

— FOR STAFF, LEADERSHIP TEAMS, AND SMALL GROUPS · 5 CONVERSATIONS

Team Discussion Guide

One conversation for each Part, and one for the conclusion. Read the chapters before you meet, open with the line from the book, and choose the questions that fit your group. The questions and practices were written for this guide; the opening lines are the book's own words.

PART ONE · CHAPTERS 1–3

The Church Got Better

The church can become better without the people becoming better at the same rate.

CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 1 · THE CHURCH HAS NEVER BEEN BETTER AT DOING CHURCH

Name one area your church has clearly improved in the last five years. What has changed in the people who use it most?

CHAPTER 2 · THE NUMBERS CAN RISE WHILE THE PEOPLE STAY THE SAME

Which number does your team check first each week, and what does it actually tell you about people becoming like Jesus?

CHAPTER 3 · ATTENDANCE IS NOT DISCIPLESHIP

Who do you know who is faithful in attendance but stuck in their walk with God? What might they need that attending does not give them?

TRY THIS TOGETHER

Before you meet, each person picks one ministry they lead and writes two short lists: what it provides, and what it hopes people become. Compare the lists together.

How Good Ministry Can Produce Passive Christians

It is easy to criticize believers for wanting to be fed while ignoring how thoroughly we may have trained them to expect feeding.

CHAPTER 7

CHAPTER 4 · WHEN PARTICIPATION FEELS LIKE TRANSFORMATION

Which activity in your church most easily feels like growth, whether or not anything is changing?

CHAPTER 5 · WHEN KNOWING MORE FEELS LIKE GROWING MORE

What truth has your team taught well that most people have not yet been helped to practice?

CHAPTER 6 · THE CHURCH CAN FEED PEOPLE WITHOUT TEACHING THEM TO EAT

Thinking of Robert and Nathan, who in your church may be faithful in public but unsure how to meet God alone?

CHAPTER 7 · WHEN THE CHURCH TRAINS PEOPLE TO RECEIVE

What do your gatherings teach people to expect: to be fed, or to learn how to feed themselves?

TRY THIS TOGETHER

Choose one regular gathering. List what people receive there, then name one thing they could be helped to practice before the next one.

What Actually Forms a Disciple

Portable faith is the ability to carry the life of discipleship into ordinary life.

CHAPTER 9

CHAPTER 8 · TRANSFORMATION BEGINS WHERE TRUTH BECOMES OBEDIENCE

Where is truth most often heard in your church but not yet obeyed?

CHAPTER 9 · THE DEEPEST DISCIPLESHIP HAPPENS WHEN NO PROGRAM IS RUNNING

What could people in your church carry into Monday if no program ran this week?

CHAPTER 10 · SPIRITUAL FORMATION CANNOT BE OUTSOURCED

What have you hoped the church would do for you that only you can do with God?

CHAPTER 11 · THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT A PROGRAM

How would your planning change if you treated the Holy Spirit, not the program, as the one forming people?

CHAPTER 12 · PRACTICE PRODUCES SPIRITUAL CAPACITY

Which spiritual practice do you understand well but have never built into a habit?

CHAPTER 13 · SOME FORMATION ONLY HAPPENS IN THE FIRE

Looking back on a hard season, what did God form in you that you could not have learned another way?

TRY THIS TOGETHER

Each person chooses one practice from Part Three to try for a week, then reports back on what was hard and what changed.

Building Churches That Produce Disciples

The church becomes stronger when ministry no longer depends on one person's constant initiative.

CHAPTER 17

CHAPTER 14 · THE GOAL IS NOT FEWER PROGRAMS

Which of your ministries keeps people busy without clearly moving them toward maturity?

CHAPTER 15 · DESIGN PROGRAMS THAT PRODUCE PRACTICE

For one program you lead, what should a person be able to do when it is over?

CHAPTER 16 · MEASURE WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO PRODUCE

What signs of formation could your team begin to notice and celebrate alongside the numbers you already track?

CHAPTER 17 · EQUIP PEOPLE TO WALK WITH GOD WITHOUT YOU

Which ministry currently depends on one person, and who could be equipped to carry it?

CHAPTER 18 · WHEN THE PEOPLE BEGIN TO CHANGE

What small sign of people changing have you already seen this year?

TRY THIS TOGETHER

Choose one ministry to redesign around a single practice. Agree on one sign of formation you will watch for over the next three months.

CONCLUSION

The Question Behind Every Church

We can become better at providing Christianity without becoming equally better at forming Christians.

CONCLUSION

THE CLOSING PRACTICE

Which day of the closing practice speaks most to your team right now, and why that one?

LOOKING AHEAD

If your church became known for forming people rather than delivering ministry, what would have to change first?

TRY THIS TOGETHER

End your meeting by praying through one day of the closing practice together.

From *When the Church Gets Better but the People Don't* by Kraig Kleeman, discussion guide for staff, leadership teams, and small groups.