

one to one

Giles Cattermole encourages personal discipleship

As a new fresher at medical school, Sam felt a bit lost. Church and CU were great - really good Bible teaching, and very lively - but big. There were occasional CMF lunch time meetings, and CU hall groups were also a good way to begin to get to know other students. But there were so many things Sam wanted to talk through in more depth, more personally, than was possible in a small group.

Chris had been CMF rep for a few months, and was finding it hard going. Clinical work was pretty full-on, and there was a lot to organise for CMF, as well as needing to spend time with the CU exec and church student workers. It was only another year or so till finals, and then an F1. How do you keep going as a Christian medic, with all these ministry responsibilities? With all that clinical work to do?!

Sam and Chris are in very different places, but both would really benefit from meeting up with someone 1-1: someone a bit older and wiser, who could help them apply their faith in their own specific situations. Someone to mentor them, to disciple them, to invest time in them.

why?

We learn in different contexts. In large groups, we can all be taught the same message in a sermon, for example. We can discuss the Bible and pray for each other in small groups. But 1-1 we can work through what the Bible means to me, here, now. As we develop the relationship we can be far more open about ourselves and our needs and our failings than is likely in a group. And of course, it's a lot easier to arrange to meet one other person than it is to meet in a group. But most importantly, it's a model that Jesus gave us, as he spent time not just with the crowds, or even the twelve, but in personal work with individuals. It's a model reflected in the relationship between Paul and Timothy. The benefit of role models is explicit in Paul's letters: 'we need both to learn from, and set, examples of Godly living.'

who?

This isn't something that only church workers can do - every Christian can help disciple younger Christians! For the new medical student, perhaps the issues that need tackling are the same as for any student - idols like sex, alcohol, work, sport.

And so probably the person you meet with 1-1 doesn't need to be a medic. Maybe someone from church, maybe an older student. For the clinical student wrestling with the issues raised at work, the person you meet with could be a local doctor. Whoever it is, make sure it's someone of the same gender, and someone with more experience of living for Christ.

what?

Arrange a time to meet - perhaps for coffee, or a meal. Study a book of the Bible, a chapter a week. Paul's letters are often a good place to start. See how God's Word speaks to you both as you read it together. Work on the application specifically to you - your work, your relationships, your life. You might want to try reading a good Christian book together too. Whatever you do, make sure you pray together. You'll be amazed how much your relationship with each other and with God can grow, and how sharing time allows you to see how an older Christian integrates their faith and work.

When I was a student, I met regularly with someone to read the Bible.

It was the making of me; church and CU were awesome: but having someone there to whom I could be accountable, someone to pick me up on my pride or priorities - that was priceless.

how?

We'd like to see a culture of personal discipleship throughout CMF, as older doctors meet with juniors, juniors with students.² Maybe older students with younger. If you've ever had someone invest time in you, you'll see how valuable it is, and want to invest in others. As this begins to happen, we hope to see a cascade of people looking after other people; equipping them for works of service, building up the body of Christ, maturing to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ; speaking the truth and growing in love as each person does their work.³

We'd hope that churches would already be active in discipling younger students, and we'd hope that doctors would look out for students in their churches and take the initiative.

It's especially important for students who are in leadership positions in CU or CMF, and those who are about to graduate. So if no-one's asked you to read with them - go and ask them! Or ask your pastor or student worker, your CU staff worker or medical school secretary - if they can't meet with you themselves, perhaps they could find someone who could!

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RESOURCES

- The Bible
- Good Bible study notes (eg, Good Book Company www.thegoodbook.co.uk/Bible-Study)
- An older Christian willing to share time with you
- One-to-One: a discipleship handbook. Sophie de Witt. 2003. Authentic
- 1-2-1 Discipleship: helping one another grow spiritually. Christine Dillon. 2009. Christian Focus
- One to One: the effective way to nurture Christians. Stephen Gaukroger, David Warren. 1997. Crossway

REFERENCES

- 1 1 Corinthians 4:15-17 and 1 Thessalonians 1:5-7
- 2 Cattermole G. Supporting Students. *Triple Helix*. 2010 Summer:12-13
- 3 Ephesians 4:11-16