative and spiritual affairs. As such, in church meetings, I will act as advocate for the people I am representing.

11. Is there a lack of willing and qualified disciplers in the church?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

This particular question aims for the purpose of this research. The participants were asked to evaluate their discipleship-making process. The first step was indicating if there is a lack of willing and qualified disciplers in the church. A majority, 55.56 percent of the participants, responded that there is a lack of qualified and willing disciplers, followed by 33.33 percent of the participants that are not sure if there is a lack of disciplers. Only 11.11 percent of the participants indicated that there is not a lack of willing and qualified disciplers in the church. The results are shown below:

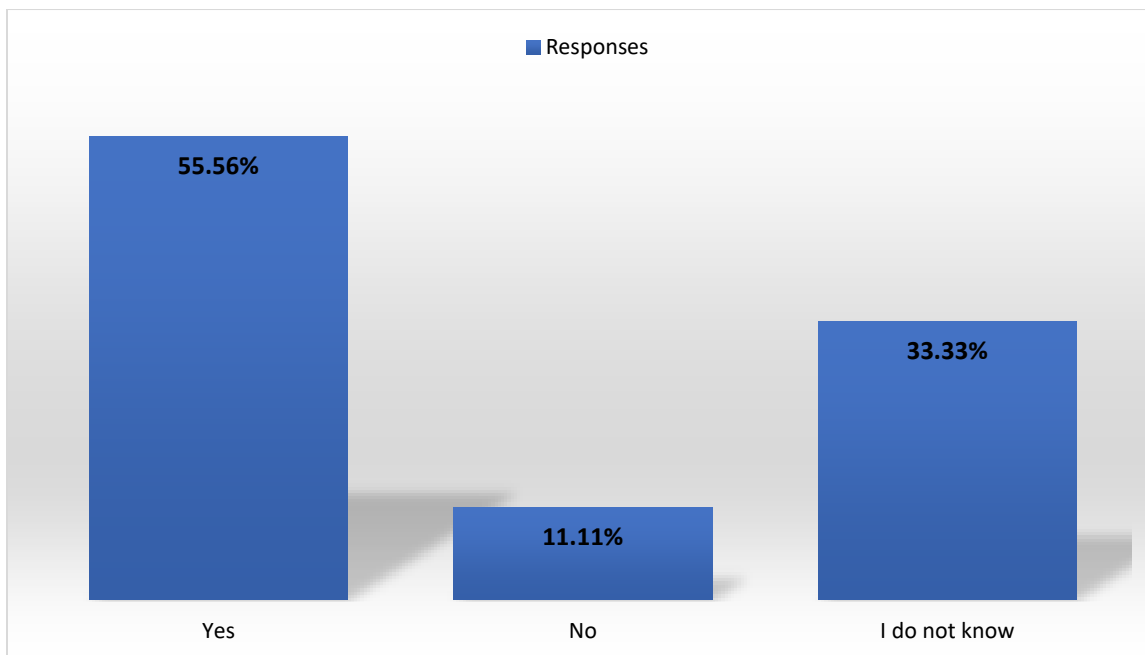


Figure 15. Question 11: Is there a lack of willing and qualified disciplers in the church?

12. If applicable, why do you think is there a lack of qualified and willing disciplers?

13. What steps have been implemented to resolve the lack of willing and qualified disciplers?

These two questions were open-ended questions. Their goal was to collect information on the reasons for the lack of willing and qualified disciplers in the church and what steps have the leadership taken in order to address this issue. Important factors were mentioned by the participants who answered “yes” to question 10. One factor that was mentioned by the participants was the amount of activities in the church. The adjective used to describe it was “overwhelming.” Based on their response, the church has more of an attractional model, focusing on many activities during the year.⁶⁹ Because of this, discipleship has gone to second place.

Furthermore, participants indicated that there is a dependency on the leaders. This statement has to be considered seriously in terms of how mature the church is and the consequences of having a completely dependent church on their leadership. Also, the participants mentioned that there is a lack of a clear vision and mission (multiple visions and missions), creating confusion among the leaders. Finally, the participants expressed that there is a lack of commitment from the church to get involved in this process. There is research conducted that validated this statement. However, this is not the main focus of this research.

In order to address these issues, the participants were asked for specific steps have been implemented by the leadership. Among those answers, the participants mentioned in Bible studies and preaching as steps to address the issue. Also, the dialog between the leaders and the church members has taken place. However, specific steps on how to address the lack of willing and qualifying disciplers are not mentioned by the participants, like a step-by-step plan. As a result, there is a low rate involvement of the church in doing ministry.

15. Are the saints being equipped to do ministry in the church?

- Yes
- No

⁶⁹ Effective Pastoral Leadership to Catalyst a Disciple-Making Church Electronic Survey, 12.

- I do not know

Following the rationale of the last two questions, the participants were asked if the saints are being equipped to do ministry in the church. Based on the analysis of the other questions, there is an expectation that there might be a logical answer to the question, that is, that the saints are being equipped. However, the participants' responses were varied among the three options given as a possible answer. All three options scored 33.33 percent. Nevertheless, special attention is required the "No" and "I do not know" answers. See results below:

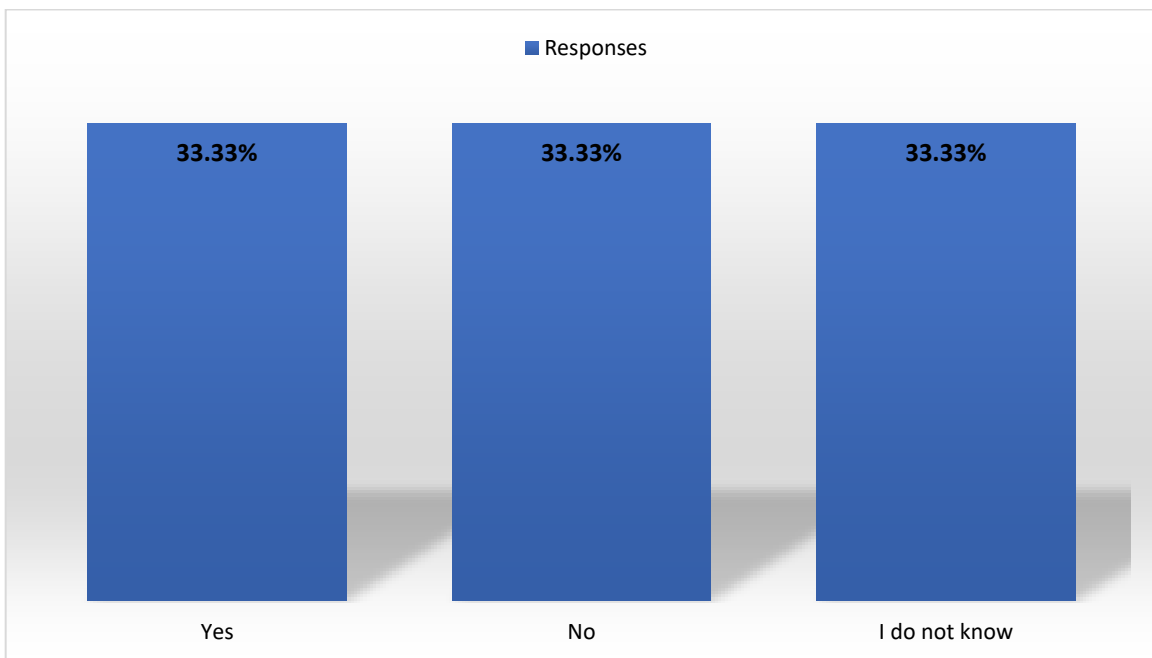


Figure 16. Question 15: Are the saints being equipped to do ministry in the church?

16. If applicable, how are the saints are being equipped to do ministry?

17. Describe how you see the saints.

Again, with the previous questions, these are intended to specify a systematic method of how the saints are being equipped by the deacons/elders/pastors. As an open-ended question, the methods mentioned by the participants vary. One method mentioned by the participants is the discipleship classes, Bible studies, and preaching. Among these answers, other participants

mentioned some type of training, but nothing specific. The participants recognized that there have been attempts to develop the saints to do ministry in the church, but there is a lack of a systematic methodology for this. Also, there are some participants that believe that the saints are not being equipped at all. There is a recognition of the participants that the right tools are needed to equip the saints so they can do ministry.

Likewise, having the right mindset for the saints is vital for equipping them for ministry. How leaders see the saints plays an essential role. As the previous question, the answers of the participants vary. In terms of the saints doing ministry, only a few (2 of the participants) mentioned that they see the saints working in ministry. There is a general view from the participants that see the saints as people of God who have been saved by Christ. As mentioned in other questions, there seems to be a lack of commitment from the saints in doing ministry. It is important to mention that this might be possible due to the lack of willing and qualified disciplers who can equip them to do ministry. Another factor that needs to be considered, and was mentioned by the participants, is the demanding of ministry and their anxiousness due to daily life activities. This is where the discipler not only will teach how to do ministry but how the saints should live their lives in a trusting relationship with Christ.

18. Without referring to the Bible, how is my level of understanding the biblical texts that provide the description of roles, function, and requirements of an elder/deacon/pastor?

- None
- Fair
- Average
- Good
- Excellent

19. Without referring to the Bible, in which of the following books or epistles are discussed the functions of an elder/deacon/pastor?

- Colossians
- Matthew
- 1 Corinthians
- Ephesians

- 1 Timothy
- Philippians
- Titus

Having a solid biblical foundation of the roles, function, and requirements of an elder/deacon/pastor it is vital for equipping others. Since the Scriptures specify the requirements for an elder/deacon/pastor, it is imperative that the leadership understands those requirements in order to be equippers. These two questions aim to collect how much the participants know about the roles, function and requirements in the Scriptures, and in which book/epistle is located those requirements and roles. For Question 18, 55.56 percent of the participants that indicated that their knowledge of the roles, functions, and requirements for an elder/deacon/pastor is good, and 33.33 percent of the participants indicated that their knowledge is average, while 11.11 percent indicated a fair knowledge.

Regarding the specific book/epistle in the Scriptures, where those roles, requirements, and functions are mentioned, the vast majority of the participants (66.67%) mentioned 1 Timothy as the epistle/book that contains the functions, roles, and requirements for an elder/deacon/pastor, and 11.11 percent was spread equally with Matthew, 1 Corinthians, and Ephesians. It is important to point out that the participants did not select Titus as an epistle/book that describes the functions, roles, and requirements for elders/deacons/pastors. This epistle, along with 1 Timothy, has the foundations, in terms of requirements, for elders/deacons/pastors. See results below:

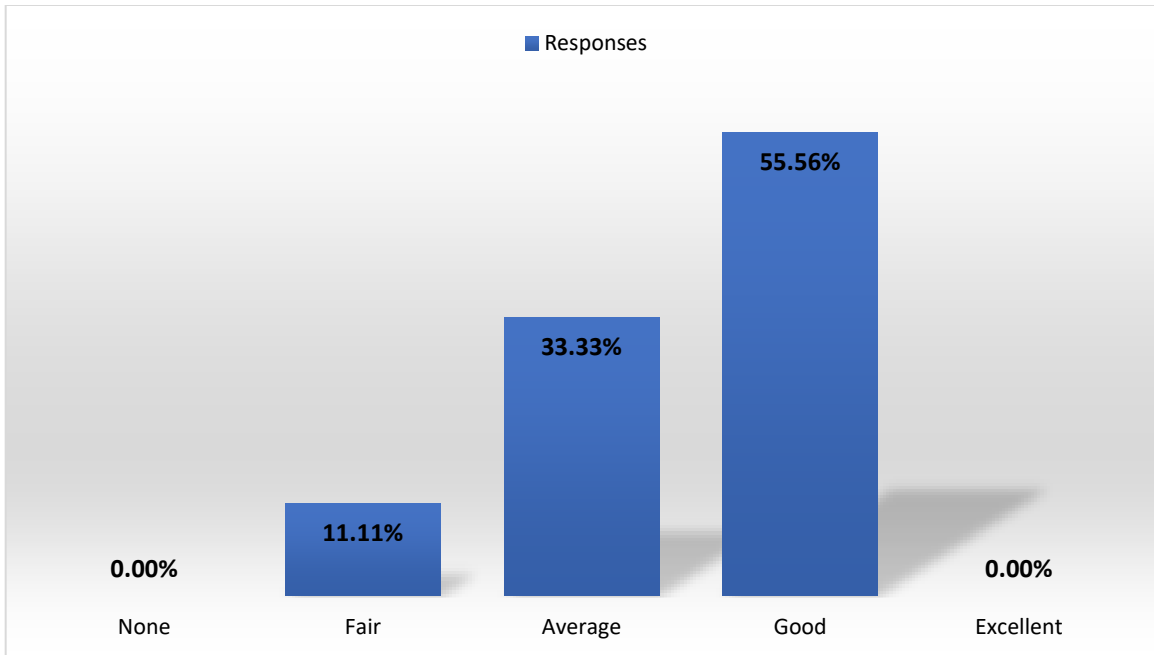


Figure 17. Question18: Without referring to the Bible, how is my level of understanding the biblical texts that provide the description of roles, function, and requirements of a elder/deacon/pastor?

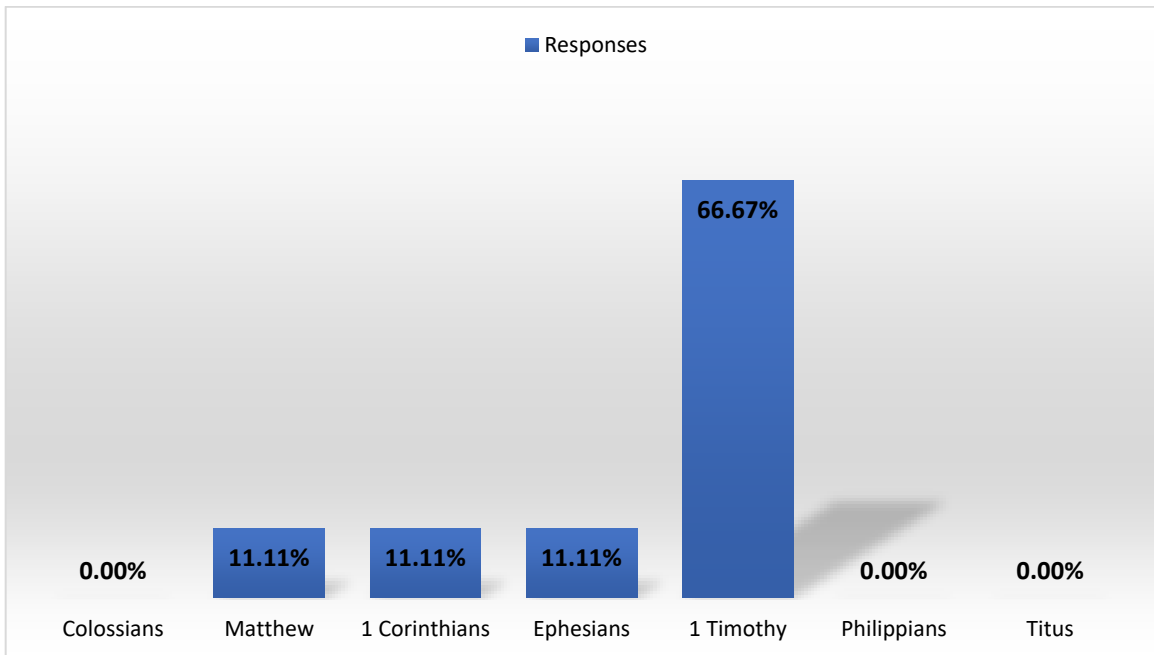


Figure 18. Question 19: Without referring to the Bible, in which of the following books or epistles are discussed the functions of an elder/deacon/pastor?

23. How do you describe the overall growth of the church in terms of new members?

- No growth
- Some growth
- Stable
- Rapid Growth
- Some decline
- Rapid decline

This question is indispensable for determining how the disciple-making process is in the church and if there are willing and qualified disciplers to help with spiritual and membership growth in the church. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a church with willing and qualified disciplers it is likely to experience growth. The participants had several possible answers to choose. Among those answers, “Some growth” and “Stable” scored 22.22 percent and 55.56 percent respectively. Also, some participants indicated that there was no growth at all (11.11%). Additional analysis will be provided in the conclusion for these findings. See results below:

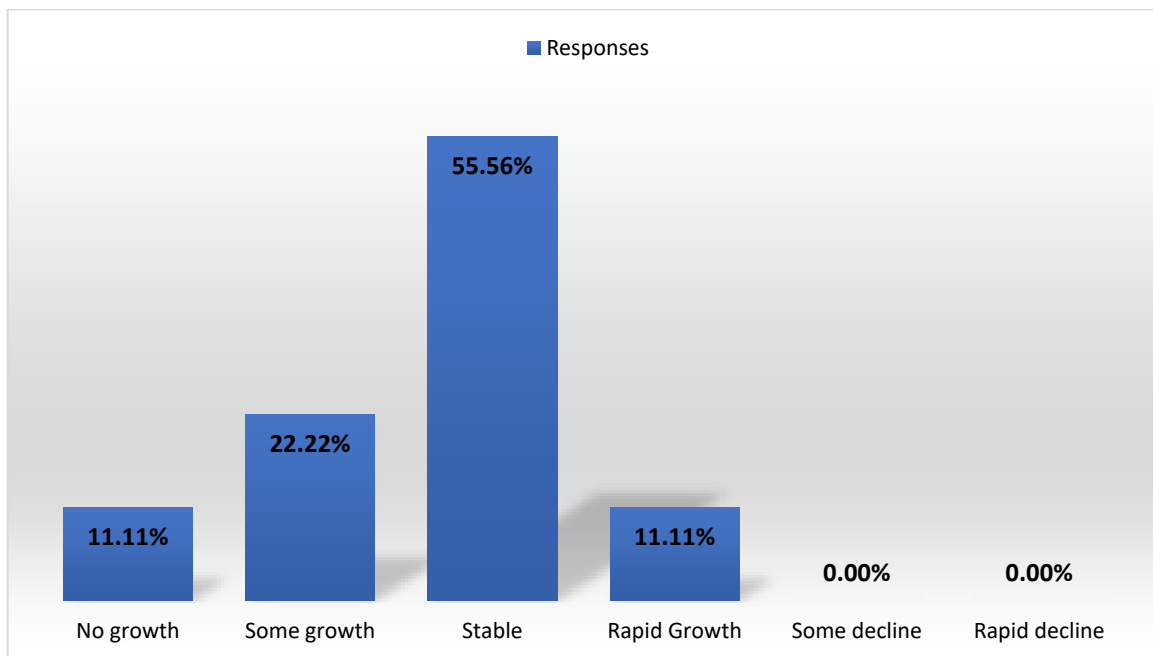


Figure 19. Question 23: How do you describe the overall growth of the church in terms of new members?

24. Currently, how would you describe your experience as an elder/deacon/pastor?

This question was an open-ended question, with the purpose of collecting information on the satisfaction levels of the current leadership in the church. From the responses provided by the participants, there is a good level of satisfaction among the participants, although some have indicated that is demanding. No specific reason was given to explain why it is considered to be demanding to be an elder/deacon/pastor.

25. Currently, there is nothing in the church that needs to be changed related to how the saints are being trained or equipped.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Given the nature of this research, this question aims to collect data from the participants regarding how the saints are being equipped in the church. Based on the participants' responses, there is a combined 55.55 percent of disagreement with the statement mentioned. These participants consider that there is not an agreement on how the saints are being equipped. Results show that 22.22% of participants are divided among "Agree" and "Neither agree nor disagree" in each answer. See the results below:

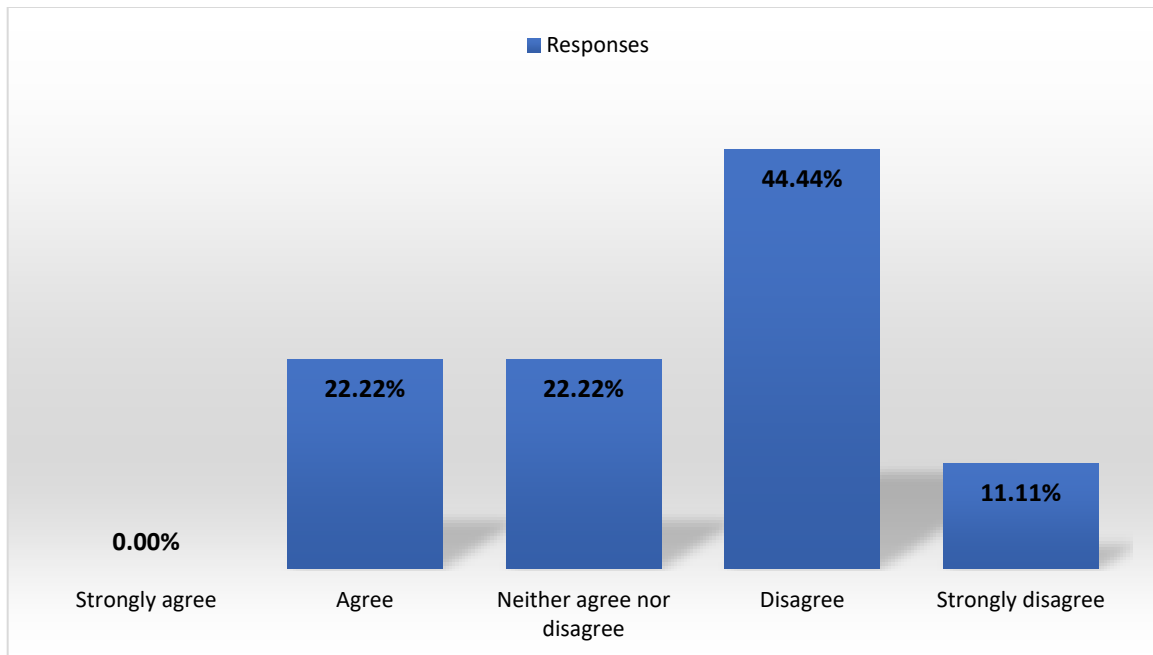


Figure 20. Question 25: Currently, there is nothing in the church that needs to be changed related to how the saints are being trained or equipped.

26. If applicable, what do you think that the church leadership needs to change?

As a continuation of the past question, participants were given the option for an open-ended answer to better understand what needs to be changed in terms of leadership, if applicable.

Among those participants that are in the “Disagree” and “Strongly disagree” categories, some indicated that training and assistance was needed. No specific trainings were mentioned in those answers, nor the type of assistance needed. Other participants focused their answers in terms of their personal relationship with God and fellowship among the leaders. Both points highlighted by the participants are essential for leadership. Likewise, the creation of a systematic methodology was mentioned as a tool for developing trainings for the leaders.

27. How satisfied are you as a leader with the disciple-making process of the church?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied

- Very dissatisfied

The question aims to evaluate the level of satisfaction among the leaders regarding the current disciple-making process in the church. It is interesting how the participants answered this question, based on their past answers in Question 22. Many of the participants (44.44 percent) indicated that they were satisfied with the disciple-making process of the church, while 11.11 percent were very satisfied. Question 22 scored over 50 percent in disagreement on how the saints were being equipped. There is a probability that the participants answered this question as satisfied, based on the current discipleship program that the church has. Further research might be needed. See results below:

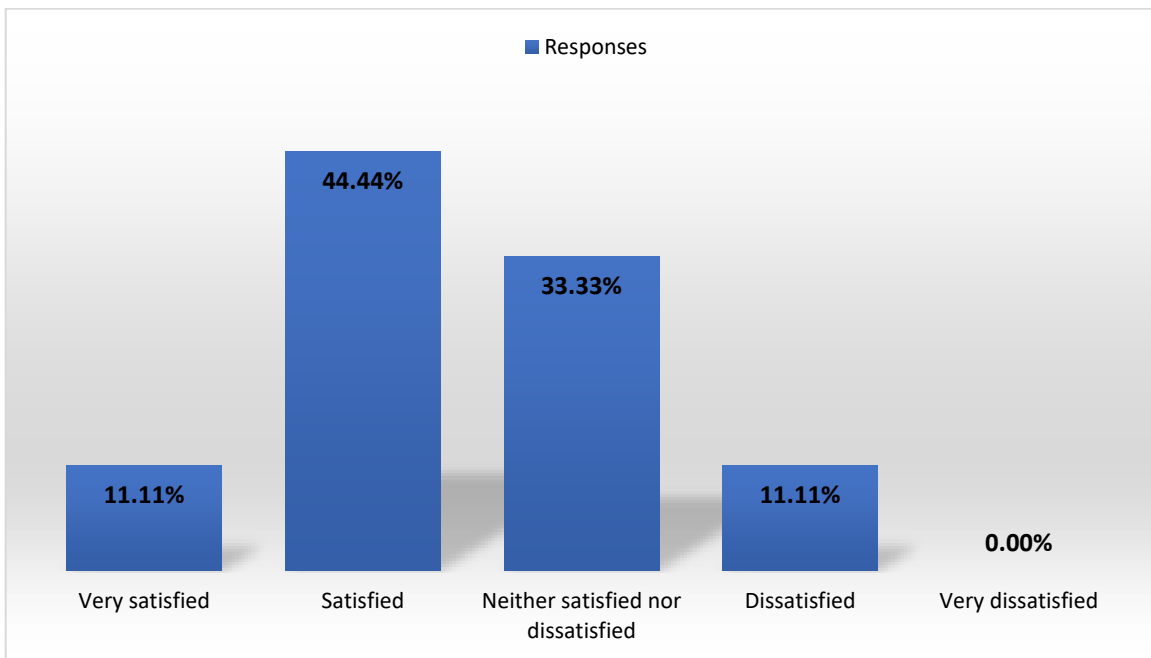


Figure 21. Question 27: How satisfied are you as a leader, with the disciple-making process of the church?

29. Are the saints being encouraged to discover their spiritual gifts?

- Yes
- No

Part of a disciple-making process of a church, it is vital for the saints know their spiritual

gifts and how to use them for ministry. The participants were asked to answer if the saints were encouraged in discovering their spiritual gifts. Among the participants, 88.89 percent answered that the saints were encouraged to discover their spiritual gifts. The question only focused on if the saints were encouraged to discover their spiritual gifts. How are they encouraged was not part of the question or what specific action has been taken by the leaders to help the saints to discover their spiritual gifts, since no church members, besides the leaders, were selected for this research. See results below:

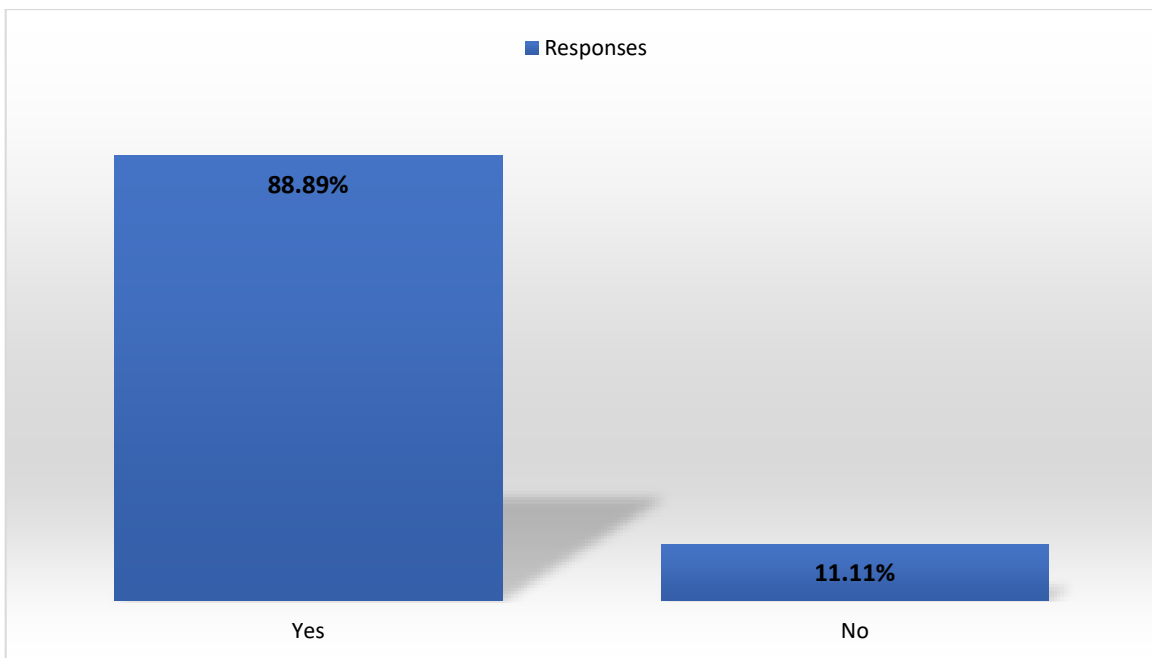


Figure 22. Question 29: Are the saints being encouraged to discover their spiritual gifts?

30. As an elder/deacon/pastor, what is the mission of the church?

This question was an open-ended question, with the purpose of collecting how the leaders know their mission. Among their answers, the mission statement was based on the Great Commission and specifics on preaching the gospel. The church selected has a mission statement. This mission statement was not mentioned, although the answers had elements of that mission statement, e.g. the Great Commission. Also, no disciple making was mentioned in their answers.

The Scriptures, based on the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20, mentions two aspects. The first one is the preaching of the gospel. Likewise, the passage mentions that the disciple had to teach. Further recommendations for including this as part of a clear vision and mission will be presented in detail in the conclusion.

31. As a leader, describe what is the responsibility of the saints?

As part of this research, the main purpose is to present to both leaders and saints the biblical responsibility regarding ministry. This question was designed as an open-ended question, aiming to collect the leadership understanding of the responsibilities of the saints, with the main focus on ministry work in the church. The participants gave a broad answer for the responsibilities of the saints. That answer focused on their relationship with God. Some aspects of ministry were mentioned by some of the participants.

However, there were no specific responsibilities given to the church in relation to ministry. This information is important for the purpose of the research, to develop a step-by-step plan to address the issues indicated in this survey.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND PROPOSALS FOR ADDRESSING IDENTIFIED ISSUES

As mentioned earlier in this research, the lack of equipped and willing disciplers represents a major issue in terms of developing and promoting church growth and maturity in a congregation. The anonymous online survey provided useful data to analyze the status of the selected church, in terms of lack of willing and qualified disciplers. The results of this survey, as discussed in Chapter 3, showed that the leadership of the selected church indicated that there is in fact a lack of willing and qualified disciplers. Also, additional information was provided of the possible reasons behind this lack of disciplers. The main goal is to provide a plan to address the issue of willing and qualified disciplers based on the research questions presented in Chapter 3.

This conclusion will be divided into the four questions presented in Chapter 1: 1) Why is there a lack of qualified and willing disciplers?; 2) Are the saints being equipped in order to become qualified and willing disciplers?; 3) Do pastors understand their biblical role as equippers?; 4) Does the church understand what their role in ministry is?

Why is There a Lack of Qualified and Willing Disciplers?

As noted earlier, the participants indicated that there is a lack of willing and qualified disciplers in the church.⁷⁰ The participants pointed out several reasons for this lack of disciplers. One aspect mentioned by the participants is a dependence on the leadership. This is very consistent with what the pastor-centered model provided as a structure and was described in Chapter 2. The dependency of ministry only in the leaders creates an unhealthy system, which will lead to no spiritual growth or disciple making, and the church will remain as spiritual

⁷⁰ Survey Data, Question 11.

children. Also, the perception of the leadership, in terms of their biblical role is affected by this dependency. For instance, the church might understand that the leadership is responsible for doing ministry, while the church members are grateful recipients of the professional care given by them.

The second aspect mentioned by the participants is too many activities in the church. Based on their response, having a too many activities is affecting the spiritual maturity of the church and the leadership as well. Based on these responses, having too many activities is a common trait of an attractional church model. The emphasis of having too many activities is on evangelism, not in disciple making. It is true that evangelism is part of the disciple-making process, but having an emphasis only in activities to attract people will not produce mature believers.

The problem of trying to attract people by activities is the message that it sends to the unbelievers. Dempsey mentions that the message can be interpreted as the church existing to serve “me,” creating a consumer mentality.⁷¹ He also mentions that when people start to have this type of mentality, the teaching of the Scriptures can turn into mere motivational messages, trying to not offend people with the message of the gospel. It is imperative to understand that the church serves, but it cannot be subject to what people want, instead of the main goal set in the Scriptures, making disciples.

Finally, other participants pointed out the lack of discipling people to be equippers, as well as having multiple visions among the leadership, also contributes in this lack of willing and qualified disciplers. It is important to mention that the selected church for this research has a formal vision and mission statement. However, there seems to be an issue with communicating

⁷¹ Earley and Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is...*, 254.

those statements to the rest of the leadership, so there needs to be only one vision as a team. Likewise, discipling people to become disciplers is one of the goals of this research. A detailed plan will be presented to address this specific issue.

Are the Saints Being Equipped in Order to Become Qualified and Willing Disciplers?

Some of the participants specified that one factor that is contributing to the lack of willing and qualified disciplers is the absence of training by the church and the leadership. Since the response of the participants factored in the absence of training, the online survey provided additional tools for them to express if there have been any steps implemented to correct this. No specific steps have been taken by the leadership to address the issue of the lack of training. Some of the responses indicated that preaching and personal dialog have been used as tools to try addressing the issue. Also, the responses of the participants seem to differ from each other regarding whether or not they have received any training to help the saints to be equipped.⁷²

Based on their responses on whether the saints are being equipped or not, some participants indicated that saints are being equipped, others indicated that the saints are not being equipped, and others do not know if the saints are been equipped.⁷³ It is essential to point out that training people to become willing and qualified disciplers goes beyond a sermon or face-to-face dialog or giving a Bible study to the entire congregation. Specific steps and decisions have to take place to resolve the issue and promote maturity and growth. The lack of specific steps can be identified as the participants indicated that only between the 1-20 percent of the members of the church are involved in ministry, including the leadership.⁷⁴

⁷² Survey Data, Question 16.

⁷³ Ibid., Question 15.

⁷⁴ Ibid., Question 14.

Do Pastors Understand their Biblical Role as Equippers?

Several questions were presented to the participants in the online survey to retrieve information on their understanding on what the biblical role of the pastor is. The majority of the participants agree that their role as a pastor/deacon/elder is to be equippers.⁷⁵ Also, the survey provided questions to the leaders about their understanding of their biblical role in terms of oversight authority, and where in the Scripture those oversight roles are supported. However, why they are not performing that role in terms of developing and equipping others to do ministry? Based on their responses in the online survey, the participants recognize that they also need to be trained to become equippers. This factor can affect the biblical role they have, even though they know what is it.

In addition, the perception of the leadership, and the practice, is one of a caretaker. There is a lot of dependency on the leadership for doing ministry instead of moving that role to the church. This dependency has created an environment where most of the church members perceive themselves as “customers” and asking what the church has to offer to them and to their needs. Although it is true that church meets some needs of their members, it is not the main goal of the church. Leadership needs to understand the biblical goal for the church, becoming disciple-making disciples of Jesus.

Does the Church Understand What Their Role in Ministry Is?

Understanding their role in ministry is essential for spiritual maturity and growth of the church. How leaders perceive themselves in terms of their biblical role is the first step. Likewise, the church needs to perceive as they are the ones who will do the ministry work. As previously mentioned, only a small percentage of the total church members is involved in doing ministry.

⁷⁵ Survey Data, Question 3.

Also, there is no consensus between the leaders if the saints are being equipped or not. When the selected leadership were asked about how they view the saints in terms of their role in ministry, they did not offer a clear view of how the saints are supposed to be involved. One factor that can affect how many saints are involved in ministry is the lack of commitment from some. Some participants pointed out that particular issue in the online survey.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, if there seems to be no consensus on how the saints been equipped, how can they get involved in doing ministry?

Based on the participants' responses of the responsibility of the saints and their biblical role, their answers (though some points are correct) are too broad. For instance, some of the participants mentioned that the saints have to take care of their salvation, read the Scriptures, be good examples to others, and testify about Jesus.⁷⁷ However, the role of the saints in terms of ministry work is not directly mentioned. Communicating and teaching the church and the leadership on their respective biblical roles is essential to transform the traditional mindset of pastor-centered model to a model where the saints are the ones doing ministry.

Proposal for Disciple-Making

After the discussion of the four research objectives, the following proposal has the intention of addressing several factors identified in this research.

The Principle of Selectivity

As part of this proposal, one aspect to be implemented to the selection of leaders would be the principle of selectivity. Hull defines this principle as the process of applying scriptural

⁷⁶ Survey Data, Question 17.

⁷⁷ Ibid., Question 31.

qualifications to the selection of leaders.⁷⁸ The main purpose of this principle is for the selection of leaders in the church. It is imperative to mention that this principle does not apply to the general church membership as applies for the leaders. Likewise, the implementation of this principle does not have the intention of creating an atmosphere of rejection. Instead, the principle of selectivity has the direct purpose of identifying people with scriptural coalification, to train and prepare them to take the role of leadership.

Hull calls this principle the “Doctrine of Selectivity.” In his discussion, Hull states that selectivity is across the Scriptures. For instance, when God selected Noah to build the ark, as well as others, such as Saul, David, Abraham, and Solomon, the Scripture provides a description or qualification for why Gods has called that particular person. The New Testament also provides the background for this principle or doctrine, e.g. Jesus selected twelve disciples to be with Him and taught them for approximately three and a half years.

The selection process, besides being based on scriptural qualifications, will give the opportunity to select among a pool of people who will or have gone to a training process. When qualifications for leadership are given the importance that they have, the quality of ministry improves, promoting at the same time maturity and growth in the church. Having the right people in the right position is essential to catalyst the disciple-making process. However, this principle of selection can and will have a tough battle in terms of acceptance, and the cause behind is the misinterpretation of the principle.

Controversy

One aspect discussed by Hull regarding the controversy on the principle of selectivity is the balance of power. He explains that churches tend to object to this principle due to the balance

⁷⁸ Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor*, 186.

of power, who has it, and how people get it.⁷⁹ A lot of systems inside churches today consider other factors for those who will become leaders. For instance, most systems might include faithfulness to the organization, time as a member in the church, willingness to serve, a belief that every option on the church should be considered, among others. Selectivity threatens these aspects on the systems described because there is no partiality, only a selection based on scriptural qualifications. The principles offer objective standards and a measurement of performance, according to those principles.

Another factor for churches to oppose this principle rests in the claim that selectivity appears to be favoritism. The logic behind this thinking is that selectivity can appear as favoritism because people who have been trained are the ones considered for leadership. The people who have gone through this training process have been close to the pastor-teacher and commonly create a friendship between trainee and trainer. This is why the objectors of the principle of selectivity do not believe in it because there is a perception of favoritism.

However, a question directed to this objection can arise. Did Jesus have favoritism when He selected the twelve among other people? Although this principle appears to be biased, it is essential. Lowering standards for leadership to a level that everybody in the church meets those qualifications will eventually establish a weak system for promoting maturity and growth.

Principle of Selectivity: Importance

The selectivity principle has many advantages for the church. First, selectivity allows the protection of the main goal, or as Hull described, the product.⁸⁰ The good selection of leaders will contribute with producing mature disciples, that will eventually serve in ministry. If no

⁷⁹ Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor*, 187.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 190.

selection process as described here is implemented to train and progressively move toward leadership, the decision and the quality of the church will be reduced to a non-acceptable scriptural standard.

Furthermore, the selection encourages and maintains good productivity.⁸¹ This productivity will guide the church to a point of growth, and the integrity and multiplication will be maintained. Lastly, one of the most important advantages that the principle of selectivity has is teaching by example. Hull mentions that one of the most powerful teaching tools is modeling.⁸² The principle is applied when a pastor-teacher selects people who are willing to be models in their teaching. When church leadership does not model the teaching, the church vision and mission will lack truthfulness. Hull explains that selectivity creates standards, training vehicles, and accountability to the model message.⁸³

The qualifications included in the Scriptures are not meant to be taken lightly if the church is intent to be faithful to the New Testament. The importance of these qualifications for elders/deacons are especially mandated to leaders because they set the pattern for modeling among believers. Worldly standards cannot keep dictating how the church will behave or believe. It is essential to mention that the apostle Paul used the term “blameless” as the first and most indispensable qualification for leadership (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6-7).⁸⁴

When Paul wrote the epistles to Timothy and Titus, the Greek word that he used for blameless means “above reproach, irreprehensible.”⁸⁵ The emphasis from Paul is not in

⁸¹ Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor*, 191.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 192.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ John MacArthur, *Called to Lead* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 163.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 163.

sinlessness, rather of a person that has an good moral reputation, sound in character, that can be a model to those who are under his leadership. Purity of character and reputation are qualifications needed to influence the life of others to become disciples.

Biblical Qualifications for Leadership

The apostle Paul told Timothy to focus on faithful men for disciple making. In order to be effective, there is a two-way commitment that needs to take place for the disciple-making process, from the leadership and from the disciples. To have a fruitful effort, call for a wise selection of faithful people who want to bear fruit for Christ. Earley mentions that when it comes to selecting potential leaders, in whom you are going to invest your life, it is wise to get the right people.⁸⁶ For the purpose of this research, the qualifications delineated by Paul in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are going to be divided into four categories: personal, public, family, and ministry qualifications. These qualifications must be considered as a foundation for those who want or are going to be considered as potential leaders.

Personal Qualifications

Glasscock mentions that there are at least 22 qualifications for leadership based on 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.⁸⁷ In these, personal qualifications are mentioned by Paul as essential for leadership. These qualifications are being temperate, prudent, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money, not a novice, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, loving what is good, just, devout, and self-controlled. The personal character of a person must be examined to be considered for leadership in the church. Paul

⁸⁶ Dave Earley, *Pastoral Leadership Is...:How to Shepherd God's People with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academics, 2012), 4057, Kindle.

⁸⁷ Glasscock, "The Biblical Concept of Elder," 73.

advised both Timothy and Titus to look for believers with these traits. Glasscock explains each of these personal traits as follows:

1. “Temperate”—avoiding extremes.
2. “Prudent”—showing good judgment, common sense.
3. “Not addicted to wine”—not abusing wine.
4. “Not pugnacious”—not having a violent temper.
5. “Gentle” (in contrast to pugnacious)—being patient or considerate.
6. “Uncontentious”—being peaceful in nature.
7. “Free from the love of money”—not being greedy for personal gain.
8. “Not a novice”—having been saved long enough to develop a spiritual maturity and wisdom.
9. “Not self-willed”—not trying to get one’s way, looking out only for oneself.
10. “Not quick-tempered”—not being easily angered.
11. “Loving what is good”—being loyal to moral and ethical values.
12. “Just”—being fair and honest.
13. “Devout”—being devoted to God in worship.
14. “Self-controlled”—being able to control oneself under adverse or tempting circumstances.⁸⁸

Public Qualifications

Blackaby mentions that when people’s actions accurately mirror their beliefs and values, their life has integrity.⁸⁹ An essential part of leadership is trust. This is why integrity and honesty have to come together (being above reproach) because they are the foundation for trust. To be effective disciplers, people must trust those who are leaders, and that trust has to have a solid foundation. Spiritual leaders with integrity possess the faculty to promote credibility, and as a result, can influence the lives of others. Paul and other New Testament writers emphasized the importance of personal example as a way of teaching others. Besides 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, the Scripture presents reference for a godly way of living for those who were leaders in the church. The following are the public qualifications for leaders:

⁸⁸ Glasscock, “The Biblical Concept of Elder,” 73-74.

⁸⁹ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 162.

1. “Above reproach”—having no questionable conduct that would bring accusations
2. “Hospitable”—being receptive and open to people
3. “Good reputation with those outside”—having a morally and ethically upright testimony with the unsaved.

Family Qualifications

When a person holds a position of influence and responsibility, such as being a leader in the church, some might struggle to balance the role of leader in the church with the roles in the family. Blackaby mentions that most leaders fail to apply the prioritizing skills they use in their leadership environment when compared to the most important people in their lives.⁹⁰ Prudent leaders strive to preserve their family and their relationship between the leadership role that they have in the church and their personal life. A proactive approach must be put in place to respond to the God-given responsibilities for their families. Healthy habits also have to be developed to make significant the events of the household, such as anniversaries, birthdays, or any special events.

Blackaby mentions a story of Billy Graham from back in 1949 during a crusade event. He mentions that Graham’s sister Ruth and his brother-in-law assisted with the crusade. It was an eight-week event. In the last week, his sister and brother-in-law appeared with a baby. Billy Graham asked about the baby, and they told him that was his daughter, Anne. Because he was for so long away from his home and family, he did not recognize his own daughter. In his autobiography, he confessed that if he had an opportunity to live his life over again, he would have traveled less.⁹¹ He recognized that he made commitments that were not necessary. Leaders

⁹⁰ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 338.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 337.

need to assess what is a priority in their lives when it comes to having a family and being a leader. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 emphasizes some of the important roles of a leader's family. Their children represent a future generation of leaders, with the potential to impact the world even more.

Furthermore, the moral aspect in family is important to be considered when selecting leaders. One of the qualifications mentioned by Paul is being a husband of one wife. This research will not go into the several interpretations of this qualification. Nevertheless, it is imperative to emphasize the character of the leader in terms of marital relationship. The emphasis made by Paul is in the moral conduct of the leader or candidate for leadership. A flirtatious conduct is reproachable, no matter from who comes from, especially if the leader or candidate is married.⁹² A person who demonstrates a character of loyalty in such areas of his life can be trusted. The following are the family qualifications to be considered:

1. "Husband of one wife"—literally, being "a one-woman type of man," that is, not a flirtatious man but one who is content with his wife.
2. "Manages his own household well"—being a spiritual leader of his family
3. "Children under control with dignity"—having children who obey respectfully
4. "Children who believe, not accused of dissipation"—having children who display faith (possibly "faithfulness"), who are not living recklessly, who are not rebellious to their fathers.⁹³

Ministry Qualifications

Blackaby mentions that preparation for leadership involves education and training.⁹⁴

Leaders who put effort in their training and preparation are better prepared than those with no

⁹² Ed Glasscock, "The Husband of One Wife" Requirement in 1 Timothy 3:2," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 140, no. 559 (July 1983): 249.

⁹³ Glasscock, "The Biblical Concept of Elder," 73.

⁹⁴ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 173.

training or expertise, and they will also have more credibility. Many persons embark on opportunities that appear to them for leadership, and eventually, they end by quitting their training. Biblical leaders, such as Joshua, Peter, Paul, and Timothy, among others, had an experienced teacher and went through training with their respective teachers. The responsibility of a leader in the church is one that needs to be valued. For instance, Paul mentioned that those to be considered for leadership must be able to teach.

This is where training comes to play an essential role. When leaders or candidates are trained to teach, the sound doctrine of the gospel is taken into consideration. In Titus 1: 9-11, Paul expected from these leaders to hold fast the Word of truth, defend it, without compromising the sound doctrinal teaching. This is why training and education is important for developing leaders and candidates for this type of position in the church. The following are the ministry qualifications:

1. “Able to teach”—having ability to instruct in doctrine (possibly “teachable”).
2. “Holding fast the word of truth”—being firm in doctrine and not compromising Scripture.
3. “Exhort with sound doctrine”—encouraging believers by means of correct doctrine.
4. “Refute those who contradict”—standing against and stopping false teaching.⁹⁵

Small Group for Disciple Making

As part of this proposal, the creation of small groups to equip the leadership and others is imperative for disciple making. This form of disciple making will allow the pastor/deacon/elder to use the time as efficiently as possible. As an example, Jesus provided the model of a small group when He selected the twelve disciples. The Gospels tell that Jesus spoke and taught to

⁹⁵ Glasscock, “The Biblical Concept of Elder,” 73.

multitudes. However, the amount of time dedicated to the twelve differs from the time dedicated to the multitudes. The context of small groups gave Jesus the opportunity for a proper platform to continue ministry, as well as the time to teach His disciples and give them the experience to minister with Him as well.

Hull explains that small groups take people from telling them what and why, to showing people in the group how to do it and put into practice.⁹⁶ This environment allows the establishment of the basics in terms of doing ministry. Also, the context of a small group functions as a filter that helps prove a person as a possible trainee for leadership. Another benefit from small groups is the controlled environment for the proper development of people. This is the best scenario for teachers to be able to measure the progress of the members in the group. Some key areas that small groups allow to grow are skill development, peer relationships, and training other disciples under the oversight of the teacher.

By creating small groups in the church, these groups are going to be considered as an extension of the church, by discipling other believers, evangelizing, and equipping potential leaders to continue to multiply. The proposed small group would be named Blessing House. These small groups are going to be composed of between 10 to 12 persons, following Jesus' model of discipling the apostles. The objectives of these groups are as follows:

1. Create a close relationship between the church and leaders so disciple-making can be initiated.
2. Teach and train believers to become multipliers, and disciple makers as well.
3. Mentor the multipliers to become "faithful men," as mentioned in 2 Timothy 2:2.
4. Commit these faithful men to continue the sound doctrine that has been learned.

⁹⁶ Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor*, 217.

The small groups will help each leader identify those potential faithful men, where each leader of small groups will invest their effort, commitment, and time. It is important to mention that wise selectivity (following the biblical qualifications) will be followed as a guideline to select these faithful men. By regularly meeting with these groups, each leader will take all the training and teaching that they received and will commit it to others. The word *commit*, used by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2, means “to transmit, to entrust,” and as Earley mentions, it carries the idea of making a deposit in the bank.⁹⁷

As these meetings progress, the leader, after identifying faithful men, will encourage them to do ministry alongside the leader. Presenting as a model for doing ministry to others will help these faithful men to practice ministry work and continue the disciple-making process in them. The Scriptures present this example when Paul took Timothy on his second missionary journey, giving him a chance to see ministry in action by his teacher, Paul (Acts 16:3). By modeling to Timothy, Paul was able to teach him how to do ministry.

While this process continues, the opportunity to do ministry, without the leader being present, should be given. Earley states that the most basic means of developing potential leaders into effective leaders is on-the-job-training.⁹⁸ The leader will have to delegate areas of responsibility to the potential leaders and provide supervised feedback on their performance. In a small group context, the potential leader can be committed by initiating the Bible study with a prayer. It is essential for the leader to give clear instructions to the potential leaders. Outlining the main goal will help them to stay in what they have been taught.⁹⁹ This setting will provide

⁹⁷ Earley, *Pastoral Leadership is...*, 4086.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4108.

⁹⁹ Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1993), 81.

multiplicity to the ministry, and other potential leaders will emerge and grow.

Discipleship Plan

Values

The following principles are the core beliefs for the discipleship plan that is being proposed:

1. We believe in God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit and their unity (1 John 5:7).
2. We confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, as the only mediator between God and humanity, and to the gospel as the power of God for the salvation of humanity (Rom 10:8-9).
3. We believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, shown by the Scriptures during His supernatural birth by Mary (Luke 1:26-38), His unity with the Father (John 14:8-12), and by their names given by the prophets (Isa 9:6).
4. The Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are composed of 66 books, 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. They recorded the creation, the history of Israel, and subsequently focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ.
5. We believe that humanity was created by God in His image, completely sinless, until they disobeyed God (Gen 1:26-27).
6. The Scriptures are fully inspired by God and is the means by which God speaks to His people. As the Word of God, it is our standard and source of authority for faith and life (2 Tim 3:16).
7. We believe in the return of Jesus Christ for His church, where the dead in Christ will rise first and the living believers will be caught up to meet Jesus Christ in the clouds (1 Thess 4:16-17).

8. We believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which gives power to the believers to do miracles, wonders, and for preaching the gospel (Acts 1:8).
9. We believe in sanctification, which is achieved by means of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer in order that it is irreproachable in Christ (Gal 5:16-25).
10. We believe that marriage was instituted by God and is only between a man and a woman, according to the Scriptures (Gen 2:18; 21-24).
11. We believe in baptism by immersion as a symbolic act of death to sin where the old man is buried and emerges a new creature. Baptism in water is made in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19).
12. The church does not accept erroneous doctrines taught by some movements such as Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and any other doctrine sponsored by any other movement that is contrary to the Scriptures.

Views

The following key terms will guide the ministry as follows:

1. Church: group of believers, “founded by Jesus Christ, mirroring His authentic character through acts of love, self-sacrifice, courage, and truth, with a vision of healing human hurts, break down barriers of race and class, and deliver men and women from their guilt, shame, fear, and ignorance.”¹⁰⁰
2. Pastor: teacher responsible for maintaining the life of the body of Christ by feeding and preserving its life with vigor and vitality and equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for building up of the body of Christ.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Stedman, *Body Life*, 12-13.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 103; 212.

3. Saints: the whole body of Christ. They are “the ordinary, garden-variety Christians in a particular time, and place whose only distinction is that they are chosen by God, claimed by Jesus Christ, and convened by the Holy Spirit as the church.”¹⁰²
4. Gospel: the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, the message of what Jesus did for us in the cross (Rom 1:16).
5. Evangelism: telling the good news to people, in order to lead them to true conversion to Christ. Relationships will play an essential role. Bridges to others can be built through common interests like hobbies, helping in time of need or crisis, or sharing moments of joy.¹⁰³
6. Disciple:
 - a. Has begun a personal relationship with God through the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
 - b. Submits to the full authority of Jesus Christ in his life, giving up his will and accepting Christ’s.
 - c. Obeys the teachings of the Bible in order to know the Scriptures and practice it.
 - d. Adopts a new style of living that reflects the character of Jesus, both thought and behavior, as testimony to the congregation and the community.
 - e. Joins the service of the congregation through their time, resources, and skills available, whether in the evangelization or another ministry of the congregation in order to bring the good news of salvation to other lives.

¹⁰² Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 1159.

¹⁰³ Dave Earley and David A. Wheeler, *Evangelism Is...: How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2010), 199.

7. Discipleship: state of being a disciple, what disciples do.¹⁰⁴ The goal of discipleship is the transformation to the image of Christ.
8. Leader/Leadership: person who demonstrates this gift in practice before officially holding a leadership office.¹⁰⁵

Vehicles

In order to accomplish the mission and vision mentioned in this proposal, the church mindset and structure must be changed to a New Testament perspective. To address the issues identified through the anonymous online survey, first, a pastoral team must be created to start addressing the issues of lack of ministry involvement of the church, as well as the needs of the church members. It is essential to point out that the current leadership will go through this discipleship plan to equip them with all the tools needed to be equippers.

A vocational multiple-staff leadership model will be used. This type of model allows each staff member to be a specialist in a particular field, such as education, counseling, evangelism, discipleship, among others.¹⁰⁶ The members of the staff are servants of the church, and they are not considered as subordinates of one person. However, a pastor should serve as an administrative head. The following leadership description will be presented as a proposal:

Leadership Structure and Responsibilities

As leaders of a local church, you are responsible for the protection, leadership, equipping and care of the body of Christ. The structure of the local leadership will be formed by the pastor,

¹⁰⁴ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 35.

¹⁰⁵ Ogden, *Unfinished Business*, 2921.

¹⁰⁶ Howard L. Bixby, "Designing A Church Pastoral Staff," *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 67.

board of elders, ministry leaders (as discretion of the board and the pastor), and volunteers (every believer of Christ). As part of their responsibilities, the entire leadership structure agrees to the following:

1. Designate leaders in their respective teams, following the qualifications delineated in the Scriptures (1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:14).
2. Seek God's will through prayer for the church and manage all the resources in the most wise and honorable way, following the guidance established in the Scriptures (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1-4).
3. Provide sound doctrine teaching of all Scripture to the church. By providing sound doctrine teaching of the Scriptures, all leaders will be prepared to face any false teaching.
4. Being an equipper to all the church members with the purpose of preparing the body of Christ to do ministry work, as defined by the Scripture (Eph 4:11-16).
5. Present as an example to the church, and other leaders, in the compliance of all the responsibilities and qualifications mentioned in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9).

Discipleship

The ordained leadership of the church (pastor, deacons, and ministry leaders) should be trained on how to make disciples of Christ and change the pastor-centered model of ministry. As with all changes, some resistance might arise from leadership. A program of discipleship, with one course like this one, will be offered to the leadership of the church. The course will last a semester, meeting once a week for a two-hour class. Several of the textbooks, which are available in Spanish, will be used for this course as learning resources. Regarding the church

model to use, for now, the Traditional Church Model will be used.¹⁰⁷

After the equipping process of the church's leaders, they will begin to equip the church and new believers for ministry. Our community, where the church is located, has approximately 1,000 families. So, a total of 5 cell groups will be used to implement the discipleship plan, turning the church into a church of small groups. This model will allow the small group leader, as well as each person in the group, to see themselves as an integral part of the church.

This plan consists of 24 studies, which will be divided to 12 per semester. The curriculum material will be broken down to discuss in these studies. Because discipleship demands total relationship and proximity to the disciples, cell group leaders will be offering activities in the home of these believers to reinforce these teachings and provide motivation. In addition to home visits, activities will be organized in the temple for fellowship among believers, as well as opportunities to testify about their experience during the process of discipleship. This type of activity allows us to create an environment where the teacher or leader can create a relationship with the disciples and allows them to observe the teacher or leader as a model to imitate.

Objectives of the Plan

With the purpose of producing disciples of Christ, this discipleship plan establishes the following 6 objectives to enable pupils to:

1. Know that salvation is by grace only.
2. Learn and understand the principles of the Christian faith and way of life, according to the Scriptures.

¹⁰⁷ Changing the church model will require a lot of effort and time. But, eventually, through this learning process, this writer hopes to make some changes in how leaders see their role in the church in order to transform the church model.

3. Obeying God's commandments.
4. To represent God in the world.
5. Serve others.
6. Obeying the Great Commission.

Discipleship Plan

Parts of the discipleship plan	Course	Time
Part One: Growing in Christ	Make Disciples Being a Disciple Devotional Time The personal study of the Scriptures: Christ as foundation Prayer Worship	3 months
Part two: Understanding the message of Christ	God in three Persons Made in the image of God Sin Grace Redemption Justification Adoption Through Christ	3 months

Evaluation	How are going? Have church members grown spiritually? Are they multiplying? Are they involved in ministry? Their life reflects the character of Jesus?	
Part three: Living like Christ	Filled with the Holy Spirit The fruit of the Holy Spirit Trusting God Love one another Justice of God Giving Testimony	3 months
Part four: Serving as Christ	The church as a body Spiritual gifts Spiritual warfare Understanding the Great Commission Obeying the Great Commission	3 months
Evaluation	How are going? Have church members grown spiritually? Are they multiplying? Are they involved in ministry? Their life reflects the character of Jesus?	

This course is according to Greg Ogden's book, *Manual del Discipulado: Creciendo y Ayudando a otros a Crecer*, Spanish translation. This manual focuses on the 24 courses mentioned above. Ogden began two studies on disciples and discipleship, leading after the

biblical tradition about the concept of disciple and discipleship. As part of the observation, Ogden, takes the spiritual needs of his students and develops four studies essential for the devotional life of the believer.

The third point to discuss is the experience of the teacher. When Ogden finished writing this book and implemented its teachings with himself and with others, he understood that discipleship was directed has not followed a more mature person, but rather to be like Christ.¹⁰⁸ As a final point to discuss, inspiration, which includes the direction and direction of the Holy Spirit, is practiced by the author in two specific studies on the richness and the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the worshipper.

Each of the 24 studies has a duly established format. The main teaching of the study serves as the beginning or starting point of where this lesson will be built. Then, each lesson will have a verse to memorize, learn where fragments of the Bible from memory in order to induce a visual sense of God to suit our vision. Inductive Bible study will guide the believer that their lives are consonant with Scripture. It is not our interest to fill simply of knowledge to the believer, but the believer is to know the biblical reality and put it into practice.

Each lesson ends with a teaching which aims to offer an application of daily life, which will challenge and stimulate our thinking. So, there is a good application, the teacher will be entitled to organize activities that are consistent with the lesson, to provide an application to the lessons. To foster a learning environment where there is a relationship between the group leader and the believers, this will assess the needs of your group in order to adjust the lesson according to their needs. The master, in conjunction with the pastor and the leader appointed by the latter,

¹⁰⁸ Greg Ogden, *Manual Del Discipulado: Creciendo y Ayudando a Otros a Crecer* (Barcelona: CLIE, 2008), 21.

carries out activities in the homes and in the temple, follow-up form more staff on the program of discipleship through the testimony of believers who are taking the courses.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter will complete this thesis by examining the main statement, research questions, research conclusions, implications, and applications, research limits, and recommendations for further research.

Main Statement

The main purpose of this research is to explore the correlation between the lack of qualified and willing disciplers, and the pastor-centered or traditional church model of leadership in the church by collecting data using an anonymous survey administered to the church leadership of the selected church.

Research Questions

RQ1. Why is there a lack of qualified and willing disciplers?

RQ2. Are the saints being equipped in order to become qualified and willing disciplers?

RQ3. Do pastors understand their biblical role as equippers?

RQ4. Does the church understand what their role in ministry is?

Research Conclusions and Applications

These research questions were used to answer the problems delineated in the main statement of this research. The questions allowed the researcher to explore two issues within the main statement, the discipleship work in the selected church and the roles of the church leadership and the church, from a leadership perspective. The first issue was to explore the details behind the lack of qualified and willing disciplers in the selected church. Questions 11

and 12 from the anonymous survey provided data on this lack of willing and qualified disciplers and the explanations for this absence in disciplers in the selected church.

The absence of training to equip others and the leadership being too overwhelmed with many activities, duties, and responsibilities indicated that only a few are involved in ministry. There is no clear direction on how to address the issue of the lack of qualified and willing disciplers.

The second issue was to explore how the leaders perceived their roles and the role of the church in ministry work. The survey provided information that the leadership does not have a clear view on the church's role in ministry. Each leader that participated in the survey gave a different response on their perception of the church's role. Furthermore, from the survey, there is data that indicates that there is no clear direction from the leadership on their roles. Not having a clear view on what their roles as leaders are contributes to the lack of willing and qualified disciplers.

Moreover, the research questions were used to answer the issues contained in the statement of the problem. A multiplicity of conclusions aroused from these questions due to the nature of the problem. The researcher found at least four main conclusions from the results of the survey. The first conclusion is that, in fact, there is a lack of willing and qualified disciplers in the selected church. As mentioned earlier, this lack of disciplers has multiple factors, such as lack of training to the leadership itself.

The second conclusion, related to RQ2, is that there is little or no training whatsoever in the church to equip it and move them to do ministry. Multiple variables have to be considered here, such as no clear vision and roles from the leadership. Further, the leadership responses on how the saints were equipped varied from not knowing to a lack of a systematic approach to

teach and develop the saints to become disciplers. It is imperative to take the necessary steps and develop a more systematic approach to the development of the saints in the church.

A third conclusion is that the leadership does not have a clear understanding of their roles, even though they expressed in the survey a clear understanding of the biblical roles. However, when trying to put into motion those biblical roles, the leaders were not entirely clear. This researcher has factored in the lack of clear description that outlines the duties for the leaders. Likewise, from the survey, there is an indication that there is a centered structure in leadership, instead of having the saints involved in ministry.

The final conclusion is that the church does not have a clear view of its roles in ministry. It is important to highlight that this is the perception of the leaders, not from the church. Because of this, further study, involving a sample of the saints in the selected church, is needed to corroborate the perception from the leaders.

The application of this investigation may be useful to the local church as well as other churches to evaluate their position in terms of having qualified and willing disciplers, and in the case that they are facing a lack of these, a practical approach can be implemented to address the issues. The modern church needs to recognize the importance of having an effective leadership. Having an effective leadership is not an option for the body of Christ, it is a must. Creating a leadership model that equips others to help the pastor do ministry will allow a better function of the church, as well as their spiritual needs are met. This researcher has faith that this proposal will help address the issues identified in this research and achieve the goal of making disciples.

Research Limits

Several major limitations were present in this study. Several variables were not considered as possible factors for the lack of willing and qualified disciplers. For example, the

lack of commitment from the leaders was not a variable included in the survey and was not explored among them. Also, other obstacles mentioned in Barna's research like sinful habits, too much busyness of life, pride that inhibits teachability, among other obstacles were not considered in this research.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research project was created to develop a strategy for effective pastoral leadership to develop disciplers among the selected church. The research targeted the issues that might contribute to, from a pastoral leadership perspective, the lack of willing and qualified disciplers. It is hoped that this research will be a useful tool for pastors and church leadership who will benefit from the findings.

Future research from this investigation could incorporate the multiplicity of factors that are major obstacles to discipleship. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Barna's research explores multiple obstacles to discipleship. This research does not incorporate these obstacles as possible factors affecting the selected church for this research. Future work could include the lack of commitment from the church to discipleship as a variable. This variable is considered to be the number one obstacle to discipleship in churches.¹⁰⁹

For example, an approach to why is there a lack of commitment from the church when it comes to discipleship can be a potent research that can provide useful data to church leadership on how mature in Christ the church is. The collected data can provide a framework for how to relate to each church member and guide them to a commitment with Christ to become a disciple. Research questions, such as the correlation between the lack of commitment to discipleship and the busyness of life, may be included.

¹⁰⁹ Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 58.

Also, future research can include a bigger sample of churches that are willing to participate in a research like this one. This research only included one church, and there might be other factors that are contributing to the lack of willing and qualified disciplers. Each church has unique characteristics in terms of how ministry is done, so a diversity of results might arise from such a research.

Another field to consider for future study is the relation of strong leadership and peer relations with discipleship. As mentioned in this research, leadership plays an essential role in discipleship. People can perceive when there is no a strong leadership and supportive relations to help them to have a mature relation with God through Christ. To conclude, the perception of the church in doing ministry is an area that should be investigated and shared with the church leadership to synchronize the ministry work in the church. As mentioned before, the leadership may have a perception that might be incorrect on how they perceived the church.

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