

# DISCIPLESHIP & SPIRITUAL GROWTH



Insights from Hispanic pastors about what encourages and discourages spiritual growth & discipleship

# SOURCE

Lifeway Research conducted an online discussion in July 2022 among 62 pastors of Hispanic churches and pastors of Spanish-speaking services in non-Hispanic churches. The 3-day discussion sought to understand how these churches are evangelizing and discipling believers, building community among members, and reaching next generations of children, youth, and young adults.

# NOTE

This study was designed to report on the CURRENT practices of Hispanic congregations with the hope that additional research can validate which ones are BEST practices.

This research anticipates that insights gleaned from these pastors will be beneficial and insightful as you think about your church's ministry, but please remember that these findings should be considered DESCRIPTIVE rather than PRESCRIPTIVE.

# SPIRITUAL GROWTH

When people are willing and able to:

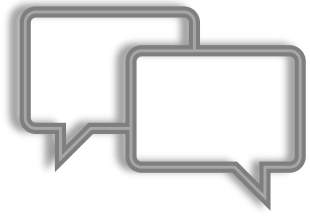
- Set aside time
- Learn from the teaching
- Be humble, accept teaching, grow
- Seek God
- Follow-through

When do Hispanic pastors say they see spiritual growth?

When discipleship resources are

- Accessible
- Relevant
- Consistent

When they invest 1-1 in individuals and families



What resources have been the most effective in fostering spiritual growth among members of your church?



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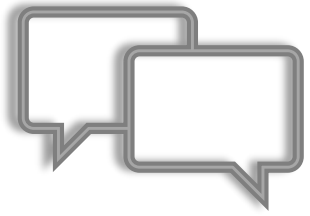


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Which of these discipleship postures poses the biggest challenge for your members?

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Setting aside time

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Learning from the teaching

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Being humble, accepting teaching

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Seeking God

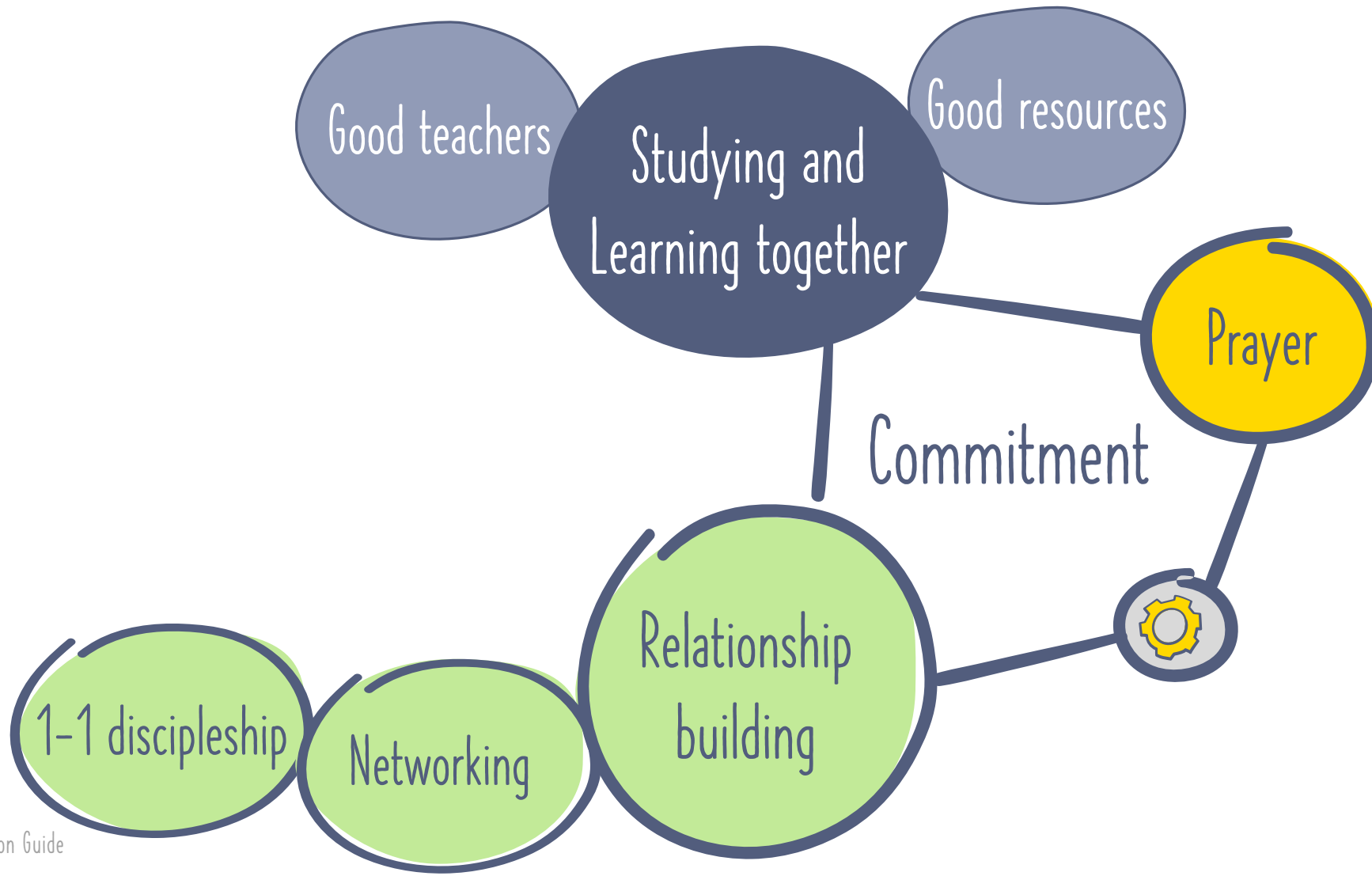
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Following through

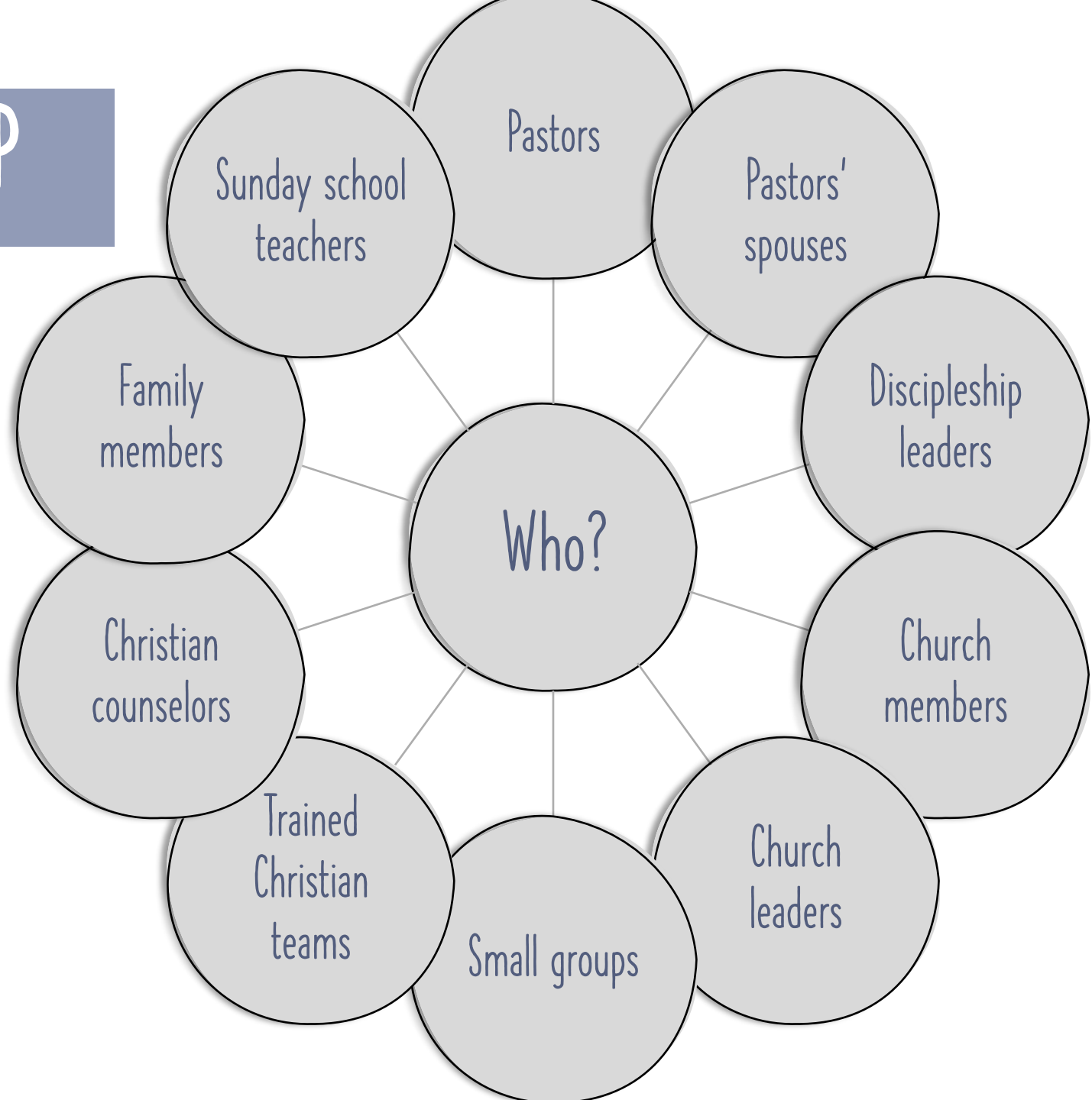
What are new ways you could help your church overcome their challenges?

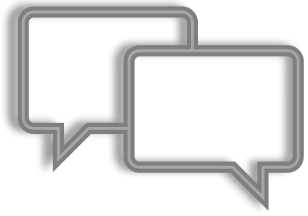
# Discipleship Emphasis

How pastors say they emphasize spiritual growth in their churches



# WHO DOES DISCIPLESHIP





Brainstorm 3-5 names of people in your church whom you believe are **READY** to disciple others but are not **CURRENTLY** doing so

Who?



Church members

\_\_\_\_\_

Church leaders

\_\_\_\_\_

Small groups

\_\_\_\_\_

Trained Christian teams

\_\_\_\_\_

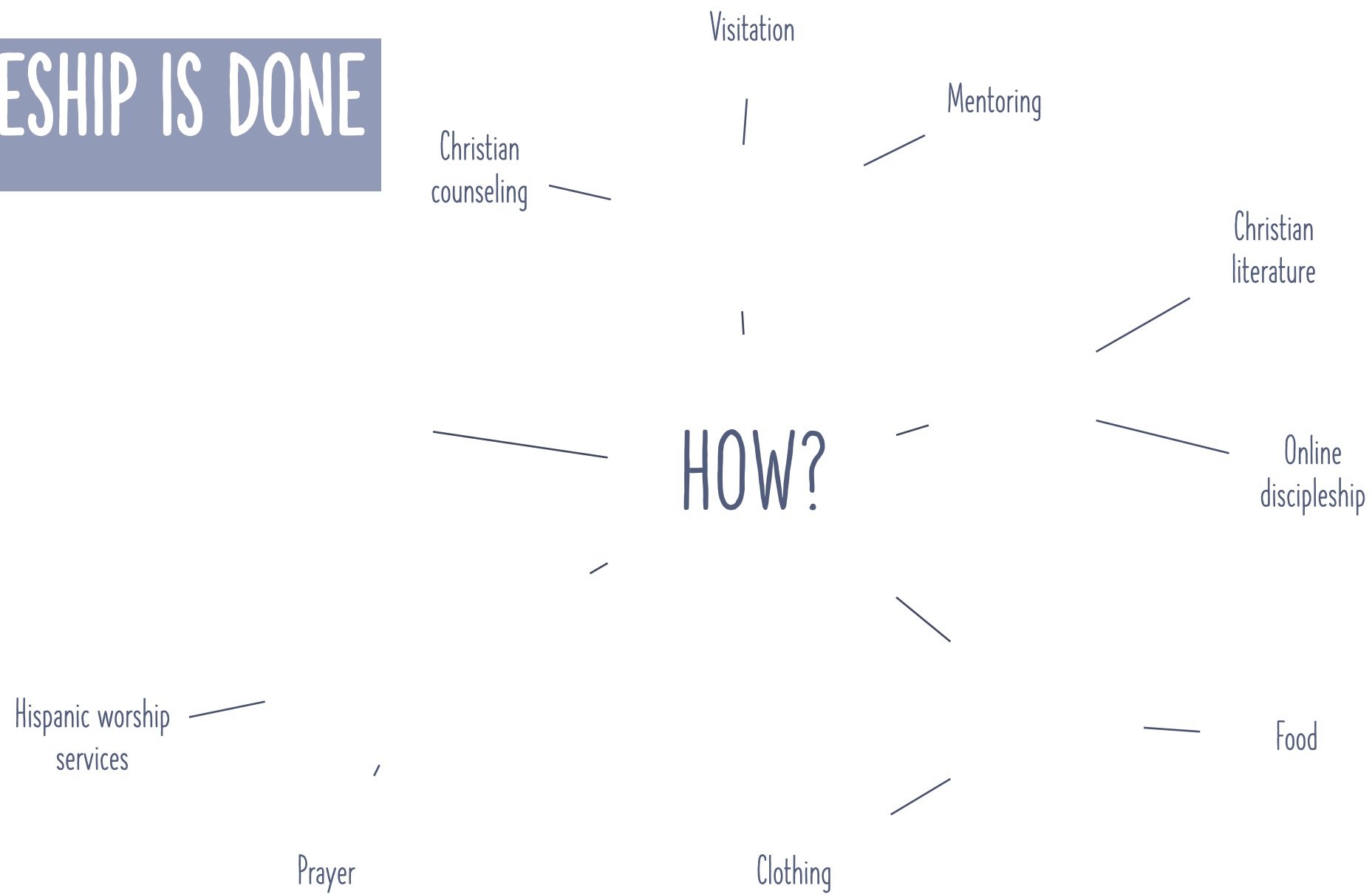
Family members

\_\_\_\_\_

Sunday school members

\_\_\_\_\_

# HOW DISCIPLESHIP IS DONE



# DISCIPLESHIP DISCOURAGERS

## Trauma

- Emotional
- Physical
- Bitterness

## Stress

- Financial
- Work
- Conflict

## No Commitment

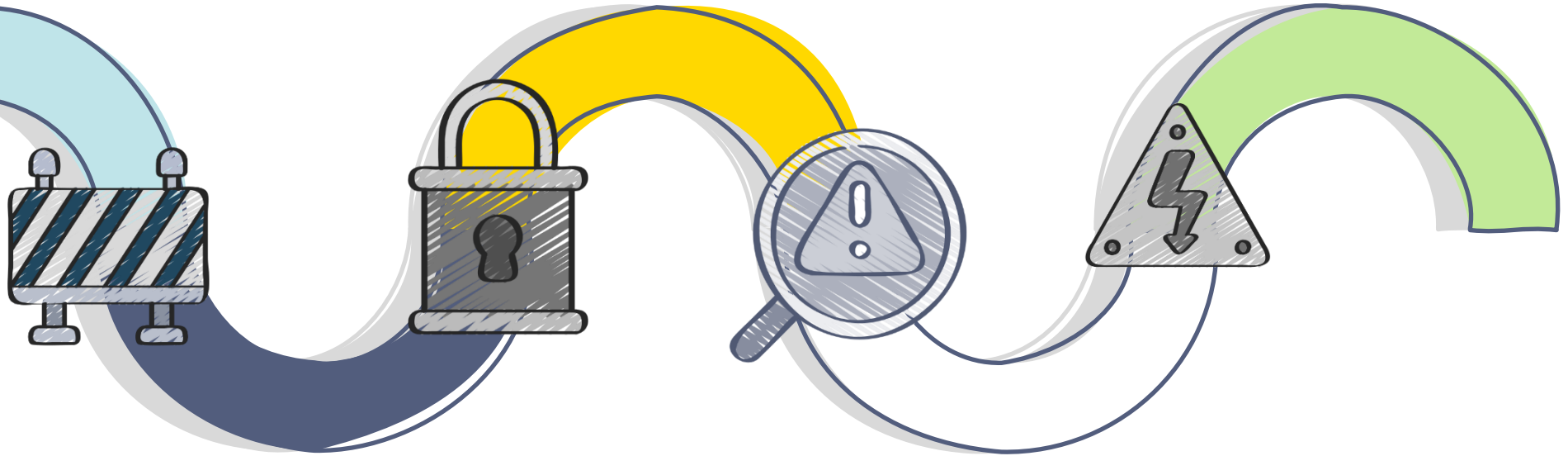
- To a local church
- To a Christian lifestyle
- To serving others

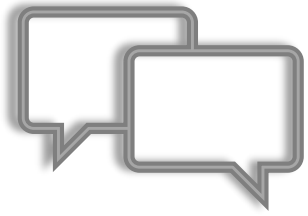
## Sin

- Neglecting spiritual practices
- Not addressing areas of sinfulness (greed, selfishness, immorality)

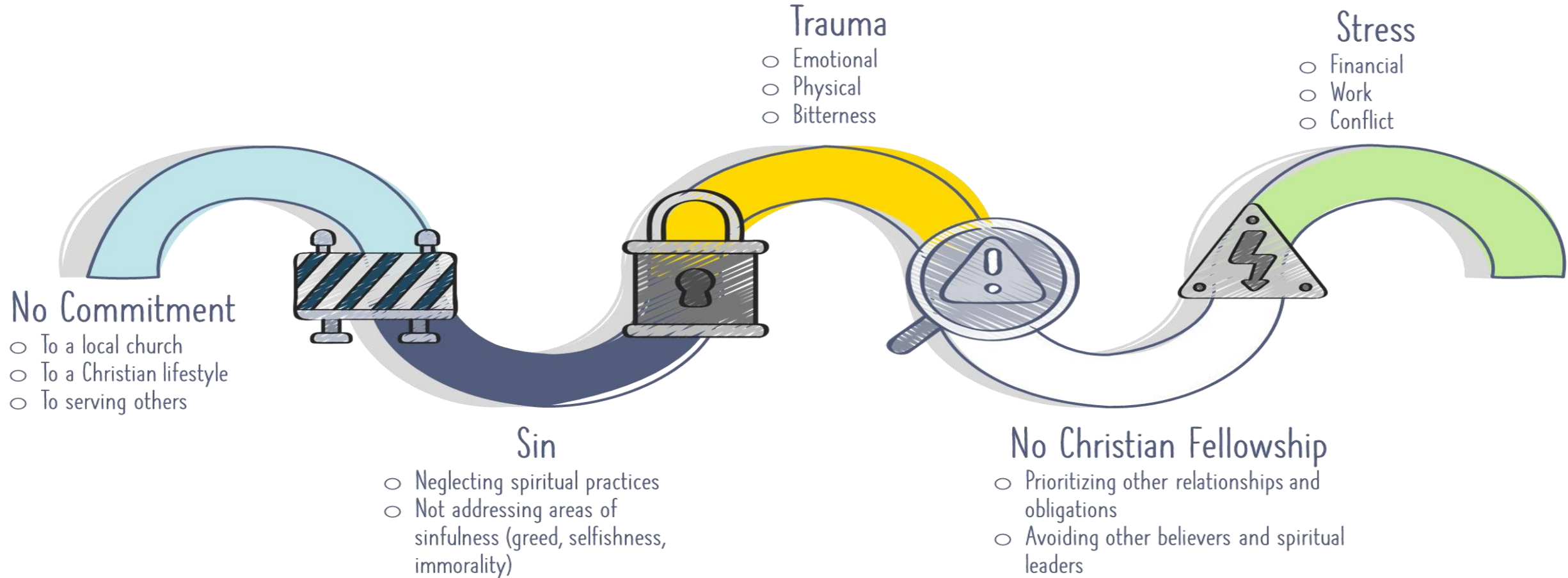
## No Christian Fellowship

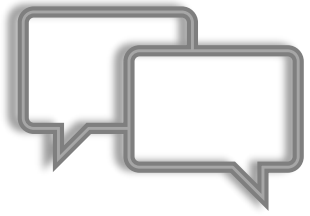
- Prioritizing other relationships and obligations
- Avoiding other believers and spiritual leaders



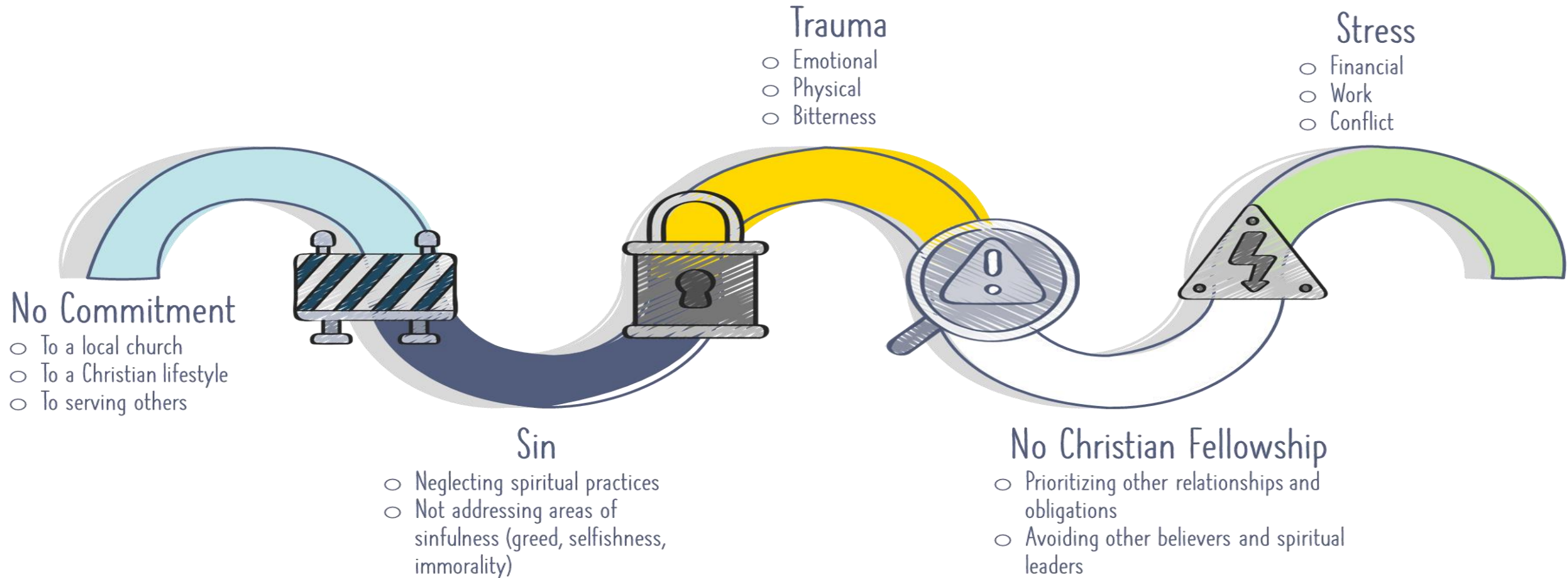


# What changes could your church implement that could minimize the impact of some of these discipleship discouragers?



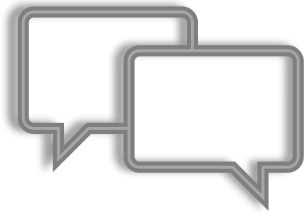


# What is a common theme you see in these discipleship discouragers?

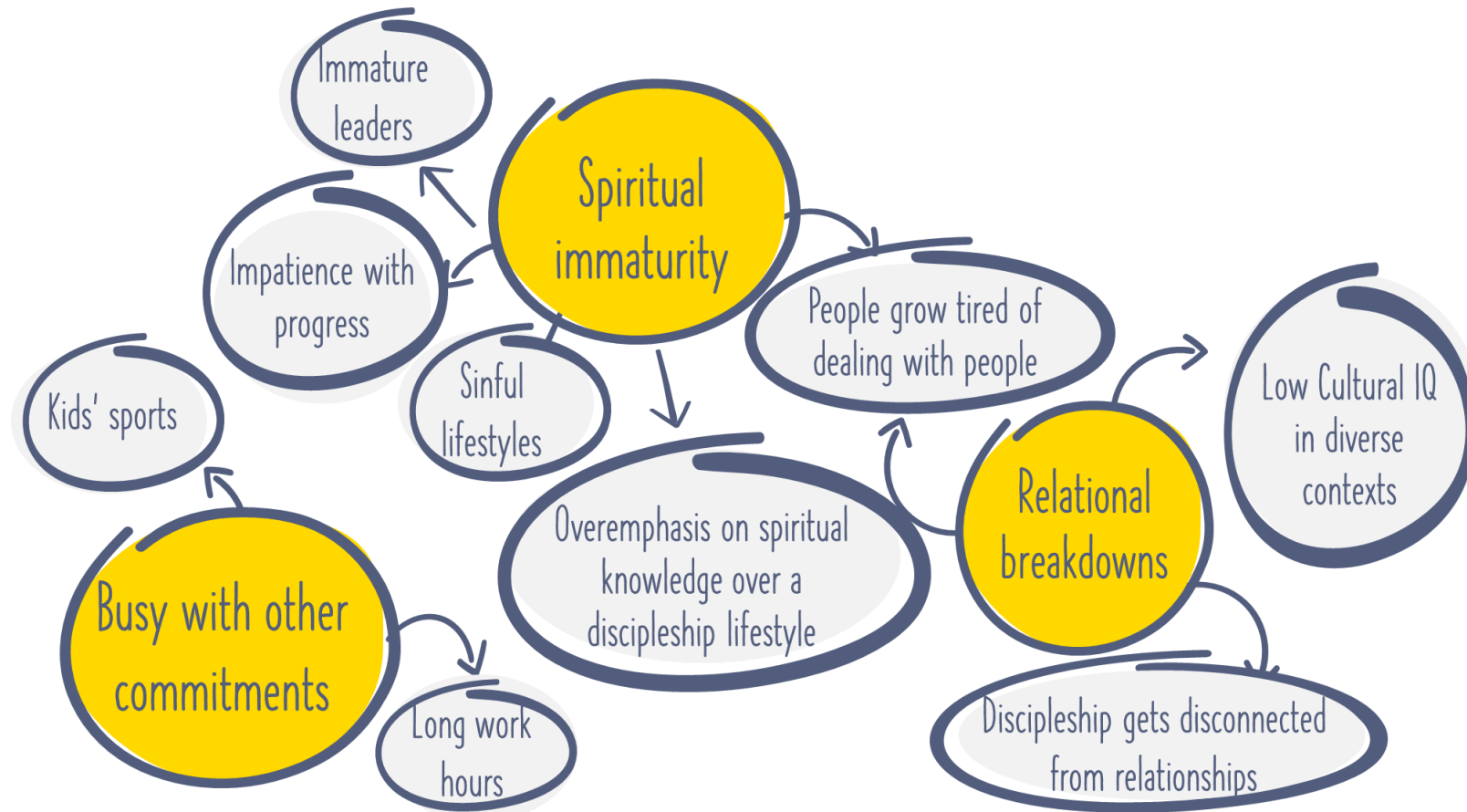


# What is Stunting Spiritual Growth





# What would you recommend to someone in your church who says they don't feel like they are growing spiritually?



# WHAT DOES NOT WORK



## Weak discipleship strategies

- Blindly copying a discipleship model from a church dissimilar to one's own
- Not taking the time to think and plan



## Low-quality systems & processes

- Oversized classes
- Irrelevant resources
- Lack of follow-through on the process
- Long and tedious programs



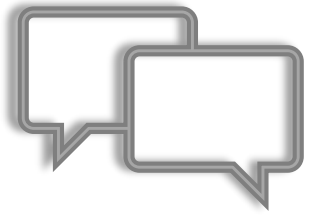
## Neglecting the individual

- Lack of follow-up
- Pushing new believers too hard, too early
- Neglecting relationships and individualized attention



## Uncommitted leadership

- Leaders living as poor examples
- Lack of discipline in prayer
- Lack of commitment to the task of discipling



In which of these four areas do you as leaders most need to improve?



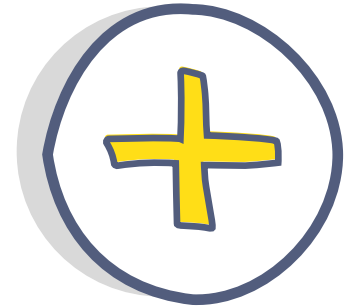
Intentional discipleship  
strategies



Quality systems & processes



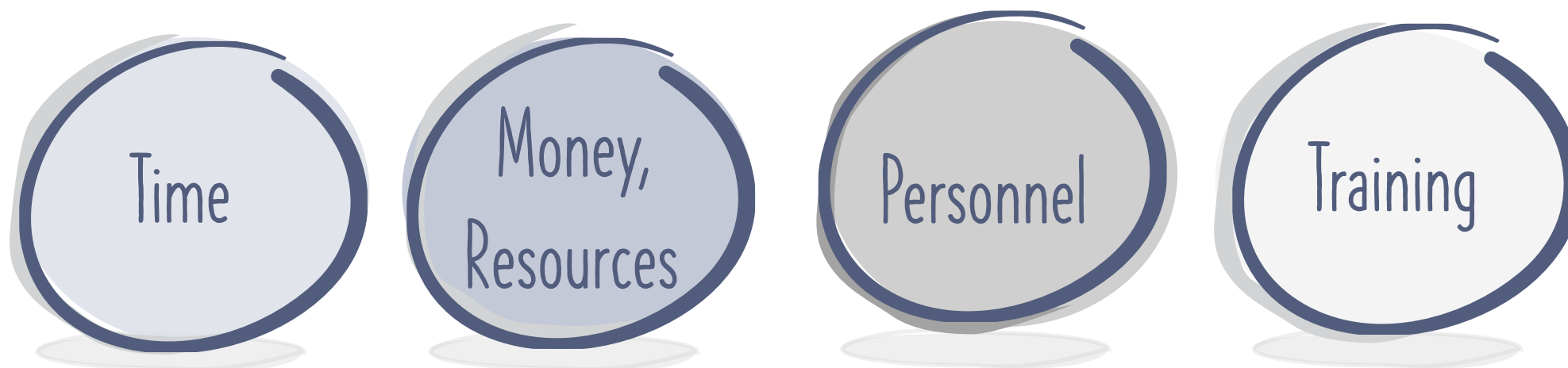
Remembering the individual



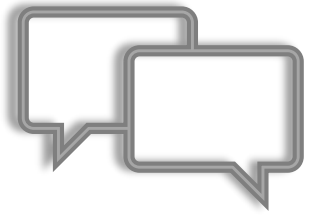
Committed leadership

## Small Church Discipleship Struggles

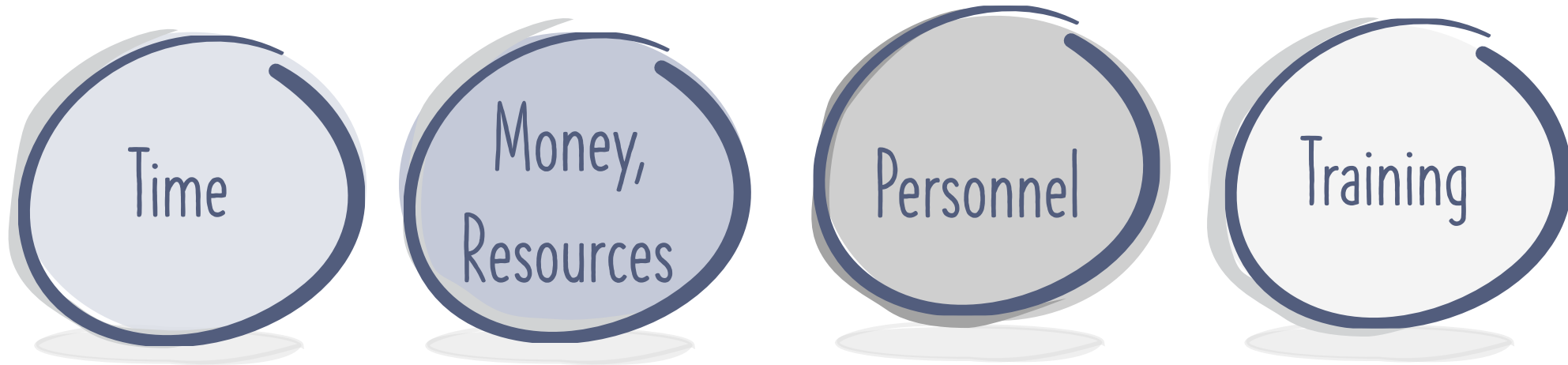
Small churches are limited in common resources needed for ongoing discipleship.



Small church pastors say these limitations often contribute to a lack of follow-through after discipleship initiatives. Even when they do provide training, the people abandon it after a short while.



How can we be good stewards of the resources we have at our church to effectively invest in ongoing discipleship?



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