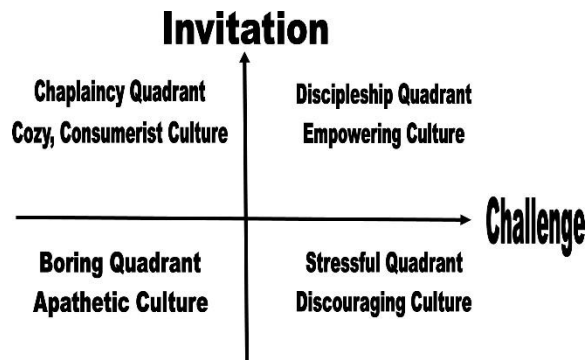


# The Invitation/Challenge Matrix



Stop and consider for a moment what Jesus accomplished. He took a team of rag-tag disciples from all walks of life and spent 3 years with them. These guys weren't the cream of the crop. They weren't the best of the best. The twelve guys that Jesus chose were made up of fisherman, tax collectors, a zealot, and a thief and betrayer. However, Jesus took

this bunch of misfits and changed history! How in the world did Jesus accomplish this without scaring them to death? The secret to the development of his disciples is found in Matthew 16. His method of balancing invitation and challenge is the key.

*Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." **Matthew 16:17-18***

In this passage, we see Jesus affirming Peter by inviting him to draw closer. Jesus uses a play on words to make the invitation even stronger. In Greek, Peter's name is Petros, which means rock. Jesus says that on this rock, or Petra, referring to Himself, He will build His church. Essentially, Jesus is saying this: Little rock, you are a part of me and on the Big Rock I'll build my church. However, Jesus goes even further—He tells Peter that he will be given the keys to the kingdom! Talk about an invitation! Jesus is inviting Peter closer into a relationship.

Yet, just a few short verses later, after Peter tells Jesus he needs to stop talking about dying, Jesus responds with a harsh challenge.

*"Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." **Matthew 16:23***

Time and time again, we find Jesus inviting his followers into an intimate relationship with Him while also initiating a direct challenge to thoughts, actions, attitude that were wrong. Jesus drew His disciples closer as He loved them, but He also gave them the opportunity to accept the responsibilities of following Him. Jesus created a highly inviting but highly challenging culture for His disciples to function and grow within. If we want to create a culture of

disciple-making, we will have to balance invitation and challenge appropriately.

**Effective leadership is based on an invitation to a relationship and a challenge to change.** A disciple-maker is someone who invites people into a close relationship with him or her, but also challenges that person to live the values of the kingdom in direct and graceful ways. Without both dynamics working together, people will not grow into fully devoted disciples. The matrix above is used to help leaders understand the reality of the types of cultures we create through our leadership and in our churches.

### Chaplaincy Quadrant

In our D-Groups, if we are constantly challenging the group, they will stop coming because in that environment they haven't agreed to that kind of relationship. When a culture exists where there is high invitation and low challenge, no real growth or transformation occurs. So, in most relationships, we have created a cozy culture.

### Boring Quadrant

A dangerous place to be is in a culture where there is low invitation and low challenge. Unfortunately, this describes some of our relationships. When this happens, apathy occurs. No one really cares about loving others and no one really cares whether there is any change or not.

### Stressful Quadrant

When we are successful in creating a highly inviting culture, it is usually at the expense of leadership. Because of that, the experience of these leaders is high on the challenge side of things but very low on invitation. There is rarely space for encouragement for these leaders or for those they are leading. So the group ends up discouraged, frustrated, and stressed. Burn out is common.

### Discipling Quadrant

This is the sweet spot. When you find balance between inviting into a relationship and gracefully, but truthfully challenging, this is where disciples and leaders are developed.

Here is the thing—no one accidentally makes disciples. Disciple-making is an intentional pursuit. But as you take that journey, remember that no one naturally strikes that balance. You will find that you are disposed to be either more inviting or more challenging. The key is to work to find a balance between the two.