

WHAT SHAPES THE CHURCH?

How Should We Define the Church?

We need to define the Church in light of:

1. Who God Is
2. What God has done
3. Who He has made the Church to Be
4. What He has saved and created her to Do.

The Church is Formed and Informed by the Gospel

The Church is God's People (who we are) **saved by God's Power** (what He has done and is doing) **for God's Purposes** (the good works he created us in Jesus Christ to do)

The Power of the Gospel (Romans 1:16-17)

The MEANS of Salvation: The *Good News* is that God, in and through the work of Jesus Christ and the power of His Spirit, accepts us, empowers us and is changing us.

PAST: We have been saved from the penalty of sin (Eph. 2:8)

PRESENT: Are being saved from the power of sin (1 Cor. 15:2; Phil. 2:12-13)

FUTURE: Will be saved from the presence of sin (Acts 15:11; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

The People of the Gospel (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:9-10)

The PEOPLE of Salvation: The *Good News* is that God is saving a people, making them into a new creation and sending them out for His Mission so that Christ will be glorified in all things. In Christ and because of Christ we have a new identity. We don't DO to BECOME something. We DO because we already ARE God's People.

We Are:

Disciples (Learners) who Make Disciples (Matt. 28:19)

Family with God as Father (Jn. 1:12-13; Rom. 12:10-16)

Servants with Jesus as Lord (Matt. 20:25-28; Jn. 13:1-17; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Pet. 2:16)

Missionaries sent by the Spirit who guides and empowers (Matt. 3:16-4:1; Jn. 20:21; Acts 1:8; Acts 13:2)

The Purpose of the Gospel

The REASON for Salvation: The *Good News* is that God sent his Son to redeem the world. Eventually the whole world will be renewed. Death, decay, injustice, and suffering will all be removed.

The Church has been saved BY God's work FOR God's work (2:10).

The Church exists to bring glory to God in all things (Eph 1)

By Making Disciples who grow up into Christ (Matt 28:19-20; Jn. 17; Eph 4:11-16)

And live all of life in light of the Gospel and Make Disciples who do the same (1 Cor. 10:31; Col 3:17)

BUILDING MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES DEFINED

A Missional Community is a gospel community (FAMILY) that lives out the mission of God together (MISSIONARIES) in a specific area and to a particular people group by demonstrating the gospel in tangible forms (SERVANTS) and declaring the gospel to others – both those who believe it and those who are being exposed to it (DISCIPLES- LEARNERS).

To Clarify... A Missional Community is NOT primarily:

- A Small Group
- A Bible Study
- A Support Group
- A Social Activist Group
- An Affinity Group
- A Weekly Meeting

FORMING A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

1. Build a foundation on the Gospel

- Gospel Power – Saved from Penalty of Sin; Being Saved from Power of Sin; and Will Be Saved from the Presence of Sin
- Gospel People – New Identity in Christ
- Gospel Purpose – Making Disciples who Make Disciples in everyday life

2. Develop a Gospel fluent culture

- Get to know the Story of God with the ability to point to Christ in every story
- Get to know each other's stories Listening with Gospel Ears
- Celebrate and Proclaim the Gospel through the Meal (Eating and Lord's Supper)
- Apply Gospel to Head, Heart and Hands in light of **The 4 Gs** (God is Great, Glorious, Good and Gracious)

3. Identify a mission together

- Ask God to clarify your mission – Who you are called to make disciples of
- Begin to pray intentionally for the mission
- Leaders clearly state the mission and call others to participate in it

4. Reorient the life of the community around the mission

- Shape the weekly schedule to flow with the cultural schedule
- Adjust the missionary strategy to the "seasons" and patterns in the culture
- Develop pathways of engagement in the gospel – Demonstrate and Declare
- Consider forming a Covenant together around the mission

5. Live life together with Gospel intentionality

- Live together on mission in such a way that it demands a Gospel Explanation
- Live in the Everyday Rhythms of life with Gospel Intentionality:
 - Story-formed
 - Listen
 - Celebrate
 - Bless
 - Eat
 - ReCreate
- Be prepared to give an answer for the way you live (1 Pet. 3:15) and share the Gospel

Everyday Gospel Rhythms

In order to lead our people to see all of life as ministry and mission we must equip them to live out the gospel in everyday activities – everyday rhythms. We have found some transferable patterns or rhythms of life that we see throughout The Story of God and in every culture in every part of the world¹. Through each of these rhythms people have the opportunity to walk by faith – *walking in line with the truth of the Gospel*² – or walk in fear or prideful rebellion to God – *walking in unbelief*.

STORY-FORMED

We understand, experience and intersect with God's Story and others'.

God has been unfolding his Story since before time began. We believe we are participants in the Story and need to understand it and see how our lives intersect with it. Therefore, we regularly reacquaint ourselves with the Story by interacting with God's Word. We look for ways and times to tell the Story often. We also take time to listen to others stories and help them find their lives within God's Story. (Gen. 1:1-2; Jn. 1:1; Ps. 1; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)

LISTEN

We set aside regular times to listen to God both "backward" and "forward."

Jesus listened to God in prayer to know his Father's will. We are also called to listen to God. We listen "*backward*" by regularly interacting with God's Word—the Story and the Son. We also believe he speaks today through his Spirit in us and through creation. We spend time actively listening "*forward*" to hear what God is saying to us today. (Mk. 1:35-37; Jn. 16:7-15; Heb. 1:1-3; Rom. 1:20)

CELEBRATE

We gather together to celebrate God's extravagant blessings.

God calls people to regularly celebrate his goodness and grace. We gather weekly in missional communities and regularly as a larger family, to share stories and celebrate all that God is doing in and amongst us. We invite everyone to these celebrations as a way of displaying God's glory. (Lev. 23; Acts 2:42-47; Heb.10:24-25)

BLESS

We intentionally bless others through words, gifts or actions.

God desires that all nations—all people—would be blessed through Jesus. And now, as his Body, we believe we live out this mission as we bless others. We intentionally seek God's direction for who he would have us tangibly bless each week. (Gen. 12:1-3; Eph. 1:22-23, 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 2:12)

EAT

We regularly eat meals with others to invite them into the community of God.

Meals are a daily reminder of our common need for God and his faithfulness to provide both physically and spiritually. Jesus called us to remember him and his sacrifice for us through a meal. When we eat together, we commune around this truth. We regularly eat meals with those not in our immediate family or circle of close friends, discipling them toward a life of dependence on God. (Lev. 23; Matt. 6:11, 26:17-30; Acts 2:46-47; Rom. 12:13)

RECREATE

We take time to rest, play, create and restore beauty in ways that reflect God to others.

After powerfully and joyfully creating the universe, God rested. We were created in his image and therefore were made to joyfully create and rest as well. We regularly take time to rest, play, create and restore beauty in ways that reflect what God is like to our community. (Gen. 1-2:3; Deut. 5:12; Mk. 2:23-28; Heb. 4)

¹ We believe we are called to equip people for Gospel Mission in such a way that it can be done in any context in the world. That is why we have not merely adopted a model of ministry but Gospel Rhythms of life that are lived out in every context in the world.

² Galatians 2:14

LEADING A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

Responsibilities

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

As a Missional Community leader it's imperative that you take your own development seriously. This likely includes:

- Working with a coach or mentor to develop a personal development plan
- Regular time in the Word of God and Prayer
- Ongoing training in Missional Community Leadership
- Working toward faithfulness to elder requirements (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9)
- Other:

LEADING OTHERS IN DISCIPLESHIP

Oversee the life and mission of the Missional Community toward making disciples who make disciples with the intent of:

- Unbelievers being converted to Jesus
- Believers growing up in the Gospel and becoming faithful on mission
- Sharing leadership with others in the group
(It's ideal if you can have a Multi-perspectival leadership or at least supplement with a coach)
 - Prophetic type – an emphasis on the unchanging truths of God's character, the gospel message and the mission of the Church
 - Priestly type – an emphasis on the care of the soul and caring for one another
 - Kingly type – an emphasis on the tangible working out of the mission through structures, strategic thinking and hands on activity
- Leaders equipped and sent out to start another MC

LEADING A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY IN THE MISSION OF MAKING DISCIPLES

As a leader of a Missional Community you need to think like a Church Planter with a Core Group

- Ask yourself, "If this group were to eventually become a core group of a new church plant, what would I do?"
- Keep in mind that you are training and preparing people for the ministry of making disciples and the leadership of new Missional Communities
- Key Elements of a Discipleship Making Context:
 - Life on Life – Accessibility and Visibility
 - Life in Community – Biblical "One Anothering"
 - Life on Mission – Hands on Ministry Training
 - Supplemental Training – Formal training worked out in ministry
- Build a multiplication mindset into everything you do