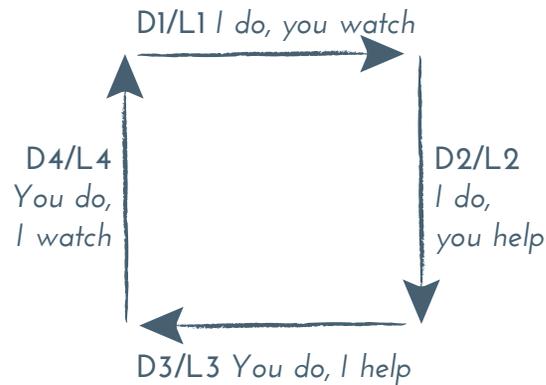


The Square

The Square helps us to recognise four different stages of discipleship, leadership & team development modelled by Jesus. These are the stages that result in any person or team pressing on to reach maturity, fruitfulness and multiplication. The 'D' stands for the stages for a Disciple, and the 'L' for the stages for a Leader.



At every stage of His ministry you can see Jesus calling the disciples to follow Him, to learn from Him, to grow through the hard times in their life together. Ultimately, He calls them to take what He has taught and shown them, His message of love, out to the world.

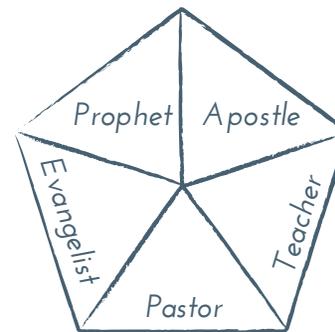
But how did He get them to that end point? As we read the Gospels we see Jesus take the disciples through a process akin to the Square. We need to be asking how Christian community members are growing in their discipleship, and how Christian leaders are raising up team and new leaders to take on new responsibilities of leadership within the community and, essentially, to grow into the leadership to which God calls them.

If we don't raise up new leaders within our Christian community, the potential for personal growth for people is limited, along with the church's capacity for numerical growth and ability to come to a place of multiplication.

The Pentagon

The Pentagon reminds us of the five key ministry roles that each of us are given to fulfil. Working together, they make up the maturing body of Christ identified in Ephesians 4.

"But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it...It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."



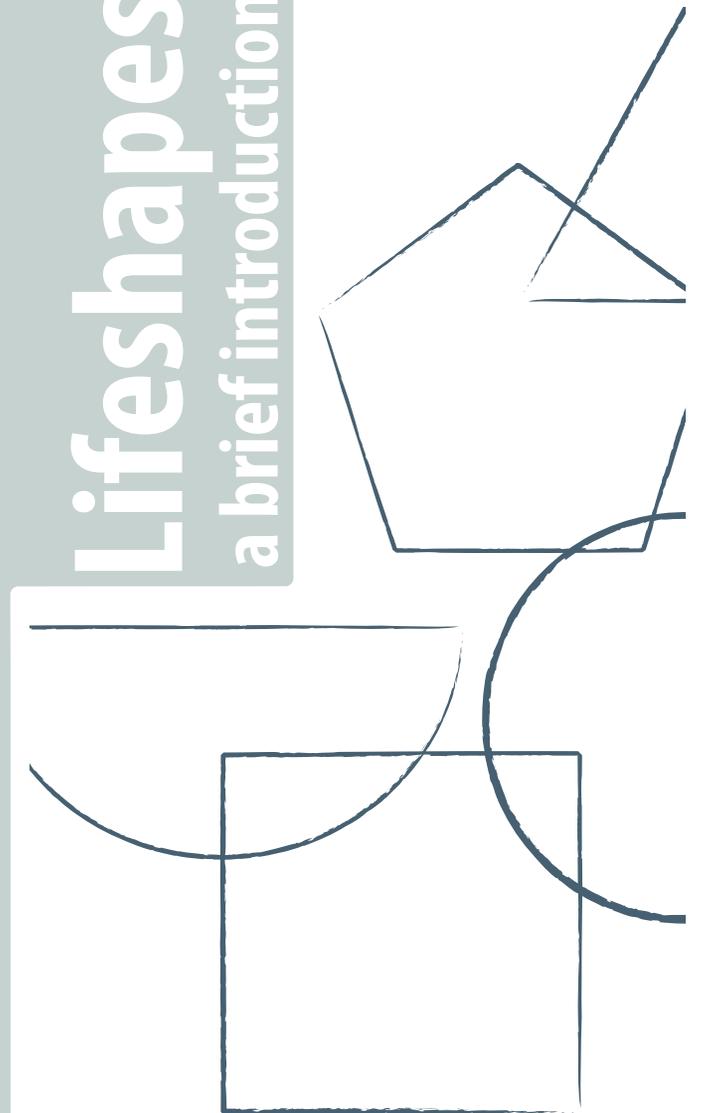
We each tend to function primarily in one 'base' ministry, whilst also growing in phases or seasons of the other roles. It is very helpful for leaders to identify which 1 or 2 roles best describe them, in order to lead out of their own identity, rather than replicating someone else's style of leadership. This can also help with looking at team dynamics and what might be overly-emphasised or lacking across the team or church community as a whole.

Recognising the different roles is important so that the "body is built up, equipped for works of service and grows towards unity, fullness and maturity in Christ," (Ephesians 4:12) not so we 'box' people into a stereotype.

For more information about Lifeshapes we recommend reading *Building a Discipleship Culture* by Mike Breen and Steve Cockram. Contact office@3dmeurope.com for more details.

Lifeshapes

a brief introduction



What are Lifeshapes?

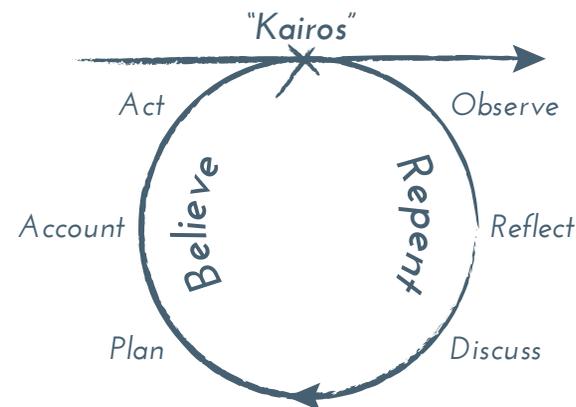
Lifeshapes are tools to help us live out a life of discipleship and mission. They are taken from biblical principles and teaching and put into simple 'shapes' to aid us in living out our Christian faith.

The Circle

The Circle is all about identifying the events in our lives that affect our emotions and actions. These represent an opportunity for learning and growth. The Circle is a key tool in discipleship, whether used personally or in discipling others.

In Mark 1:15 Jesus describes the process for us:

"The time [kairos] is here. The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

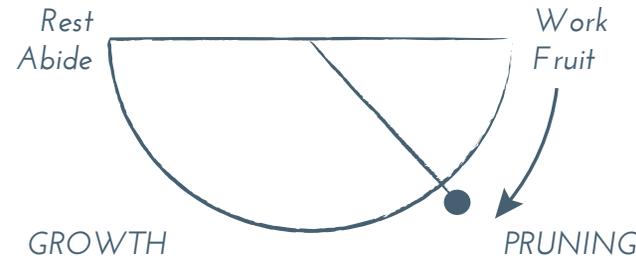


Use the different stages of the Circle to draw out thoughts and feelings about a particular situation. Engage with each area and ask how God might want to change the way you think (repent), and step out in faith (changing the way you act, live and lead) in the new direction (believe) by making a plan for which you are accountable.

People are naturally prone to prefer one side of the Circle to the other so be encouraged to go through each stage prayerfully.

The Semi-Circle

The Semi-Circle gives us a tool that helps us to identify rhythms and patterns in our lives; rest and work, fruitfulness and abiding. Recognizing these patterns will prevent us from becoming over-stretched.



It is particularly important for every Christian leader to identify and put in place rhythms which help them engage in patterns of rest and work - so that they don't end up in burnout or struggling to lead their community.

It is also important for each church or group to engage in different rhythms throughout the year. Sometimes it might be appropriate to gather people more often or in a different pattern. For example, to engage with a season of rest during the summer it may be appropriate to do more social gatherings.

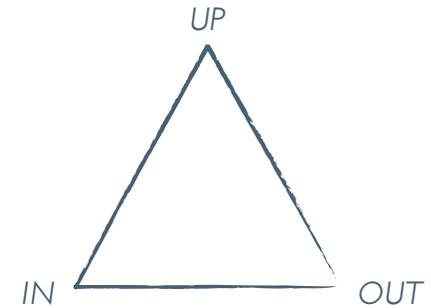
It is also important to recognize when God brings seasons of pruning, abiding and fruitfulness (John 15). We need to include other people in this process as they may sometimes more easily recognize different seasons than you can see yourself.

Abiding is all about coming back to the Gardener, our Father, and giving our energy to putting our roots further down into Him. We remember our identity is found in the Father and who He says we are, rather than in what we do or achieve, in how well our ministry is going, or in how many people give their lives to Jesus.

The Triangle

The Triangle is all about getting our balance of relationships right.

There are three dimensions: Upwards, in our relationship with God; Inwards, in our relationships with other Christians; Outwards, in mission and relationship with the world.



Jesus models a perfectly balanced life to us in the Gospels. We see him retreating to spend intimate time with the Father alone (UP), times when He draws the disciples close to Him (IN), and moments when He is totally focussed on the crowds with whom He performs miracles and shares stories and truth about what God is like (OUT).

Personally and as Christian communities we need a balance of all three dimensions. It is good to evaluate this every so often and make any necessary adjustments.

It is worth noting that not everyone will have the same balance i.e. it is unlikely that people will have a 'perfect' balance of 1/3 UP, 1/3 IN and 1/3 OUT. Rather those called to lead church communities may find they spend more time with their 'IN' relationships, whereas those who are evangelists may spend more time with their 'OUT' relationships, and so on. What is important is that people are responding to the Lord's call to engage in relationships in all three dimensions, in balance.