

The Collaboratory

Mentoring Disciples

The workers and advisors of the Collaboratory seek to help each other live a life worthy of the Lord. Development and education of members to use their gifts for lifelong service to Christ is at the core of our organizational identity. This is evidenced by two of our five core value statements: first to “integrate our work and Christian faith by making wise use of gifts and abilities to serve the underprivileged around the world; second to “foster lifelong commitments to Christian vocation and servant-leadership through peer and advisor mentoring and discipleship to Christ.” These statements say that together we will work to give our gifts and talents over to God directed work, to become his approved workers (*Dokimoi Ergatai*¹), and that we will help each other toward that end as disciples of Jesus disciples and through peer and advisor mentoring.

We want to bear the fruit of service as Disciples of Jesus, and to grow in the knowledge of God. As Disciples we are persons who have voluntarily placed ourselves under the discipline of our master teacher, Jesus. Ours is the school of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The first meaning of discipleship, then, is our submission to the active authority of Christ in our lives. Discipleship, however, also refers to the relational work between two or more believers who covenant to support one another in the work of being a disciple. Here it is important to recognize that the desire to control others, particularly for accommodation of our own failings, is powerful. Discipleship between believers can sometimes degenerate into nothing more than me telling you what I want you to do. The work of discipleship is never to assume in each other’s lives the work of Jesus, our master teacher.

Discipleship demands infinite respect for God’s work over and above our own, and for his timing and patience in the lives of others. God desires our loving obedience, and therefore does not use power to take what is not freely given. Neither should we attempt any such exercise of power in the life of a brother or sister. We must also be careful to respect God’s personalized calling on the life of each believer, according to the gifts of personality and ability that he has given to each of his children. We must be slow to judge the outward particulars of any believer’s life before we know the inner call of Jesus on that brother or sister’s life. God sees the condition of the heart, which was understood in Jesus’ day to represent the seat of human will. When the heart is yielded to God, a Godly life becomes the only life possible.

With these words of caution in view, we also recognize that individual response to God is not a private affair. Discipleship to Jesus is not my own business, it is advanced in relationship with other disciples and manifests itself in particular life habits, choices and actions that are visible to others. True discipling relationships begin with individual and corporate commitments to ever more faithfully live out the truth that we possess, and an earnest desire to experience the work of God’s Holy Spirit in our lives. Christian relationships are to be characterized by mutual submission, so that together we might uphold the honor and integrity of the name of Jesus and all who follow him. We hold out the light of truth for one another, and are commanded to live the master’s instruction in body as well as spirit. Disciples expect from themselves and from each other an account of God’s inner work in each life, and outward evidence of a response from each believer to this work.

¹ *Dokimoi Ergatai* (pronounced *doe-key-moy air-ga-tie*) is a Greek phrase that means *Approved Workers*. It is taken from a verse in the Bible (2 Timothy 2:15): "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." Our desire in the Collaboratory is to become God's approved workers or *Dokimoi Ergatai*.