WHY SHOULD I DISCIPLE NEW CONVERTS?

I. BECAUSE GOD COMMANDS DISCIPLESHIP

A. DISCIPLESHIP IS THE GREAT COMMISSION (Mt. 28:18-20) ("Teach" = lit. "make disciples")

B. DISCIPLESHIP WAS THE PRACTICE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

1. Discipleship is expounding "the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:23-28)

2. Discipleship is declaring "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:18-20, 26-27)

For full discipleship to take place, you need:

a. <u>public</u> teaching of the Word in a church (see Acts 11:26)

b. <u>private</u> teaching of the Word in a home (see Acts 18:23-28)

Personal discipleship does not contradict the ministry of a church--it complements it. You need both! Don't substitute one for another. A pulpit ministry does not substitute for personal evangelism and discipleship, and vice-versa.

3. Discipleship is giving to others what has been committed to you (II Tim. 2:2)

a. Christ discipled the apostles (who were called His disciples (see the Gospels)
b. The apostles discipled Barnabas (implied in Acts 4:36)
c. Barnabas discipled Paul (Acts 9:27)
d. Paul discipled Timothy (I Tim. 1:2)
e. Timothy discipled Ephesian saints (I Tim. 1:3)
f. Paul discipled Aquilla & Priscilla (implied in Acts 18:2, 18)
g. Aquilla & Priscilla discipled Apollos (Acts 18:23-28)
h. Apollos discipled the Corinthian saints (Acts 19:1, I Cor. 1:12)
ETC. ETC. ETC.

4. Discipleship is the goal of the ministry (Eph. 4:11-13)

II. BECAUSE NEW BELIEVERS NEED DISCIPLING

A. NEW BELIEVERS (like newborn infants) NEED LOVE, PROTECTION, FOOD AND TRAINING

1. They are more vulnerable than mature Christians

a. More easily deceived by Satan (I Th. 3:5)

b. More easily led astray by false religions, false movements, and false teachings (Acts 20:29-31)

2. They have a great potential for growth (change)

a. Fastest growth rate is in early childhood (just as the early stages of growth are vital to an infant, the early stages are vital to a new convert)

b. Patterns are established early that will continue

B. NEW BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW WHAT THEY HAVE IN CHRIST (II Cor. 5:17)

1. Teach him that he has a new faith (change in beliefs) (Acts 2:42 - "continued in apostles' doctrine)

2. Teach him that he has a new food (change in diet) (I Pet. 2:2; Mt. 4:4)

3. Teach him that he has a new family (change in relationships) (Prov. 24:1; I Cor. 15:33; II Cor. 6:14-16)

4. Teach him that he has a new fight (change in conflicts) (Put on new man - Eph. 4:24; I Thes. 3:1-5; II Tim. 3:12; James 1)

5. Teach him that he has a new future (Eph. 2:1-10)

a. Change in direction (new goals) (Eph. 2:1-5)

b. Change in destiny (new hope) (Eph. 2:6-7)

1) We anticipate no judgment for sin

--We face no condemnation (Ro. 8:1)

--We have passed from death to life (Jn. 5:24-25)

2) We anticipate a new body (I Cor. 15:51-58)

3) We anticipate a new home (II Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-8)

We must live like citizens of Heaven - Phil. 1:27; 3:20; Eph. 2:19

c. Change in duty (new responsibilities) (Eph. 2:8-10)

Serve (work for) Christ and His children with love as your motive (Jn. 13:34; I Jn. 2:7-8).
We are not saved to sit, soak, and sour, but to serve!

C. NEW BELIEVERS NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT CHRIST IS NOW THE LORD OF THEIR LIVES.

(Teach them the Lordship of Christ)

1. Who is Jesus?

   a) He is Master & Lord (Jn.13:13)

   b) He is over all things (Col.1:16-18)

   c) Every knee shall bow before Him (Phil.2:9-11)

      (He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords - Rev.19:16)

2. How must we respond?

   a) Follow Him (without question) (Lk.5:27-28)
      (cp. Lk.9:23: To do so you must: deny self die to self)

   b) Obey Him (Lk.6:46)

   c) Serve Him (Jn.12:26)

   d) Live for Him (II Cor.5:15)

(see Rom. 12:1,2)

Christ is Lord over our: personal lives, family relationships, use of money & time, friendships, possessions, careers, etc.

If God commands discipleship, we must obey.

If new believers need it, we must love them enough to commit ourselves to this great task.

Appendix

The issue of "Lordship salvation" is hot today. Much confusion.

To understand the Biblical view on this subject we must examine 2 time factors regarding the Lordship of Christ:

I. THE TIME OF ACCEPTING JESUS AS LORD

Question: Do we depend upon Christ as Lord or Savior for salvation? Or both?

Answer: both!

When we invite men to receive Christ as Savior, we are implicitly asking them to receive the One who is LORD! Jesus is LORD.
Note: The title: LORD (gk. kurios) is the greek equivalent for the O.T. Hebrew words: YAHWEH (Jehovah) meaning eternal God; and Adonai meaning ruler or master.
Jesus is sovereign, ruler, authority, and He is God!

Those who reject Jesus as Lord also reject Him as Savior. They have "another Jesus". Jesus cannot be Savior without being Lord. (see: Is.43:11 & Acts 4:12)

For me to say: Jesus is my Savior, is to also say: Jesus is my Lord. Why? Because Christ is not compartmentalized. No one can have just one aspect of Him. "Is Christ divided?" (I Cor.1:13)

Either you have Christ, all of Christ, the way He is or you do not have Him at all. (What kind of Savior would we have if He could not command those He saves?)

Therefore we should not tell a new Christian to make Christ Lord of their lives, but rather we are to tell him that He is Lord of their lives. If you really trusted Him you trusted Him as both Lord and Savior.

II. THE TIME OF SERVING JESUS AS LORD

When you get saved you are bought (redeemed) with a price (I Cor.6:20) Therefore: I now belong to Christ. He tells me what to do. Its no longer my life. Its His! I now have no choice but to submit to His will!

You receive Christ the LORD to be your Savior for salvation (Rom.10:9);
And you submit to Christ your Savior because He is your LORD upon salvation (ie. as soon as His Spirit comes into your life at conversion - I Cor. 12:3).

Ex. Relationship always comes before responsibility.

You must meet (and be hired by) an employer before you serve him.
You must accept Jesus Christ as Lord (personally) before you serve Him as Lord.

But serving Him always follows accepting Him (and there should be no delay in time - service is a natural response to:

1) His Lordship over you (Who He is - Lord); and
2) your Love for Him (What He has done for you as your Savior)

I do not get saved by serving Christ, I get saved to serve Christ.

You became His servant when you received Him into your life.

Paul was a slave (doulos) of Christ (Rom.1:1; Phil.1:1)
So are we! (Ro.6:18;22; Eph.6:6; Col.3:24; I Pet.2:16)

We are also "servants" (diakonos) (Col.1:7; Heb.6:10;

Pet 4:10,11)