

START!

TO FOLLOW

40 Days of Discipleship
Church-Wide Campaign Guide



Start! To Follow Church Wide Campaign Guide



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The Purpose and Power of a Campaign

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.

Matthew 28:19 – 20a (ESV).

The Great Commission is Jesus' expectations of every Christ-follower. All of us are to be disciples and disciplemakers. But Jesus' followers were never meant to be disciples or make disciples in a vacuum. The church works together to accomplish The Great Commission. The role of the church is to create spiritual momentum around disciple-making while equipping, encouraging, and empowering those who are making disciples. The local church is the driving force behind discipleship.

Many churches are not yet disciple-making churches because they are held captive by a paradigm that contradicts disciple-making. Most church leaders are intuitively aware that if they are going to lead a discipling church, they must first change the culture. That is, diminish the power of the presently flawed paradigm while embedding a disciple-making paradigm... church-wide.

How does a church create momentum around disciple-making while instilling a new DNA in every area of church life? One of the most effective and expeditious ways to accomplish these two essential goals is by doing a church-wide campaign.

A discipleship focused church-wide campaign is effective in accomplishing these goals for multiple reasons.

- 1) The church's full attention is given to the campaign. This makes it possible for every person and ministry to promote the principles and practices that are being embedded into the hearts of the church membership without giving attention to competing ideas.
- 2) Leaders at every level are influencers. When church members see every leader/influencer walking in the same direction, they will get in step with them.
- 3) The principles of disciple-making are being taught and pursued at three vital levels: *individually* through daily devotionals, during *group life* as each small group and/or Sunday School class is studying the same curriculum, and through the teachings of the senior pastor at each weekend *worship service*. Every person in the church is gaining understanding of the same discipleship principles daily as every person is engaged in the same devotional experience, being influenced by the weekly teaching of the senior pastor, and processing and committing to disciple-making principles and practices while attending their small group or Sunday School class.

Most churches will experience the paradigm-shifting effects of a discipleship campaign in just six weeks.

The campaign your church is about to undertake is built on the principles and practices found in Greg Laurie's book, *Start to Follow*. In eight revolutionary chapters, Pastor Laurie forces each of us to evaluate whether or not we have chosen a disciple's lifestyle, going on to point out the traits of a disciple, the costs of discipleship, the Bible's role in the disciple-making process, how prayer plays a part in a disciple's life, the responsibilities of a disciple as it relates to being a passionate and committed member of a local church, and the importance of discipling others. He then leads each reader to make a decision concerning becoming a fully devoted disciple of Jesus Christ.

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Essential Resources for a Successful Church-Wide Start to Follow Campaign

As you continue to read the following pages you'll be seeing the titles of the necessary resources. So that there is no confusion as you continue, each resource is noted below with a short description stating how each is to be used.

- **Start to Follow BOOK BY GREG LAURIE.** This concise book unearths the foundational biblical truths that the campaign is built upon. Each ministry leader should read this book prior to the first public announcement about the campaign. This includes senior pastor, every elder and/or deacon, each staff member, and every Sunday School teacher and small group leader (Some churches will also request each member of the finance team read *Start to Follow*.). This is suggested reading as it makes every influencer aware of the importance of discipleship as well as creating positive, organic, momentum leading up to the campaign. Having read and accepted the biblical truths unearthed in this book, these revered influencers will be able to answer questions and encourage others in the church as the campaign is being promoted and while it is in process. During the study, it is most beneficial for every individual to read the book, taking personal steps of faith and understanding in his or her walk with Jesus Christ.

- **PERSONAL READING AND REFLECTION GUIDE.** Each person in the church will want this 40-day devotional guide. Engaging in a daily devotional has two goals: first, empowering individuals through the habit of discovering biblical truth on their own; second, connecting people to the heart of the heavenly Father as they spend time developing a relationship with Him through His Word. Some of the most transforming experiences will take place as people involved in these daily devotionals learn about and hear from God. The guide provides suggested daily readings from the *Start to Follow* book and from Scripture, as well as thought-provoking questions for personal reflection. This resource follows the same six-week outline as the Bible study and *Small Group Discussion Guide*.

- **SIX-WEEK BIBLE STUDY** for Sunday School classes. Every Sunday morning Bible study/Sunday School class will take a break from their curriculum or course of study to join the church in this six-week Bible study on discipleship. This is essential in redirecting the church to a discipleship mindset (especially those slow to embrace new ideas, also known as late adopters). Individuals, especially late adopters, are most apt to accept a new perspective as the smaller community they are part of affirms the new perspective together. Trusted leaders and class members will play a major role in helping individuals embrace a new paradigm by affirming and accepting the ideas. Each bible study leader will need online access to (or a copy of) the study.

- **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE.** For churches with small group ministries or for groups preferring more casual and conversational learning, the *Small Group Discussion Guide* will also be available for easy download within the online Bible Study Manager. Every small group will take a break from their current routine to utilize the *Start to Follow Small Group Discussion Guide*. This is also a perfect time to start new groups, empowering new leaders and welcoming new friends, neighbors, or church members. Each week, groups will walk through the guide's three-part structure: *Our Story*, *His Story*, and *The Journey*. The "Our Story" section aims to establish a conversational environment as group members unveil their perspective and current level of engagement concerning a particular topic. The "His Story" part of the experience moves the conversation to Scripture to learn what God has to say about the topic and what His expectations are of His people. The "The Journey" aspect of the study leads group members to consider embracing God's truth and/or committing to walk according to God's expectations. Each gathering ends with a time of prayer for one another.

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- **FREE PROMOTIONAL PIECES AND ARTWORK.** Get the word out and establish a unified look and feel for your church's *Start to Follow* – 40 days of discipleship campaign.

To acquire each of these resources go to www.starttofollow.com.

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Leadership Team... The Roles to Be Filled and the Responsibilities of Each Role

When a church chooses to immerse itself in a campaign of this nature it is essential that the right structure be in place. If your church overlooks this important aspect of the campaign you will most likely fail in accomplishing the goal of establishing discipleship as a primary core value of the church.

By filling the roles noted below and by each person carrying out their responsibilities with excellence, a church is well on her way to experiencing a successful campaign.

• **Senior Pastor** – Every movement needs a leader. No role is more vital to the campaign and life of the church than that of the senior pastor. Below you'll find a list of responsibilities for the senior pastor.

- **Cast Vision.** In order for an initiative to gain momentum, it is important that the senior leadership describe the new future to the congregation as the campaign is being promoted and throughout the campaign.
- **Enlist the Leadership Team.** Each of the roles that follow will need to be filled by someone passionate about the role they are taking on and capable of accomplishing the responsibilities listed with excellence. When the senior pastor enlists these individuals personally, the roles are recognized as essential and the initiative is seen as a vital to the church's future.
- **Preach sermons weekly** that coordinate with each week's theme. A careful progression has been developed over the six weeks, moving individuals from a point of recognizing their need to personally commit to following Jesus, through essential dynamics in relating to God and each other as the church, to ultimately responding to the Great Commission where every disciple is a disciplemaker.
- **Lead or be part of a group during the campaign.** If the senior pastor is not in a group, it will be challenging, if not impossible, to get buy-in from the congregation. When a senior pastor chooses to lead or participate in a group during this time, enlistment of other group leaders is much easier.
- **Consistently reemphasize the importance of groups,** whether bible study groups, Sunday school classes, small groups, community groups... whatever model of community and education your church uses. Encourage everyone to join or lead a group, at least trying one for the six weeks of the campaign. This will be essential for impact.
- **Have oversight of the leadership team and any related meetings.** This does not mean only the senior pastor should have a voice, certainly other leaders can be empowered and entrusted, but it is vital for the senior pastor to clearly be seen as championing (never forcing or controlling) the call to discipleship and leading this campaign as a catalyst for revolution or revival within the church and community.
- **Pray daily for everyone on the leadership team and for the church to become a church that makes disciples who make disciples.**

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• Worship Team Leader

- Utilize a team of people to plan, coordinate, and lead worship in a way that supports the overall goals of the campaign and specific weekly emphasis related to discipleship and life with Christ.
- Create worship experiences that align with your church's style of worship and that establish an environment where transformation can take place.
- Consistently cast vision for and promote the campaign to all persons and teams involved in the worship ministry and in the congregation.
- Encourage everyone in the worship ministry to be involved in all aspects of the campaign.
- Pray daily for every person on the worship team and that the worship ministry will become a ministry whose primary goal is to make disciples who make disciples.

• Prayer Team Leader

- Enlist the prayer team.
- Guide the prayer team to create a strategy so that every ministry of the church and every gathering of church members are in regular praying for the campaign and that your church would become a disciple-making church.
- Pray daily for every person on the leadership team, prayer team, worship team, group leaders, and group members. Model this in every setting possible.
- Organize special prayer emphasis prior to and during the campaign. A few suggestions...
 - 168 hour prayer vigil – This is a one week, 24 hour prayer experience. Sign up people to pray every minute of every hour for one week. Be sure to create a list of things to pray for. And yes, they can pray wherever they are.
 - Home Prayer Gatherings – Break down the community where your church is located geographically. Enlist people to host a prayer gathering in their home. Prepare and give each host home an outline of specific things to pray for related to the campaign, specific team needs, church leadership, the church body, and for impact in your community and beyond as discipleship becomes a part of your church's DNA. Also, do not forget to include a time for personal prayer, regarding what God is doing to grow each person involved as a disciple and disciplemaker – you may want to include a time for people to pair up and pray for one another in this home gathering. Register people in the church lobby to be involved in a home prayer gathering that will take place near them.
 - Work alongside the senior pastor and worship team to organize a few church-wide prayer gatherings with the primary agenda being to pray for the campaign. You may also want to incorporate a specific time of prayer in the worship service, allowing various leaders of members to pray for God's movement in and through your church.

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• Groups Champion

- Enlist group leaders for the campaign. A church may have an established group ministry. Many groups will already be in place. It will be vital that short-term groups be available also, groups that will only meet the six weeks of the campaign. It is the group champion's responsibility to enlist these short-term group leaders.
- Register short-term group members in a group and connect them with a group leader. The group leader can follow up and extend a personal invitation. Some churches may choose to offer open signups for groups meeting at various times and locations – in which case a leader should still follow up to make a personal connection.
- Be certain group members know where their group is meeting, what day and time the group meets, and when the first meeting will take place. This responsibility can be given to group leaders but be careful, if this isn't accomplished you may lose group members the first week of the campaign.
- Be certain small group leaders and members have the resources they need including the curriculum the group will be using, the personal reading and reflection guide, and the *Start to Follow* book, if providing those for leaders and/or members (recommended but not required).
- Train the group leaders, walking through material overview, format, and basic group facilitation dynamics.
- Challenge and encourage groups leaders to reach out to new people in the church and in their daily lives to join their group for the six week focus on how to be a successful follower of Jesus Christ.
- Throughout the campaign, be available to answer any questions group leaders have, get them what they need, and encourage them.
- Pray daily for group leaders and group members. Each group leader should likewise be praying for his or her group members.

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Suggested Schedule:

Throughout this section, the senior pastor is given much responsibility. This will work best in a small to mid-size church. If your church is a larger church, it may be important for the senior pastor to assign someone to spearhead this initiative and carry out the responsibilities requested of the senior pastor. That is, all but the teaching and vision casting responsibilities.

Six Months Prior to the Campaign:

- 1) Senior pastor goes through the process of getting the campaign approved.
- 2) Senior pastor works alongside the finance team to budget for the campaign.
- 3) Senior pastor tells the church staff of the initiative and how it will affect their area of work over the next six months.

* If possible, some of these steps may need to be established earlier as ministries are planning calendars and budgets, in which case this six month point will simply be a time of bringing the teams together to remind and recast vision for what is ahead.

Five Months Prior to the Campaign:

- 1) Senior pastor orders copies of *Start to Follow* to give to every staff team member, every elder and/or deacon, and every person who will be on the Leadership Team.
- 2) Senior pastor spends the month enlisting the leadership team. The senior pastor will communicate the time and location of the leadership team's first team meeting.

Four Months Prior to the Campaign:

- 1) Senior pastor gives every staff member, elder, deacon, and Leadership Team member a copy of *Start to Follow* asking them to read the book in the next four weeks, clarifying and emphasizing the importance of having everyone unified in their knowledge and expectation of the general discipleship principles serving as the foundation for the campaign and the curriculum.
- 2) Senior pastor meets with each Leadership Team member to review the team leader's list of responsibilities and encouraging and praying for them.
- 3) The person spearheading Sunday morning Bible study and/or the person with oversight of small groups makes the teachers and small group leaders aware that they will be setting aside the regular curriculum during the six-week campaign. Be certain that this happens this early in the process. Some teachers and some leaders will need to plan for this.
- 4) Leadership Team Members enlist their teams (worship, prayer, groups).

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Three Months Prior to the Campaign:

- 1) Senior Pastor hosts first Leadership Team meeting.
- 2) The Senior Pastor announces the initiative and begins casting vision for the campaign during worship services.
- 3) Teams begin to meet, establish strategies, assign duties, and move forward with each of the team's responsibilities.
- 4) The Groups Champion begins enlisting short-term group leaders and answering the questions of pre-established leaders and teachers.
- 5) The Prayer Team finalizes the prayer strategy and implements prayer for the campaign in every area of church life.

Two Months Prior to the Campaign:

- 1) The Groups Champion continues to enlist short-term leaders and answer the questions of pre-established leaders and teachers.
- 2) The Groups Champion orders all resources needed for groups, both Sunday morning groups and small groups. (*The Bible Study Curriculum* and *Small Group Discussion Guides* are available online through the lesson manager along with, the *Personal Reading and Reflection Guide*. *Start to Follow* books are also available for purchase if they have not already been provided by the church if groups choose to add this valuable resource.)
- 3) Special prayer experiences are planned by the prayer team. If these are church-wide worship style experiences it will be important to involve the senior pastor and worship team leader in the planning process.
- 4) The Worship Team begins planning worship services for the six-week campaign.
- 5) Each week from this point until the end of the campaign, during worship services, the senior pastor,
1. casts the vision of a disciple-making church, 2. promotes the campaign, 3. encourages people to join a group during the campaign, 4. encourages church members to pray daily for the campaign.
- 6) The Senior Pastor orders *Start to Follow* books for the estimated number of people who will be involved in the campaign if providing these from the church budget. (Again, these book are recommended for deepening individual's faith and understanding but are not required during the campaign.)

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One Month and Two Weeks Prior to the Campaign:

1) The Groups Champion and team sets up a kiosk in the church lobby where people can register for a group. You may choose to offer three categories of groups: *Being Disciples*, *Making Disciples*, and *Students*. *Being Disciples* Groups are perfect for new believers, non-believers, or any Christians looking to grow in their own understanding of what it means to be a disciple. *Making Disciples* Groups are perfect for more mature Christians ready to be more intentional in sharing their life and faith with others. *Student* Groups have a more age-appropriate perspective on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Finally, Small groups would benefit from a variety a maturity levels as they discuss life with Christ.

2) The Senior Pastor enlists a team (if possible, the elders or deacons) to print and pass out the PERSONAL READING AND REFLECTION GUIDE to everyone involved in the campaign.

One Month Prior to the Campaign:

1) The Groups Champion trains all group leaders on the exciting and convenient online Bible Study Manager, showing the different features for online preparation or easy download of complete or customizable lesson plans each week. Be sure to emphasize the various options to introduce and conclude each lesson based on learning style and spiritual maturity. Remind that groups using the Small Group Discussion Guide can download those as a single document (or simply provide those already printed for your leaders).

2) Throughout the month... Prayer Team members visit each class and group to pray with and for the group as they begin their discipleship journey.

3) The Worship Team continues to plan worship experiences for the six weeks of the campaign and praying for God to use them in their very public role.

4) The Senior Pastor continues to promote the campaign and preparing sermons based on the weekly studies.

5) The Groups Champion and team continue to oversee a kiosk in the church lobby where people can sign up for a group.

6) The team that was recruited by the senior pastor to pass out the DAILY READING AND REFLECTION GUIDE sets up a kiosk in the church lobby and passes the DAILY READING AND REFLECTION GUIDE out to those involved in the campaign.

7) The Prayer Team continues to host special prayer opportunities that focus on the campaign and the church becoming a disciple-making church.

8) The Worship Team finalizes upcoming worship experiences and takes time during rehearsals to pray for the campaign.

9) The Senior Pastor meets with all team leaders for a time of passionate and expectant prayer and to tie up any loose ends.

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Throughout the Campaign:

- 1) The Groups Champion and team continue to oversee a kiosk in the church lobby where people can join a group.
- 2) The Groups Champion and team assign late registrants to a group.
- 3) The Groups Champion and team contact those registered for groups making them aware of the group they will be in, who will be leading the group, and when and where the group will meet.
- 4) The Groups Champion and team contact group leaders telling them of the newly registered group members they will be leading asking the group leaders to make contact with them via telephone.
- 5) The team that was recruited by the senior pastor to pass out the DAILY READING AND REFLECTION GUIDE sets up a kiosk in the church lobby and passes the DAILY READING AND REFLECTION GUIDE out to those involved in the campaign, along with any additional copies of the *Start to Follow* book for free or for purchase.
- 6) The Worship Team finalizes the upcoming worship experiences and takes time during rehearsals to pray for the campaign.

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Proven Principles for a Successful Campaign:

As your church considers a *Start to Follow* 40 Days of Discipleship campaign, it is essential that you hold to some undeniable principles. These principles have been proven again and again to be true of successful campaigns.

- **During the campaign break from all other programming.** Many churches have weekly, monthly, even annual events that various ministries host. During the campaign, every person in the church needs to focus time and attention to the campaign experience alone. Temporarily break from all other events and activities throughout the six-week campaign.
- **Ensure that as many church leaders as possible are promoting the campaign and are fully engaged in it.** Church members take their cues from those in leadership. If the church leadership isn't giving itself to the campaign, others won't either.
- **Every Sunday school class and/or small group must set aside other curriculum and use the *Start to Follow* Sunday morning resource or the small group discussion guide throughout the campaign.** One of the goals of the campaign is to get everyone aligned and this will happen as every group is learning, espousing, and embracing the same principles and practices.

Pastor, below you'll find a prayer that you might begin to pray as you spearhead this campaign....

"Father, I am fully aware that You want every church be a disciple-making church. And I am fully aware that You will be with me as I lead our church to become one. Please prepare the hearts and minds of the church leadership. Give them the vision you've given me. Allow them to see You as the architect of the church and that we are simply making it possible for You to build us into the spiritual building You always meant for us to be. Thank you for putting this passion in my heart and for what you are about to do. Amen."