

DISCOVER CITY CHURCH VISION & VALUES

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WELCOME TO CITY CHURCH

We are glad you have chosen to learn more about City Church!

This class is the basic introduction to our church family. It is designed to clearly explain the “who” and “what” of our church.

Why is this class is important?

We live in the age of Consumerism. Most people (even those claiming to follow Jesus) treat the church like a buffet. We'll take a few items from this church and a few items from that one. All the while we are missing the primary point. We are meant to give our lives away to the body of Christ, the Church. It is unthinkable that an arm would separate and live apart from the body. It is unthinkable that a finger would find purpose disconnected from the hand. However, the unthinkable occurs often in our culture.

Many people calling themselves Christians have separated themselves from the blessings found in the body of Christ. This has largely contributed to many saying “I am not happy at this church” or “ I am not being fed!” The parts of the body find meaning as they connect to one another. The parts of the body find purpose as they work with one another. The metaphor holds true with your life (a part/a member) and the church (the body). As you give your life away in sacrificial service to the local church, purpose and meaning follow. Our call as followers of Christ is to sacrificially commit our lives to building the Kingdom of God through the local church.

We invite you into the movement!

We invite you into a radical engagement of life and mission, soul and gifts!

We invite you into the body of Christ.

We want you to know up front that City Church longs to be a movement centered on the extension of God's glory. We do not exist for the sake of entertainment, but for the sake of eternity. We are fighting not with guns, but with the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our enemy is real and his tactics are subtle. His weapons of sin and rebellion are devastating. We fight not for land, position, power or wealth; we fight for the glory of God and the joy of men and women. We will not stop until what Habakkuk said comes true when he said “*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*” (Habakkuk 2:14, ESV)

How is this satisfying? That is what we want you to discover.

Striving,

City Church

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

THE PERFECT CHURCH WOULD BE? (describe this church)



1: THE CHURCH IS **PERSONAL** TO JESUS.

Acts 9:4-5, He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" 5 "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.

2. THE CHURCH IS **SPECIAL** TO JESUS.

Acts 20:28, Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

A WORKING DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH:¹

The local church is a community of **regenerated believers** who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. In obedience to Scripture they organize under **qualified leadership**, gather regularly for **preaching and worship**, observe the **biblical sacraments** of baptism and Communion, and are **unified** by the Spirit, are **disciplined for holiness**, and scatter to fulfill the **Great Commandment** and the **Great Commission** as missionaries to the world for God's glory and their joy.

¹ Patrick, Darrin. Church Planter: The Man, the Message, the Mission (p. 183). Crossway.

8 DEFINING MARKS OF THE CHURCH:

1: Regenerate church membership (Acts 2:38-41)

2: Qualified leadership (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1:5-9)

3: Preaching and worship (2 Timothy 4:2)

4: Rightly administered sacraments (Matthew 28:19-20; I Corinthians 11)

5: Spirit unity (Theological Unity, Relational Unity, Philosophical Unity, Missional Unity)

6: Holiness (Hebrews 12:14; Matthew 18; I Corinthians 5; Proverbs 27:17)

7: The great commandment to love (Matthew 22:34-40)

8: The great commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

OUR CULTURE AND THE CHURCH

- The culture currently trends toward **consumerism** not **commitment**.
- Consumerism causes people to **date** the church, when God wants you to **marry** the church.
- Church membership calls you to **give your life away** to the local church.

REASONS FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

REASON 1: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS IMPLIED IN CHURCH GATHERINGS.

The New Testament has no category for people calling themselves Christians while connected from a local church.

REASON 2: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS IMPLIED IN CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

1 Corinthians 5:1-2, *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. 2 And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.*

1 Corinthians 5:9-13, *I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people - 10 not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler - not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? 13 God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."*

REASON 3: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS IMPLIED WITH CHURCH LEADERSHIP.

Hebrews 13:17, *Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

1 Peter 5:1-2, *So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you.*

REASON 4: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS IMPLIED IN RECORD KEEPING.

Acts 2 - numerical record. 1 Timothy 5 - a record of widows. In Acts 6, there were elections. In Hebrews 13, there's accountability. In Romans 16:1-16, there is an awareness of who the church members are.

REASON 5: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS IMPLIED BY THE BODY.

1 Corinthians 12:12-20, *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.*

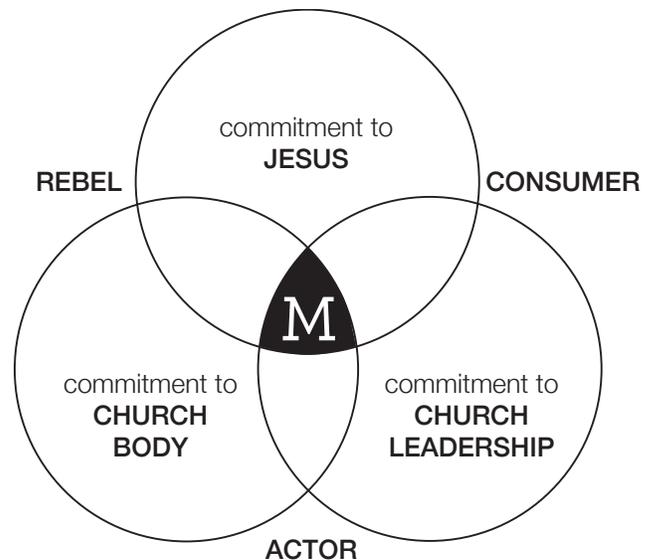
REASON 6: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS CLEARLY TAUGHT.

Hebrews 13:17, *Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

WHAT IS A CHURCH MEMBER

A CHURCH MEMBER HAS THREE COMMITMENTS:

- **TO JESUS:** (I believe) in Jesus, and pursuing Jesus, gospel-centered heart, essential beliefs, sound doctrine.
- **TO THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP:** (I support) mission, vision, values of the church.
- **TO THE CHURCH BODY:** (I belong) to HomeGroups, serving, giving to the body.



THE CONSEQUENCE OF MISSING ONE COMMITMENT:

- **REBELS** want God and the fellowship of His congregation but doesn't feel committed to the Mission, Vision, Values of the local church or have any real submission to the elders.
- **CONSUMERS** want what the church has to offer but doesn't really want the church. They are a relational one-way street. They expect the church to provide everything to them that they have personally withheld from the church.
- **ACTORS** want to check off all the organizational boxes in order to demonstrate their legalistic commitment to the church while having little to no connection with her head, Jesus Christ. This is the religious person, the elder brother, the Pharisee.

THE MISSION

EXTENDING THE GLORY OF GOD BY MAKING DISCIPLES THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

What would a church, a local body of believers, look like who would give their lives away to see the above occur? There are three driving ideas embedded into this sentence that captures our hopes and dreams as a church and as individual people.

PART 1: EXTENDING THE GLORY OF GOD

It is human nature to want to give credit where credit is due. Everyone likes being recognized. When the NFL Philadelphia Eagles won the Super Bowl in 2018, praise was given to the administration, to the coaching staff, to the key players, and it was true that all had a part in the great victory. But the Christian players and head coach all acknowledged, “Glory to God.” What they meant was that ultimately, all achievement or accomplishment that we encounter in this life, and in fact, for all eternity, is solely and absolutely because of God and Him alone.

If you survey the whole of scripture, you will find this truth emphasized over and over and over again — everything exists for the glory of God (Rom 11:36). By the word glory we mean more than just that He gets the credit, but beyond this, we are to recognize that everything is designed to extend his fame, his renown and his beauty.

On earth, we can begin with the creation itself. The creation declares the glory of God, and men can’t help but marvel at his handiwork. (Psalm 19:1, Rom 1:20) In heaven, the angels declare the glory of God in worship (Isaiah 6:3, Matt 6:10). Humankind himself was created for his glory, (Isaiah 43:7) but yet because of sin, he falls short of the glory of God. (Rom 3:23) Humanity now stands guilty of exchanging the glory of God for created things (Romans 1:21-23).

God provided a way to restore humanity to his glory by sending his Son Jesus (the only man who glorified God, see John 17:4). and his coming made it possible for God to receive glory and peace to be on earth. (Luke 2:14). By beholding/ trusting God in the face of Jesus, man is transformed from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18, 4:3-6)

This is what it is all about! God intends to fill the whole earth with the knowledge of his glory. (Hab 2:14). This mission will take many risks and many sacrifices, hence the power of Paul’s statement in Phil 1:21, “for to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Oh that God would use people like you and me for the sake of His fame in the Lycoming County area and the nations.

PART 2: BY MAKING DISCIPLES

If asked, “How do we as a church extend the glory of God?” Our answer is disciple-making. The greatest way for the world to see a stunning picture of God is for our world to see stunning pictures of the lives He has changed. This is how we make much of God. Jesus said “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*” (Matthew 28:18–19) Disciple-making comes in two parts. Part one is proclaiming the Gospel to those who don’t know Jesus and desperately need him. This is God’s means of making a disciple. Part two is proclaiming the Gospel to those God has saved. This is God’s means of maturing disciples. So we want to be a place that extends the glory of God, and we do that by making and maturing disciples.

PART 3: THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

Our hope of bringing glory to God through lives changed lies squarely in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul, in *2 Corinthians 5:17*, says, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”* The Gospel is the means to bring change to the hearts of His followers. God makes new creations by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We never move past the Gospel, just into the Gospel in deeper and more profound ways. As we behold the glory of the Lord in Christ, we are continually transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. (2 Cor 3:18,) The gospel works for change in all areas of our lives, even the hidden ones.

Paul says in *Romans 1:16*, *“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”* The Gospel is the POWER of GOD. We must preach it, live it, and love it. As we do, God gets the glory and we get the joy of changed lives!

CHURCH DISTINCTIVES

THE BIBLE IS CLEAR ON WHAT MAKES A CHURCH, BUT UNCLEAR ON HOW TO DO CHURCH.

Distinctives help answer the question, “What makes your church unique?” Churches, like people, have unique DNA. The beauty of the body of Christ is that there are many expressions of it. It is amazing to observe how little direction is given to the details of how “to do” church. God has not called every church to operate within the same structure and the same philosophy, but this is what we feel God is calling us to become.

DISTINCTIVE 1: EVERYTHING BEGINS IN THE FAMILY

THERE IS THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.

When you hear the word “church” most people think of a building, a denomination, or at least a geographically based Bible study with a biblically qualified leader. While this thought is accurate, it is also incomplete. The Bible speaks many times of “the church” in both broader and more specific terms than this definition allows. For example, in Hebrews we find the church described like an “assembly” that is in heaven!

Hebrews 12:22-23, *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.*

This passage obviously reveals that the church is much more than a building or a geographically-centered group of believers. The Bible also talks about Jesus being the “head” of the church (Eph. 1:22) or the “chief shepherd” or pastor of the church (1 Peter 5:4), so clearly there is a bigger “church” than the one we attend week in and week out. This idea of church is what is called the “universal church”, and it includes all believers who have ever lived for all time. Jesus is the pastor of this church and this is the “church” to which Jesus refers in Matthew 16:18 where he tells Peter that he will build His church and the “gates of hell” will never prevail against it. It is important for every Christian to be aware what of what God is doing world wide. While local churches fail every year, the universal church will never close its doors and never fail!

THERE IS THE LOCAL CHURCH.

Within the universal church there also exists the local church. The local church is the church you attend every week. Each local church has a pastor and a group of elders to lead them, protect them, and guide them under the guidance of the Chief Shepherd Jesus. There are numerous examples of the local church in Scripture.

- Church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1)
- Church in Galatia (Galatians 1:2)
- Church in Sardis (Revelation 3:1)
- Church in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2)
- Church in Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1:1)

The local churches in the New Testament are numerable and the role of the local church is essential within the context of the universal church. While our redemption and mission are given as a universal body our

missional context, pastoral care, and mutual accountability are given within the local church. Every believer in Christ is commanded to attend a local church!

Hebrews 10:23-25, *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

THERE IS THE FAMILIAL CHURCH. (1 Timothy 3:5)

While the necessity of the local church cannot be overemphasized, the depth of a local church body is dependent on the depth of the individual families that make up that church. The Bible is very direct in relating the local church to the familial church, even calling the local church the “household of God” (1 Timothy 3:14-15).”

YOUR CHURCH IS ONLY AS STRONG AS THE _____ THAT MAKE UP THE CHURCH?

That blank determines a great deal of your philosophy as a church. We believe the answer to that question is, FAMILIES. A church is only as strong as their individual churches, or families. Therefore, the family is very important to God and to the church. That explains why we will be very intentional about building God-pursuing, truth-seeking, family-loving men to serve their wives and children as pastors. The primary spiritual shaping force in a child’s life is the family, not the local church (consider Deuteronomy 6:4-9). The local church is AN influence in a child’s life while you are THE influence.

MOST DO LOCAL CHURCH AT THE EXPENSE OF THE UNIVERSAL & FAMILIAL CHURCH.

At City Church we believe that the critical mission of the local church is twofold: to expand and grow the universal church and to strengthen the familial churches. Our church is built around this distinctive. In many churches you would find very diverse programming with a busy weekly schedule, but we work diligently to provide simple opportunities for men, women, and children to be equipped to worship as a family. In other words, we want our church to pull families together, not push families apart. We want to call our men toward and equip them to become great pastors in their home (or familial church), who lead their families toward Jesus.

1 Timothy 3:4-5, *He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?).*

This is why we stress men studying their Bibles and praying with their wives, because the job of pastoral care and the provision of direction and wisdom should primarily happen by a loving, sacrificial husband and father. Likewise, our women are commanded in the Scriptures to live exemplary lives that produce kingdom-valued children. They are called to be good stewards of their family’s resources, talents and time.

Proverbs 31:10, *An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.*

Proverbs 31:25, *Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future.*

Proverbs 31:27, *She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.*

This description of an excellent wife in *Proverbs 31:28-31* concludes with this familial remark:

Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband also, and he praises her, saying: "Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all." Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her the product of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

The husband/father and wife/mother of a family have a divine calling and responsibility for the spiritual well being of one another and their children. We wholeheartedly believe that the strength of the local church is dependent on the strength of our familial churches. Everything begins with the family. This distinctive impacts the philosophy in every area of our church. We will always ask the question, "Does this help parents teach their families the ways of God?"

PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

1. Everything we do will build the family.
2. Men must be built to be good pastors.
3. Ministries are partners to discipleship, not our primary means to discipleship.

DISTINCTIVE 2: EVERYTHING SERVES THE MISSION

THE MISSION DEFINED: EXTENDING THE GLORY OF GOD BY MAKING DISCIPLES THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

Our mission lays a grid over our church to help us make decisions. Every decision we make must serve the mission God has given us. We want God's glory to spread, disciples to be made and matured, and the Gospel to be known, seen, and savored. Everything must serve that mission. The way that services are structured must serve the mission. The way ministries operate must serve the mission. The way we preach and teach must serve the mission. The way we run youth and children's ministry must serve the mission. The way we do home groups must serve the mission. Everything is about the mission.

OUR GOAL IS TO HAVE A SIMPLE AND CLEAR DISCIPLE MAKING STRATEGY.

In every area of our church, we want our disciple making strategy to be easily understood, hard to get lost in, and reflective of the hard work that is included in life change. In a word, we strive for "simplicity." We want to avoid clutter, confusion, and complexity.

"Many of our churches have become cluttered. So cluttered that people have a difficult time encountering the simple and powerful message of Christ. So cluttered that many people are busy doing church instead of being the church." - Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger in "Simple Church"

As a church, we have made a concerted effort to keep things simple. Here's why.

FIRST, A SIMPLE DISCIPLE MAKING STRATEGY PROMOTES SPIRITUAL MATURITY.

Without constant care a church can find themselves doing many good things while missing the main thing, namely disciple making. We want to keep the main thing, the main thing. We want to invest our time, energy or resources into a few things that produce the best fruit (or spiritual maturity) within our church family. We want to be sure that everything we do fits into a clear disciple making strategy. In summary, we want to be simple in our disciple making strategy to be most effective in making disciples.

SECOND, A SIMPLE DISCIPLE MAKING STRATEGY PROMOTES FAMILIES.

We want to be a church that pulls families together. However, the more complex and cluttered with events our church becomes, the more likely we are to push families apart. Every event, program, or ministry requires volunteers; and volunteer time comes at the expense of family time and time to engage a lost world. In light of that, we are very cautious to add anything to the calendar that does not fit into a simple disciple making strategy. In summary, we want to be simple in our disciple-making strategy to serve our families.

THIRD, A SIMPLE DISCIPLE MAKING STRATEGY PROMOTES GOSPEL EXPANSION.

A cluttered calendar with multiple events per week is one enemy of missional living. Every night you spend at a church event is a night you will not spend in your neighborhood and among your neighbors. The more we keep you at church events the more we prohibit our church family from befriending people who desperately need the Gospel. In summary, we want to be simple in our disciple-making strategy so we can free you to engage others during the week. There is no greater joy for our church than to hear and see our members serving and engaging their neighbors.

LASTLY, SIMPLE DOES NOT EQUAL EASY.

It is important to clarify that a simple disciple making strategy does not mean disciple making is easy work. Instead, a simple disciple making strategy gives clarity and direction to the goal of our work. As an example, there is nothing easier to understand than handing someone a shovel and telling them to dig a ditch from point A to point B. The directions are simple. The goal of the work is clear. However, ditch digging (along with disciple-making) is very demanding and difficult work.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS:

1. We will always be about making and maturing disciples.
2. We will work hard to keep every area of ministry centered on a simple disciple making strategy.
3. We will not do many things (events/programs/ministries) that other churches will do.

DISTINCTIVE 3: EVERYTHING ENDS IN MULTIPLICATION

MULTIPLICATION IS IMPLIED IN THE GREAT COMMISSION.

Matthew 28:19-20, Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

Multiplication is at the heart of disciple making. As Jesus was ascending, He gave the above command. The disciples did not have to ask what He meant by making disciples. Jesus spent three years sharing his life and ministry with his disciples, and they clearly understood that they were to reproduce what he had done with them.

MULTIPLICATION ON A PERSONAL LEVEL.

Making disciples is all about multiplication. Paul alludes to this in Philippians.

Philippians 4:8-9, *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me— practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

In verse 8, Paul points to Godly characteristics as worthy of our following; listing them as true, honorable, just pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise. But in verse 9, Paul points to characteristics in his life that should be replicated among the Christians at Philippi. He tells them to replicate or “practice” what they saw him doing. Christians replicate their lives by obeying the Great Commission. When a follower of Jesus begins to pray for a person that doesn’t know Jesus, invites them into their life, talks about Jesus with them, watches God save them, and then walks with that person as they mature and grow in Christ, they have just multiplied themselves in the Kingdom of God. We pray that everyone in our church family would prioritize multiplying themselves.

MULTIPLICATION ON A CORPORATE LEVEL.

Just as the Great Commission leads individuals to multiply their lives, it also leads churches to multiply themselves, or plant other churches.

We are a church planting church.

We help church plants on many levels through financial assistance, coaching, training, and supporting. It is our prayer that in the future we have Residency Program provides future church planters with hands-on experience as they serve City Church in various ministry roles. We intend to equip them with the skills needed to plant a church, educate them on potentially devastating mistakes, provides startup funds, and potentially provide personnel as our City Church family prays about relocating with a prospective Church Planting Resident.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS:

1. We will sacrificially give to church plants.
2. We will staff ministry positions with potential church planters.

DISTINCTIVE 4: REDEMPTION LEADS TO RACIAL RECONCILIATION

Paul speaks with unbelievable clarity when he calls the Gospel the “unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8). The implications of the Gospel spill out into every crack and crevice of the world (and our lives). One beautiful reality of the Gospel is that **it redefines our family**. In fact, according to Jesus every Christian has two families, a family by birth and a family by re-birth or God’s rescue (Mark 3:31-35). While we want to put great emphasis on parents pastoring their family by birth, we also want to hold up the importance of our family by re-birth, or our church family. The Bible’s teaching on our family by re-birth is breath-taking. According to the Scriptures, our family by rebirth (or by God’s rescue) is more real and more lasting than our family by birth. In other words, it’s our family by re-birth (not necessarily by birth) that we’ll spend all eternity with. But what’s even more shocking is the multi-colored diversity of our family by re-birth. Consider **Revelation 5:9-10**,

“And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

This passage shows God's intent to rescue people from every ethnicity. Heaven will be wonderfully diverse, full of people from every color, language, and culture. As your pastors, we want to do everything we can to prepare you, the people of City Church, to enjoy this future reality. Secondly, **this passage reveals what it cost God to accomplish his intent, namely, the blood of his Son** (v.9). God doesn't just tolerate other races and ethnicities. Rather, God celebrates, embraces, and loves all ethnicities to the point that He'd slay his own Son to redeem them. To say that another way, embracing men and women from every race and ethnicity is so important to God that He'd planned and purposed the death of his Son to accomplish it. That leaves us with a really important question.

If racial reconciliation is that important to God, shouldn't it be important to us?

We believe so. However, the sad reality is that the church is as racial divided today as it has ever been. The sad words of Martin Luther King Jr, spoken over fifty years ago, still ring true today, *"We must face the sad fact that at the eleven o'clock hour on Sunday morning when we stand to sing, we stand in the most segregated hour in America...and the most segregated school is Sunday school."*

Diversity in churches is often measured by the 80/20 rule. A diverse church is a church that has no more than 80% of a single ethnicity. Using that measure, only 2.5% of all the Jesus loving churches in America would be considered ethnically diverse. We believe that really does sadden the heart of God and masks the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to unite people of all cultures (Ephesians 2). In light of that, **we want to be very clear of our intention to pursue racial diversity.** We want to be a church family that does more than tolerate other cultures, we want to actually embrace and celebrate other cultures. We have a deep desire to reflect the heart of God in this way.

An objection that we get in Williamsport is that we are not that diverse, but yet our city grows in diversity more and more each year. **As we welcome nations every year during the Little League World Series, we also want to welcome those who move into our city and show them, Christ.**

On a personal level, we are not saying that everyone in our church needs to make racial reconciliation the number one emphasis of your life. We hope some will be called toward that. But it will not be all. But **we are asking you to make it an emphasis of your life.** Our goal is for more than a diverse worship gathering. **Our goal is for our church family to have diverse dinner tables.**

In a racially charged world, there are few pictures of the Gospel more powerful than a diverse church. And as hard as that sounds, it is possible (see Ephesians 2). Let these words of John Piper encourage you,

"The bloodline of Jesus Christ is deeper than the bloodlines of race. The death and resurrection of the Son of God for sinners is the only sufficient power to bring the bloodlines of race into the single bloodline of the cross."

The cross of Christ is the great leveler. The cross shows us that before God culture and color gain nothing. Rather, Jesus, and Him alone, gains us everything. Racial reconciliation is rooted in and empowered by the Gospel. We were the outsider and the other that God sent his Son to redeem, and that heart for the outsider and the other now beats in us, the people of City Church.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS:

1. Let's pray for it.
2. We'll pursue it corporately through staffing and style.
3. Let's pursue it personally by prioritizing it, being especially welcoming in our gatherings, and by being ready to learn.

CORE VALUES

THE **MISSION** ANSWERS THE QUESTION: What are we about?

THE **VISION** ANSWERS THE QUESTION: What are we doing right now to accomplish the mission?

THE **DISTINCTIVES** ANSWER THE QUESTION: What makes us unique?

THE **CORE VALUES** ANSWER THE QUESTION: What do we want people to become?

The challenge of core values is not in agreement, but in personal application.



CITY CHURCH'S CORE VALUES

1 Peter 2:9-10, *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

COMPONENT 1: GOSPEL

The Gospel is the good news that Jesus took on human flesh and lived a perfect life, was slaughtered in our place and for our sin, and was buried in a tomb for three days. Moreover, on that third day Jesus rose from the dead defeating Satan, sin, and death. It's the announcement that Jesus has fought our battle, secured our victory, and ensured our freedom. Due to the work of Jesus on our behalf, God really does look at us as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and as a people for his own possession. This good news is both foundational and motivational.

COMPONENT 2: COMMUNITY

Adoption is one great Gospel promise. Due to the work of Jesus for us, God promises to be a great Father to us. The benefits of adoption are vast and various. Not only do we get a new and perfect Father (God), we get a new family called the church. That's why in 1 Peter 2 we are called a "chosen race" and not a chosen person, "a royal priesthood" and not a royal priest, "a holy nation" and not a holy person, and "a

people” not a person “for God’s own possession”. This means that through the Gospel, God has actually given us a new family (called the church) to live our lives with.

COMPONENT 3: MISSION

God is a missionary God. God the Father sent his son, Jesus Christ, on a mission of reconciliation (Ephesians 1:10). Jesus came to earth in human form to live among a people. He worked, ate, and interacted among those people, showing them what God is like (Colossians 1:15). After living a perfect life in place of our imperfect life, Jesus died an undeserving death in place of our deserved death, so that all people, places, and things could be restored to a right relationship with God. This is the missionary God of the Bible. In the same way, we are God’s missionary people, commissioned by God to make disciples (Matthew 28:16- 20), be agents of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18), and to be people who proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). In Jesus God not only gives us a family to live with, but a mission to live for.

CORE VALUES & A SIMPLE DISCIPLE MAKING STRATEGY

We believe all three components are critical and necessary to make disciples. If you take any one of these components out, there is a barrier to effective disciple-making. The Gospel is foundational. It gives us a new identity to live from and a new motive to live with. Mission is exposing. It shows us where we do and do not believe the Gospel. Community is reminding. Community helps us see unbelief and sin and to remember Jesus.

CORE VALUE 1: GOSPEL



ROMANS 3:21-26, *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it - 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

The Gospel is the just and gracious God of the universe looked upon hopelessly sinful people and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over sin in the resurrection so that all who have faith in Him will be reconciled to God forever.²

PART 1: THE JUST AND GRACIOUS GOD OF THE UNIVERSE

- The Gospel starts with God (Romans 1:20-21, 2:1-11, 3:24).

PART 2: LOOKED UPON HOPELESSLY SINFUL PEOPLE

- We have rebelled against God (Genesis 3).
- We are separated from God (Romans 3:23).
- We are dead without God (Ephesians 2:10).

PART 3: AND SENT HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST, GOD IN THE FLESH, TO BEAR HIS WRATH AGAINST SIN ON THE CROSS AND TO SHOW HIS POWER OVER SIN IN THE RESURRECTION

- Jesus' life displayed the righteousness of God (Hebrews 9).
- Jesus' death satisfied the wrath of God. (Romans 3:25).
- Jesus' resurrection demonstrated the power of God (I Corinthians 15).

PART4: THAT ALL WHO HAVE FAITH IN HIM WILL BE RECONCILED TO GOD FOREVER

- God is the giver of the Gospel (Romans 3:24).
- God is the gift of the Gospel (2 Corinthians 5:18).
- The Glory of God is the goal of the Gospel (Romans 3:24-26).

WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US?

- **LOST:** those living in rebellion against God.
- **RELIGIOUSLY LOST:** those unknowingly living outside of the grace of God.
- **REDEEMED:** those living in the grace of God.

² The section on the gospel is taken from David Platt and his sermon on "The Gospel: What We Need."

Matthew 7:13-23, Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy (1)that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. 15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. 21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE GOSPEL-CENTERED?

There are two ways to see the Gospel - a narrow and a broad way. The narrow way, which many are familiar with, sees the Gospel as saving us from the penalty of sin. This is a great Gospel reality. The Gospel is the good news that Jesus paid the penalty for our sin (Romans 3:23-24). Moreover, this is how the Gospel is normally talked about by churches and by Christians. The broad perspective does not say less, but more. The Gospel not only saves us from the penalty of our sin, but also from the present power of sin in our lives. To put it another way, the narrow perspective sees the Gospel as only for non-Christians, while the broad way sees that the Gospel for both Christians and non-Christians. The Gospel is God's means through which a Christian's life is renewed and sin is overcome. The Gospel is renewing and relevant to every area of a Christian's life. By God's grace, we are learning as a family to allow who Jesus is and what He has accomplished on our behalf to saturate everything about us.

Listen to **Joe Thorn** describe what it means to be Gospel-centered....

"To be gospel-centered means that that the gospel – and Jesus himself – is our greatest hope and boast, our deepest longing and joy, and our most passionate song and message. It means that the gospel is what defines us as Christians, unites us as brothers and sisters, changes us as sinner/saints and sends us as God's people on mission. When we are gospel-centered the gospel is exalted above every other good thing in our lives and triumphs over every bad thing set against it."

To be Gospel-Centered means that you're progressively seeing that everything starts with the Gospel and is sustained by the Gospel. It's through the Gospel that God saves us and sanctifies us. It's seeing the Gospel as both foundational and motivational. This is why Tim Keller says,

"The gospel is not just the A-B-C of Christianity, it's the A-Z. The gospel is not just the minimum required doctrine necessary to enter the kingdom, but the way we make all progress in the Kingdom...It is the solution to each problem, the key to each closed door, the power through every barrier."

PERSONAL APPLICATION QUESTIONS FOR GOSPEL-CENTRALITY.

1. What is the Gospel? How is the Gospel currently changing you?
2. How is the Gospel good news when your marriage is struggling, in the battle against lust, when you feel condemned in sin, when you lose your job, when you're betrayed, etc.
3. Are you growing in your awareness of how the perfect life, death, and resurrection of Jesus apply to your everyday life and struggles?

BAPTISM AT CITY CHURCH

Water baptism is only intended for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become His disciple. Therefore, in obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the church, oneself and the world, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is an expression of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It signifies that one's former way of life has been put to death and vividly depicts a person's release from the mastery of sin.

1. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

We believe baptism is an ordinance commanded by God to be observed. Baptism is a symbol of two things: Christ's death, burial and resurrection, and our death to sin and new life in Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:3b-4a, *Christ died for our sins...He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day...*

Romans 6:4, *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

Baptism is a **symbol** of salvation; not a **means** of salvation.

2. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

We practice what has been historically called "believers' baptism." We feel this term brings clarity to any confusion on our beliefs and practice of baptism. What do we mean by "believers' baptism"?

Acts 2:41, *So then, those who had received His word were baptized ...*

Acts 8:12-13, *But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women alike.*

Acts 10:46-48, *For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.*

In these verses we see that baptism follows saving faith, it does not create it or add to it. Acts 10:46-48 highlights a significant point. The Holy Spirit was given to the Gentile believers before baptism, not after. Therefore, faith is the only requirement for salvation, and even faith is given by God, so that our works (baptism) could not save us and so no one can boast.

3. CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM AS SYMBOLS.

Colossians 2:11-12a, *And in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith...*

In the Old Testament, God's covenant people were the Israelites. The sign of God's covenant for the Israelites was circumcision. Being circumcised did not make you an heir of the covenant, it was merely a sign that you were already an heir. In Colossians, the Apostle Paul compares baptism to circumcision in the way that circumcision was a sign for the old covenant, so baptism is a sign of the new covenant.

4. SHOULD WE BAPTIZE INFANTS?

We do not practice infant baptism. Why then do some Christian churches baptize infants and why do we not? Those who baptize infants believe that the continuity between circumcision and baptism reveals the way we ought to practice baptism in the church. If all the physical sons of Abraham were circumcised as a sign of belonging to the offspring of Abraham and therefore heirs of the covenant, then we should practice the same with our children by baptizing them as infants as a sign of the new covenant. However, we believe this continuity between circumcision and baptism does not interpret our practice of baptism. Although baptism and circumcision have continuity, there is a discontinuity between the two because of the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant and the Israelites and the Church.

“But who are these spiritual sons of Abraham who constitute the people of God in our age? Galatians 3:7 says, know then that it is those of faith who are sons of Abraham. The new thing since Jesus has come, is that the covenant people of God are no longer a political, ethnic nation, but a body of believers.”

John Piper, *Brothers We Are Not Professionals*.

The difference between circumcision and baptism as symbols is the difference between the covenants they signify. The Old Covenant was based on physical birth. However, the New Covenant is based on spiritual birth. Therefore, we conclude that from all New Testament passages, baptism is a sign of faith in Jesus and it happens as an outward sign of that faith. This means until someone is of the age to make a profession of that faith in Christ they should not be baptized.

5. HOW DO WE BAPTIZE?

We baptize believers in Jesus Christ by immersion.

Matthew 3:16, And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water ...

Acts 8:38,...and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.

Here's how Wayne Grudem says it in his Systematic Theology, *“The word “baptize” means to immerse in water. “The Greek word “baptizo” means to plunge or dip, immerse something in water. The practice of baptism in the New Testament was carried out in one way: The person being baptized was immersed or put completely under water and then brought back up again. Baptism by immersion is therefore the mode of baptism or the way in which baptism was carried out in the New Testament.”*

COMMUNION AT CITY CHURCH

Matthew 26:26-29, *“Take, eat; this is My body.” And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it with you in My Father’s kingdom.*

1. WHAT IS COMMUNION?

The ordinance of communion was established by Christ when He ate the Passover meal with His disciples in the upper room on the night that He was betrayed. Like baptism, communion is an ordinance that is also symbolic. Communion is symbolic of the breaking of Christ's body (bread) and the shedding of His

blood (wine). We as a church (universal) do not only take communion because of the example of the last meal of Christ and His disciples but also because of the example of the early church which was established by the Apostles, who also observed this act.

2. HOW IS COMMUNION A SYMBOL, AND WHAT DOES IT SYMBOLIZE?

Communion is symbolic in two ways:

A. “Remembrance” is a significant word in verses 24 and 25 that helps us better understand communion as a symbol. If you remember something, you are calling to mind a past action. When we take communion we are calling to mind two greater truths. **First**, we are remembering the suffering and death of Christ on our behalf for our sins and that God’s wrath was appeased. This means Christ’s act of redemption is complete and acceptable to God. Therefore, justification, propitiation, adoption, sanctification and glorification are all offered to those who believe. **Secondly**, when we take communion we are remembering God’s present work in us because of the New Covenant (see Jeremiah 31:33-34). The New Covenant differs from the old in its form. The Old Covenant was external and the New Covenant is internal. The Old Covenant was about ethnicity. The law was written on stone. God’s presence dwelt among the people of God and the people of God needed someone to speak for them and speak to them from God. The New Covenant is internal. It is not about ethnicity but about faith. The law is now written on our hearts, God’s presence now dwells in us, God now speaks directly to us and we can speak directly to Him. So when we are called to “remember,” it isn’t just imagining what it was like for Christ to die; there is substance to the body and blood. That is what we must “remember” when we take communion. We remember the past work of Christ done for us, the present work of God being done in us, and anticipate His second coming.

B. Proclamation is the second way in which communion is a symbol. Look at verse 26: *“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.”* So communion is more than remembering, it is also proclaiming. There are three things we proclaim with communion. First, we proclaim His death. When we take of the bread and cup we proclaim the crucified Christ as Savior. Second, when we take communion we proclaim his resurrection. This is not implicit but implied in verse 26, *“... the Lord’s death until He comes.”* If Christ died and is returning again then He must not be dead, but alive. Communion proclaims the risen Lord. Lastly, communion proclaims His second coming “until He returns.” Every time we take of the bread and cup we proclaim of the returning King.

3. WHAT DOES COMMUNION DO?

We believe that taking the elements of communion bring about no special grace and the elements do not become the literal body and blood of Jesus when taken. Notice we said that communion does not bring about any “special grace.” Communion is one of two ordinances; therefore, we should keep it in high regard because God does. However, we do not want to be confused with the idea that communion has some special persevering grace that is given with the taking. Praise, evangelism, prayer, accountability, the preaching of the word, etc., all release grace. Communion may release grace into our lives as do all things God has given us and called us to. The only significance of the elements is what they represent. When Christ said, “this is my body” and “this is my blood” did he mean this is my literal body?

4. WHO SHOULD TAKE COMMUNION?

We believe a person must be a Christian in right standing with God to participate in communion with us.

1 Corinthians 11:28-29, *Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

To “examine yourself” is another way of saying that a Christian has asked the Holy Spirit to make them aware of any known sin, they have confessed those before God, and they are resolved to make a break from those things. Moreover, we practice open communion. Anyone who is a believer in Jesus Christ can participate in communion at City Church.

5. WHEN AND HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE OBSERVE COMMUNION?

We typically take communion the last Sunday of each month toward the end of the service.

TEACHING AT CITY CHURCH

We have a two handed approach to teaching theology.

- **HAND ONE:** CLOSED (the non-negotiable truths that cannot be compromised)
- **HAND TWO:** OPEN (negotiable truths that have no consequence on eternity and little on earth)

In one hand we hold some things in a tight fist in order to protect their purity, and in the other we hold some things in an open palm to signify freedom and harmony. Liberal theology is all open-handed, compromising any doctrine for the sake of unity. Fundamentalist theology is all close-handed, compromising unity for the sake of unessential doctrines. We labor to grow in the whole counsel of the Bible and we will fight vigorously for essential doctrines and agreeably disagree on non-essential doctrines. As we discuss theology, we will deal primarily with the closed hand (essential) doctrines. However, if you have questions about open hand issues, feel free to stay afterwards and talk.

Our philosophy in teaching theology is also three-fold and will always influence our structure and style.

1. CLARITY.

Clarity is rightly defining, explaining, and presenting Biblical truth in a way people can understand. We are committed to clarity in our teaching. When clarity exits, confusion enters. First, there will be manipulation of truths to fit our point of view or to discredit another view point. Second, there will be great difficulty in applying the truth of Scripture to life. We believe the best way to fight for clarity is to preach through books of the Bible.

2. INTEGRITY.

Integrity is a vital part of teaching the Bible. We commit to model integrity in two ways during our teaching: First, we will keep Scripture central. Second, we will not dismiss a view by misrepresenting its argument.

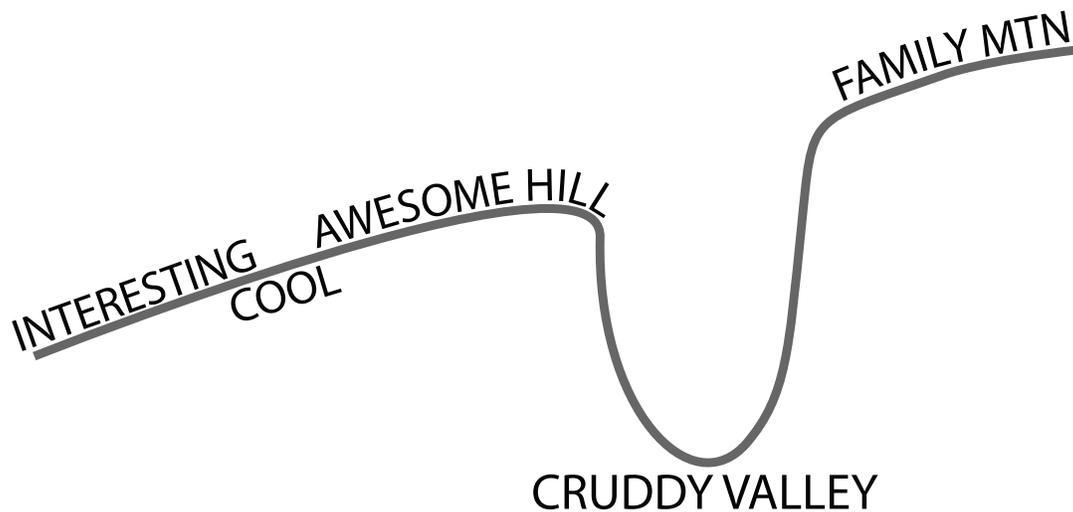
3. HUMILITY.

Most importantly, we pray that God would grace us with great humility as we teach the Bible. Paul exhorts us to speak the truth in love. When humility is absent, two things happen: First, our disagreements will dishonor God. Second, our disagreements will cause divisions among us. Neither result honors God or benefits the church.

CORE VALUE 2: COMMUNITY



We are a family. The Gospel is a deep and wide reservoir of riches (Ephesians 3:8). Community, or the creation of a new family, is one prime part of these riches. When God saves you, the good news is that He becomes your perfect Father. He adopts you and makes you His own. He pledges and promises that He will work for your eternal good every minute of every day for the rest of time. But God doesn't just become a good Father, he also gives us a new family, called the church. As you read about the church in the New Testament, various metaphors are used to describe the church (body, temple, bride). But the dominant metaphor for the church is family or the household of God. In light of God making us his sons and daughters and placing us within his family, we want to grow practically into what God has made us positionally.



THE JOURNEY: The line represents the journey of any church becoming practically (a family) what God has made the positionally (a family). Family mountain is when there is no pretense or pretending, people are 100% known (strengths and weaknesses). But that journey takes these very predictable turns.

INTERESTING: This is the starting point. It's when you look across a room and see a person that's interesting enough to take a step toward getting to know.

COOL: This is step two. As you take the few first steps toward them, the intrigue builds. When their name comes up in your mind it's associated with really good thoughts (they are wise, insightful, nice, etc). And this leads to...

AWESOME HILL: Awesome hill is when we've actually taken several steps toward them, them toward us, and a friendship is starting to form. We like them, they like us. But here's the problem with awesome hill, our friendship is still very superficial. We just know the parts of them that they've allowed us to know. We've seen their best characteristics, but we've been hidden from their worst. For the journey toward family mountain to continue, the next breath-taking turn has to occur.

CRUDDY VALLEY: Cruddy Valley is the moment in a friendship where we see that this person is not just a nice, wise, insightful, fun, person. They are also a self-centered, self-exalting, self-seeking jerk! At this moment we've fallen into cruddy valley. Now think about the person sitting at the front of the path looking down the road ahead. It would seem that family mountain is just one small step from awesome hill. From the front of the path, it's impossible to see the cliff and the fall into cruddy valley. But consider this point, falling into cruddy valley is absolutely necessary to get to family mountain.

FAMILY MOUNTAIN: It's only after falling into cruddy valley (where the worst of people is seen) that the climb up to family mountain can begin.

THE DISCONNECT IN CHURCHES: There is a reason most churches do not have rich community. Almost every relationship in the church is on awesome hill rather than family mountain. The disconnect happens when people fall off the cliff and land in cruddy valley. At that point, most people disengage with the person who pulled them over the cliff. Rather than walking with them through cruddy valley and starting the climb up family mountain, they short-circuit the process as they find another person who's interesting to start the journey over with.

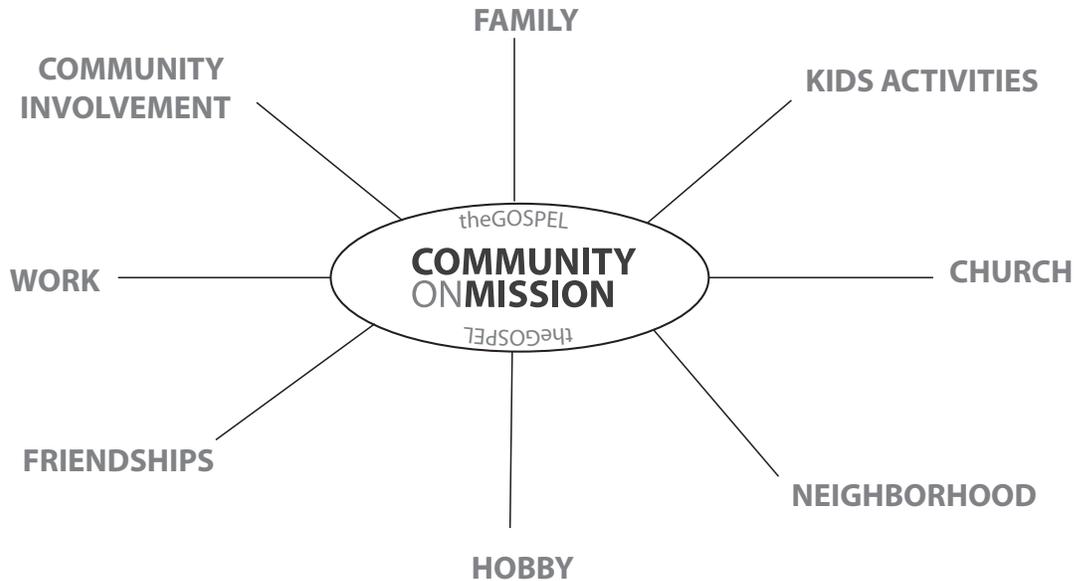
PERSONAL APPLICATION QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY

On a personal level, this core value means that you are living in community. To say that another way, you are to live like the church really is family. Here are some questions to help gauge your progress toward community.

1. Is your community involved in your big decisions?
2. Do people speak the truth in love to you?
3. Do you have unplanned interaction with your church family?
4. Are you 100% known?
5. Are you in a Home Group at City Church?

HOME GROUPS AT CITY CHURCH

A GOSPEL LENS FOR LIFE:



HOME GROUPS DEFINED:

A home group is a gospel community (family) that lives out the mission of God together in a specific area and to a particular people group by displaying the gospel in tangible forms and declaring the gospel to others (missionaries).

HOME GROUP IS NOT PRIMARILY:

- :A Small Group.
- :A Bible Study.
- :A Support Group.
- :A Social Activist Group.
- :A Weekly Meeting.

HOME GROUPS & GOSPEL, COMMUNITY, AND MISSION

COMPONENT 1: GOSPEL

The Gospel is the foundation of our Home Groups. God uses the Gospel to create a community of believers living on his mission. To state that another way, the Gospel gives us a new identity (community) and a new purpose (making disciples who make disciples). 1 Peter 2:9, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into marvelous light.” We have a deep desire for our church family to learn how the Gospel applies to their everyday life, how to apply the Gospel to one another’s life, and how

to equip others to apply the Gospel to each other's life. We believe this is best accomplished in the context of a Home Group.

COMPONENT 2: MISSION

It is no accident where God has placed you. The place you work, the place you live, and the places you spend your time, are exactly where God wants to send you as a missionary. We want to be asking questions in group like, "How can we be faithful and fruitful missionaries where God has placed us?" By being on mission to a specific people we hope to display the Gospel by helping those who are broken-physically, emotionally, spiritually. We also hope and pray for opportunities to declare the truth of the Gospel. In this way, we get to be faithful to serve people and we get to watch a faithful God save people.

COMPONENT 3: COMMUNITY

George Gallup Jr. concluded from his studies and polls that Americans are among the loneliest people in the world. That statement is eye-opening when considering the ease of transportation, the availability of "connecting" technology, and the massive amount of people on the planet. Gallup also offered the following insight into isolation:

"We are physically detached from each other. We change places of residence frequently. One survey revealed that seven in ten do not know their neighbors. As many as one-third of Americans admit to frequent periods of loneliness..."

We believe the church is God's primary means of addressing relational needs. Community is one of the most precious gifts God offers men and women through the local church. As family we see it as our obligation to personally care for the needs of one another - both physically and spiritually. We disciple, nurture and hold each other accountable to living in line with the gospel. Community is the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ being shared in open and authentic relationships. Community is the context God uses to change us and to grow us. One of our consistent prayers for the people of City is authentic Biblical community, and Home Groups provide the atmosphere for that biblical community to grow.

Home Groups at City Church are the central way that we seek to provide the atmosphere for this sort of community to emerge. It is our primary equipping and disciple-making pathway. Moreover, they are central to the life of our church. This means that Home Groups are a normal expectation of all those who are a part of the City Church family. To forsake Home Groups would be to forsake one of God's most important means of grace in your life...community.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer warns both those who can not be alone and those who love to be alone saying "**Let him who cannot be alone beware of community.** He will only do harm to himself and to the community. Alone you stood before God when he called you; alone you had to answer that call; alone you had to struggle and pray; and alone you will die and give an account to God. You cannot escape from yourself; for God has singled you out. If you refuse to be alone you are rejecting Christ's call to you, and you can have no part in the community of those who are called. 'The challenge of death comes to us all, and no one can die for another. Everyone must fight his own battle with death by himself, alone. . . . I will not be with you then, nor you with me' (Luther). **But the reverse is also true: Let him who is not in community beware of being alone.** Into the community you were called, the call was not meant for you alone; in the community of the called you bear your cross, you struggle, you pray. You are not alone, even in death, and on the Last Day you will be only one member of the great congregation of Jesus Christ. If you scorn the fellowship of the brethren, you reject the call of Jesus Christ, and thus your solitude can only be hurtful to you. 'If I die, then I am not alone in death; if I suffer they [the fellowship] suffer with me' (Luther). We recognize, then, that only as we are within the fellowship can we be alone, and only he that is alone can live in the fellowship. Only in the fellowship do we learn to be rightly alone and only in

aloneness do we learn to live rightly in the fellowship. It is not as though the one preceded the other; both begin at the same time, namely, with the call of Jesus Christ.³

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. HOW DO GOSPEL, COMMUNITY, AND MISSION WORK TOGETHER IN A HOME GROUP?

It's important to see how these three things fit together. The Gospel forms a people (community) and fuels them for the mission of God (missionaries).

2: WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK WHEN LOOKING FOR A HOME GROUP?

a: Where do I live and where do groups meet?

Geography is the primary way to determine what Home Group to attend. This means that we would love for you to join a group that is close to you. We have found that if Home Groups are separated by long distances they become weekly meetings rather than families on mission together.
b: What is their context of mission?

Image 1: Life.

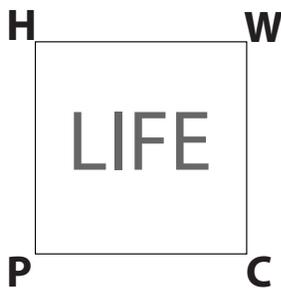


Image 2: A life out of community

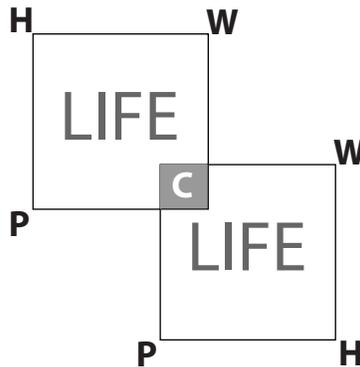
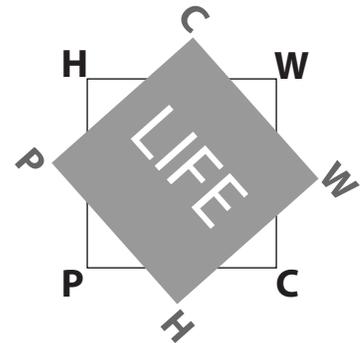


Image 3: A life in community



b: What night of the week works best for me?

A weekly meeting is not primarily what Home Groups are, but it needs to be a priority. If a night of the week doesn't work for you, don't go to that group, regardless of how close it is. After locating the groups that are closest to where you live, pick the one that meets on the night of the week that works best for you.

3: WHERE DO I FIND INFORMATION ON WHERE HOME GROUPS MEET?

You can find all the information on Home Groups by going to 1) the website⁴, 2) the Home Group table on Sunday morning 3) contact the office at info@citychurchpa.org

³ Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. Life Together. Hymns Ancient and Modern Ltd.

⁴ For Home-groups go to <http://citychurchpa.org/home-groups/>

CHURCH GOVERNMENT & ELDERSHIP AT CITY CHURCH

HOW IS THE CHURCH LED OR GOVERNED?

Though we have all come from different ecclesiological traditions it is important that we agree on how the Bible paints the picture of church leadership. God intends the church to be comprised of three different levels of human leadership: **elders, deacons and members** (Philippians 1:1). Elders primarily prepare the deacons and members to do ministry through their leadership, oversight, and teaching. (Eph 4:11- 16)

WHAT ARE ELDERS?

Philippians 1:1, *Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons.*

Elders are the **group** of **rescued, qualified,** and competent men who God has charged to **shepherd** the local church. Elders

Elders are the male leaders of the church who are also called pastors, bishops, and overseers (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:2). They are qualified (1 Timothy 2:11–3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9) and tasked with shepherding or pastoring the church. The elders are always spoken of in plurality because God intends for more than one man to lead and rule over the church as a safeguard for both the church and the man.

ALL NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES HAD ELDERS.

Elders were in all the churches that Paul founded.

Acts 14:23, *When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*

Elders were in the Church at Jerusalem.

Acts 15:2, *And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.*

Elders were in Ephesus.

Acts 20:17, *From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church.*

Elders in All the Churches of Crete

Titus 1:5, *For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you.*

Elders in All the Churches of the Dispersion of the Roman Empire

James 1:1; 5:14, *James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings....Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."*

Elders in All the Churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia

1 Peter 1:1, *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen....*

1 Peter 5:1, *Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God.*

THE LOCAL CHURCH IS GOVERNED BY CHRIST (MATTHEW 16:18).

This governance was mediated through the authority of the apostles and their close associates (Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 7:17; 14:37-38; 2 Thessalonians 3:14). Today Christ still rules through the words of his apostles as they are preserved for us in the inspired writings of the New Testament. Therefore, every effort will be made to conform the structure and procedures and spirit of church governance as closely as possible to New Testament guidelines, with a constant eye to promoting the glory of God and the advancement of faith (1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 1:25).

The ministry of the church is primarily the work of the members in the activity of worship toward God, nurturing each other, and witness toward the world. Internal structures for church governance are not the main ministry of the church, but are necessary for equipping and mobilizing the saints for the work of ministry. Governance structures should be lean and efficient to this end, not aiming to include as many people as possible in office-holding, but to free and fit as many people as possible for ministry. Christ is the head of the church and, spiritually, all his disciples are on a level ground before him, each having direct access to Him and responsibility to intercede for the good of all as a community of priests.

Not inconsistent with this equality, God has ordained the existence of officers in the church, some of whom are charged under Christ with the leadership of the church. The leaders of the church should be people who are spiritually mature and exemplary (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9), gifted for the ministry given to them (Romans 12:6-8), have a sense of divine urging (Acts 20:28), and are in harmony with the duly established leadership of the church (Philippians 2:2).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ELDERS

The elders' duties include ruling (1 Timothy 5:17), managing (1 Timothy 3:4-5), tending (1 Peter 5:2-5), giving account (Hebrews 13:17), living exemplary lives (Hebrews 13:7), using authority (Acts 20:28), teaching (Ephesians 4:11, 1 Timothy 3:2), preaching (1 Timothy 5:17), doctrinal instruction (Titus 1:9), and discipline (Matthew 18:15-17). Members are the Christians who are actively participating in the life of the local church so that it is built up for God's purposes (1 Corinthians 12:1-31 especially 12:24). The early church had a notion of membership that included numerical record (Acts 2:37-47), records of widows (1 Timothy 5:3-16); elections (Acts 6:1-6), discipline (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1), accountability (Hebrews 13:17), and an awareness of who was a church member (Rom. 16:1-16).

QUALIFICATIONS OF AN ELDER (WHO CAN BE AN ELDER?)

Because of the distinct responsibility of leadership in the church, God gives very practical and measurable standards that dictate who can become an elder in the local church.

1 Timothy 3:1-7, *The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.*

The first thing we see about eldership is that it is to be aspired to. It is a noble task and mature Christian men should aspire to this office. Not everyone will make the cut, but every man should long for it.

Above reproach...This means that elders should be without any character defect. This is Paul's way of letting us know that this list was not meant to be exhaustive but rather showing us that we should set the bar of eldership high. This does not mean elders are perfect but that they have seen measurable victory over sin in their life and they are consistently watching their lives for sin and actively repenting.

Husband of one wife...There are many interpretations of this (never divorced, not a polygamist, not cheating) and the arguments are just as numerous. We fall in the category of the "spirit of the law" rather than the "letter of the law". We take each man's case individually. We, as a rule, will discount divorced believers in the same way that Scripture discounts Christians who live consistently in sin. If a man is divorced we will deal biblically with the divorce. There are occasions for divorce in the Bible and circumstances where God allows people to break the covenant of marriage (adultery, Jesus; desertion, Paul), though Christians are to seek reconciliation.

sober minded...This qualification speaks to the emotional life of a pastor. He must be able to control his desires and emotions through submission to the power and authority of the Holy Spirit. He must have a measurable amount of freedom from debilitating excesses or rash behavior.

self-controlled...He must have a sound mind, have good judgment and common sense.

respectable...This means he has a well-ordered life. To summarize the last three, when this man's name is mentioned there is widespread agreement that he is the sort of man worthy of leadership.

hospitable...He loves strangers, specifically those outside the faith.

able to teach...This qualification is not found on the list given for deacons. This does not mean that an elder has to be an excellent preacher. Rather, an elder must be able to handle the Scriptures well by helping people understand what it meant in its original context and in its contemporary application.

not a drunkard...Doesn't get drunk or depend on mood-changing drugs. In other words, his release value is not alcohol.

not violent, but gentle (peaceable)...Not a fighter for the sake of fighting, but rather fighting only for the sake of peace. A man who loves unity, peace and protecting the people, but will stand up to defend his people

not quarrelsome...A pastor cannot be a man who is always looking for his next fight.

not a lover of money...A man who does not allow money to motivate his life's decisions. Money is not bad, but the Spirit leads us, not the love of money. This does not mean that elders should be poor or that elder's wives should dress in rags but rather elders would be motivated by the Spirit and hopefully blessed by God through the church.

He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

This qualification disqualifies many men from eldership. Wives are the first element we want to watch, because our wives reveal our true character. Men can sell you, interview well and tell you what you want to hear; constantly painting a picture of perfection, but women will reflect men's true character. Weak men produce domineering women. Overbearing men produce weak women and fragile women. The true reflection of the man is seen in his wife. Children are the next level. Kids are supposed to be loud and boys are supposed to be dangerous, but if your children are not growing, learning, and respecting dad then eldership must be postponed.

He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Young believers should not get too much power or they will become conceited, feeling like the church owes them...(power, money, respect) and eventually will fall by the same sin of the devil. While the term "elder" describes maturity and not age, new believers must be given time to mature in Christ before taking on this level of leadership.

Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil." This guy is good in business and in the community. He lives in such a way that people want to imitate him and thereby learn to imitate Christ.

PASTORAL CARE AND CHURCH DISCIPLINE AT CITY CHURCH

1. TAKE A MINUTE AND READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-8.

1 Corinthians 6:1-8, *When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers!*

- How does this verse change your view of church membership?

2. TAKE A MINUTE AND READ 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-5; 9-13.

1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 9-13, *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people — not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler — not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. Purge the evil person from among you.*

- What action does Paul say the Corinthian church should have taken regarding this sinful member?
- What is the ultimate hope of such action?
- By whose authority is the church to act?

Throughout its pages, the Bible sounds a recurring theme: Those God loves, He disciplines.

*See appendix 4 for church discipline statement.

SERVICE AT CITY CHURCH

WHY DO WE SERVE?

1. It's command.

Galatians 5:13, *For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*

2. We serve to glorify God.

There are two key passages that we will look at that reveal this to us. First, our serving glorifies God because it is a form of worship:

Romans 12:1, *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

1 Peter 4:11, *Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

3. Serving builds up or edifies others.

Ephesians 4:11–12, *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.*

WHERE TO SERVE?

Discovering where to serve can take patience and sometimes trial by error. There is no test or quiz you can take that can tell you where you are to serve in an instant. It can sometimes take time. There are a few key things you can do to help you make steps toward discovering where you should serve. They are discovering your spiritual gifts, discovering your ministry passion, special talents, and prayer.

1. Consider your spiritual gifts

Spiritual Gifts are special abilities given by the Holy Spirit and distributed to every believer according to God's design and grace for the common good of the body of Christ.

Spiritual Gifts are special abilities.

- They are divine endowments.
- They are used for spiritual purposes.
- They are for tasks or functions.
- They enable us to do meaningful service.

Spiritual Gifts are given by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:8-10, *For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by one Spirit, and to another prophecy. . .*

Spiritual Gifts are given to believers.

Spiritual Gifts are given to every believer according to God's design and grace. Therefore, unbelievers do not have Spiritual Gifts. Every believer has at least one Spiritual Gift. We do not earn them or choose them.

Spiritual Gifts are given for the good of the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:7, *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

1 Peter 4:10, *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*

2. Consider your ministry passions.

Ministry passion is a heartfelt desire that compels us to make a difference for the kingdom of God. Your passion may right a wrong, meet a need, solve a problem, serve a cause, change a life, etc. While spiritual gifts are functions or tasks you perform, ministry passions are feelings or desires that motivate you to serve in a particular ministry. It's what drives you. Your ministry passion could be for a certain people group (youth, poor, young marrieds, etc.) or even a social issue (childcare, poverty, education, AIDS, etc.).

3. Consider your opportunities.

After evaluating your spiritual gifts and ministry passions, then begin looking around at God given opportunities within the church and your circle of influence. As God brings opportunities, give your life away serving. Your first stop may not last forever, but it will start the process of God refining your passions and sharpening your gifts.

4. Continue praying.

It takes time and trial by error to discover your area of service. Sometimes you think you are called to a specific ministry and when you get involved, you realize that ministry really isn't for you. That doesn't mean that you aren't called anywhere. It means that you need to continually ask God through prayer to reveal His will to you. It is easy to become discouraged, but we see in John 16:13 that we have been promised that the Holy Spirit will guide us down the path God has designed for us.

John 16:13, *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*

WHAT DOES SERVING LOOK LIKE AT CITY CHURCH?

At City Church believers should be serving the kingdom in three areas: the **body**, the **community**, and **globally**. What does serving look like in these three areas?

SERVING THE BODY

Serving at City Church is a normal expectation of covenant members. Serving the body can take many forms and should be done consistently to help the body grow up in Jesus (Ephesians 4:16). We see this in the following verses.

Ephesians 4:15-16, *Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

Romans 12:5, *In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

1 Corinthians 12:2, *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

The illustration Paul gives us in 1 Corinthians is that we are all part of a body. If one part is not functioning properly, the whole body doesn't function properly. It would be like the kidney saying, "I'm tired of cleaning up all the time. Get someone else to do it." This would cause the body to suffer or die, just as if people in the church weren't serving.

Here are just a few of the service opportunities at City Church: Saturday night clean-up, Sunday set-up, City Kidz, check-in, greeters, foyer (book table/coffee bar), student ministry, safety team, hospitality, building, administrative help, among many others.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Serving the community are acts of service that demonstrate God's love and glory to our surrounding community of non-believers. We are to be an example to our community as seen in **Matthew 5:14-16,**

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

At City Church, the primary way that service happens is in Home Groups. One of the things that we are working towards is connecting our Home Groups to areas of brokenness and need in our community and join God in what He is doing.

SERVING INTERNATIONALLY

Serving internationally is done through a couple of ways at City Church. It can be done through annual mission trips, supporting a missionaries, or church plants.

Matthew 28:28-29, *And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on Earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Most of us know we should serve and most of us want to serve, but a lot of us are not sure just where and how we can best serve. Here are a few steps that will help you get started.

1. Learn your spiritual gifts⁵
2. Determine your ministry passion.
3. Visit with a staff member. Ask a staff member to help point you in the right direction.

If you are having trouble figuring out your spiritual gifts or your ministry passion, you can set up a meeting with a pastor for help and counsel. Our pastoral staff is here to equip the church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-13). We want this process to be as simple as possible at City Church and we don't want to hinder the body's mission.

⁵ Find and take the spiritual gifts survey here: http://m.lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcF_MYCS_030526_Spiritual_Gifts_Survey.pdf

CORE VALUE 3: MISSION



We have been commissioned as missionaries by God. The Gospel is good news because it gives us a perfect God as our perfect Father. The Gospel also gives us a family, called the church, to live with. But the Gospel gives us even more. Not only do we have a family to live with, but a mission for that family to live for. As the Gospel sinks deeply into our souls, it begins to send us out on the mission of God.

A MISSIONARY GOD AND A MISSIONARY PEOPLE

MATTHEW 28:18-20, *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

THE MISSION DEFINED.

- We are to make disciples.
- We are to baptize.
- We are to teach followers of Jesus to observe Biblical truth.

THE MISSION'S POWER.

- All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.
- And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

THE MISSION PERSONALIZED.

- Go therefore.

THE PERSONAL COMPONENT OF MISSION

The first component of mission is personal. **You are a missionary.** You were created by God (Psalm 139), called by God (Ephesians 1:5), and commissioned by God as a missionary (Matthew 28:18-20). Moreover, the Bible makes it clear that God has also determined the time and place of your life (Acts 17:26). It's fascinating to think that God created you, planned the exact moments you would be alive and the exact places you would spend your few days, so that you could leverage every moment on planet earth for the glory of God and the spread of the gospel. This is your God given role to play. This is not a City Church program. The more you program missional living, the more you rob it of its power. This is a personal commission, given by God, that reorients the rest of a Christian's life. It's importance to notice, a missionary isn't an elite group of Christians. Rather, every single Christian has been commissioned by God as missionaries to the world. We use the phrase missional-living to describe this.

MISSIONAL-LIVING DEFINED: *It's everyday people doing everyday things with Gospel intentionality.*

First, everyday people. Missional living isn't reserved for the few or the especially selected. Missional living is for every Christian. **Second**, gospel intentionality. Moreover, the brunt of missional living isn't something we are asking you to create space for in your daily life. Missional living is meant to saturate everything you are currently doing in the rhythms and routines of your life. For instance, we are to actively participate in

the mission of God as we...enjoy hobbies, eat, live in our neighborhood, work, recreate, rest, celebrate, etc. Wikipedia describes missional-living like this, "Missional-living is a Christian term that describes a missionary lifestyle; adopting the posture, thinking, behaviors, and practices of a missionary in order to engage others with the gospel message." This is the sort of lifestyle God has called every Christian toward.

A MISSIONARY'S TASK

First, we want you to see that you are a missionary. This is your God-given role to play as a Christian. Second, I want you to take a moment to think about the missionary's task.

HAND 1: the GOSPEL.

In one hand the missionary holds the Gospel (all that God has done for us in Jesus). For a missionary (Christian), we have seen, heard, and experienced the good news of the Gospel, that Jesus has died for our sins, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day. Moreover, all those who have faith in Jesus will be reconciled to God forever!

HAND 2: CULTURE.

In the other hand we hold culture. Culture consists of the beliefs, behaviors, objects, and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society.

THE BRIDGE: the CHRISTIAN/CHURCH

The Christian has the God-given privilege of bringing both hands together, of bringing the beauty of the gospel into the chaos of our culture.

A MISSIONARY PEOPLE'S PROBLEM.

Christians have made one of two primary mistakes as it relates to their missionary task. Error one, in an effort to pursue the mission of God, some let go of the Gospel. The result is that they have no good news to give culture. Error two, in an effort to protect the Gospel they let go of culture. Rather than living on the mission of God, some Christians choose to retreat behind the barriers of their church buildings and their front doors. Although both are present with churches across our country, we feel the predominant problem we have is error two.

PERSONAL APPLICATION QUESTIONS FOR MISSION

We like to ask four questions as a gauge for people's missional involvement...

1. Have you ever had the joy of watching God use your life to display the Gospel and your lips to declare the gospel for the salvation of a friend, co-worker, neighbor?
2. In the last month, have you had any gospel conversations with those who don't know Jesus?
3. In the last six months, have you had anyone into your home for dinner who doesn't know Jesus?
4. Who are you consistently praying for who doesn't know Jesus?

"Prepare yourselves...to see and suffer many things with which you would rather be unacquainted. Experiences which would be unnecessary to you personally will become your portion if the Lord uses you for the salvation of others."

Charles Spurgeon

THE CORPORATE COMPONENT OF MISSION

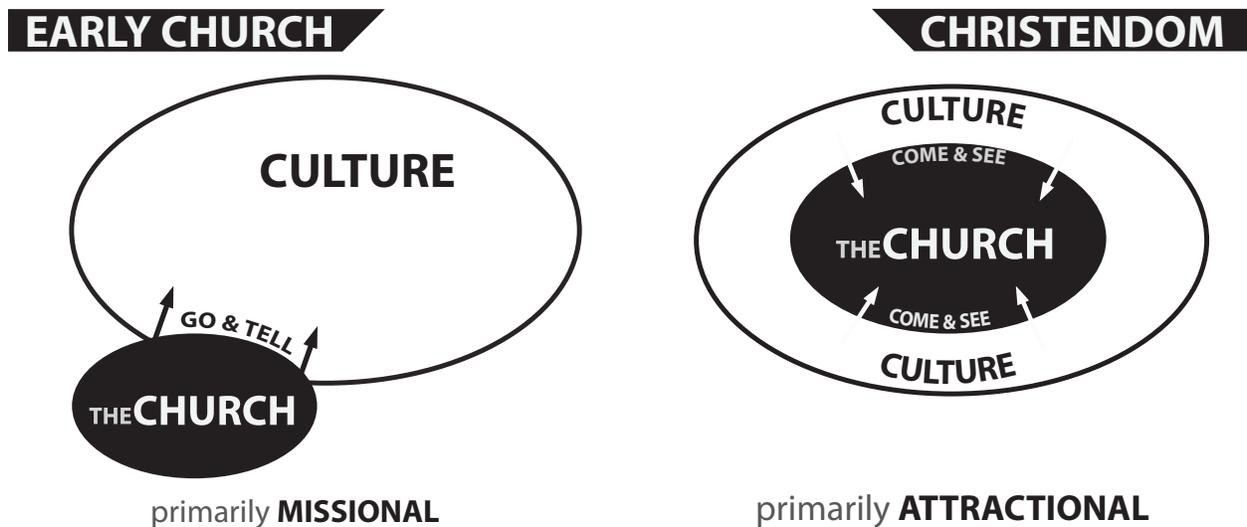
It is vital that every church clearly answers the question: “How are we going to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ?” A lack of clarity at this point kills. Every church has an answer to this question, but our experience is that most do not take the time to clarify it. So for the sake of clarity, we have two statements that answer the “how” of mission for our church.

1. OUR STRATEGY IS BUILT ON PEOPLE, NOT ON PROGRAMS OR PROPERTY.

This means that we are not looking for the biggest and best building, the latest tool, or the next gadget, but for the people of God, empowered by the Spirit of God, to live on the mission of God. In simple terms, that is our strategy to reach the community and to see God transform our city with the Gospel.

2. OUR STRATEGY IS PRIMARILY MISSIONAL, SECONDARILY ATTRACTIVE.

We are first a “go and tell” church, not a “come and see” church. Our primary strategy to reach the community is not by them coming to see our church on Sunday morning, but by our church family going and telling throughout the week.

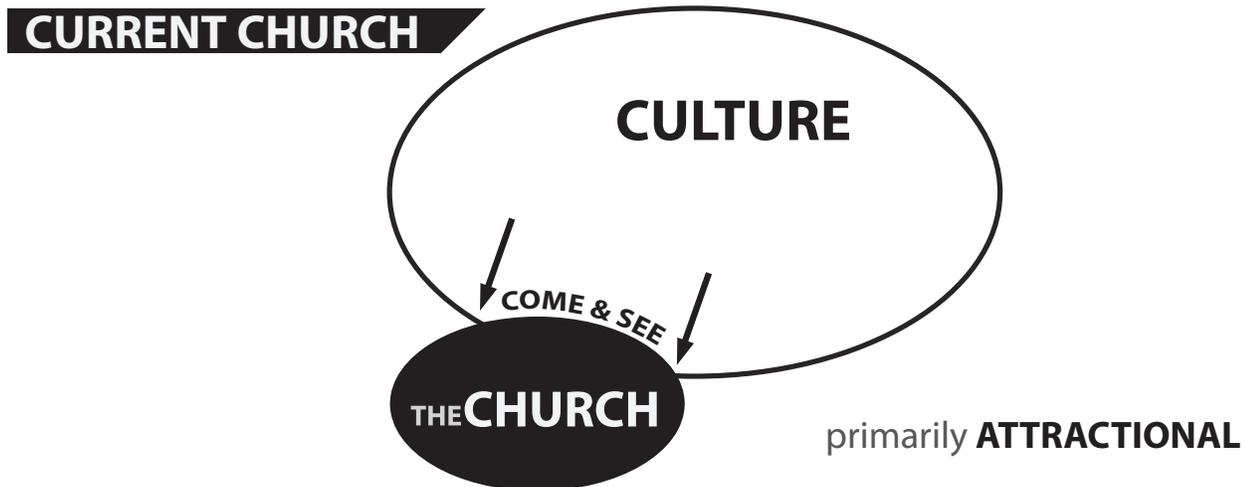


The above charts illustrate how the relationship between the culture at large and the church has changed. The first graphic illustrates the early church and culture. As you read through the book of Acts it is clear that the church is on the margins of culture at large. The Jewish leaders disliked the church (Acts 8). Moreover, even the Romans disliked Christians. Ironically, they considered Christians to be atheists because they did not worship their plethora of gods. The church was in the margins but the church had a clear mission (Acts 1:8). **In that context, the church exploded.**

The second graphic illustrates the relationship between the church and the culture during Christendom (4th-20th century). During the 4th century the Roman Emperor Constantine turned the entire empire toward Christianity. Christianity went mainstream under Constantine. It moved the church from the margins of culture to the center of culture and ushered in what is known as Christendom. Christendom is a term used to describe how the church relates to culture at large. In Christendom, Christianity is central to the culture. The culture respects, likes, and is even favorable toward Christianity. Christian beliefs sit under and

support the culture. Christianity sits over culture influencing the way people talk and see the world. In Christendom, behaviors that are Biblical are valued and behaviors that are unbiblical are stigmatized. Moreover, culture, with its institutions and systems, is “Christianized” while many in the culture were still not converted to the gospel. In Christendom the church adapted to its new circumstances. Rather than being a “go and tell” people, it shifted to a “come and see” or attractional posture. The result was not all bad, the church was fruitful and faithful for much of that time.

Our problem is illustrated with the current situation illustrated in the next graphic.



The problem is simple, Christendom is crumbling in America. The last remaining remnants of Christendom lies in the deep south; however, it is also disappearing quickly. We have (and are) moving back into a first century relationship with culture. The church is on the margins, rather than the middle, of culture. The church has less and less influence, the percentage of people who grow up in church continues to decline, Christianity has been pushed from the public square to the privacy of our homes.

We hope that does not leave you with a pessimistic outlook on the church, or the mission of God. Rather, we hope you are encouraged. The first century church thrived under the same conditions. However, we do want you to see the difference between the posture of the first century church and the current church. **While the first century church was fiercely missional (go and tell), the 21st century church is still primarily attractional (come and see),** when the culture at large does not care to come or see. If we are going to reach the culture with gospel of Jesus Christ, it requires a church that both goes and tells and invites people to come and see.

In conclusion, if we are going to reach the culture with Gospel of Jesus Christ, it requires a church that both goes and tells and invites people to come and see. If this is true, it means that we as individual people have to move toward a missional life.

3. OUR CHURCH FAMILY’S STRATEGY HAS TWO PRIMARY PARTS.

PART 1: Church Planting.

Church planting is not just a hobby of City Church. Rather, we really believe the Bible shows it’s central to God. As an illustration of this reality, think about Acts 1-2. In Acts 1:8 the disciples are given the mission of being a witnesses to the ends of the earth. Then in Acts 2 the mission took its first steps through people preaching, God saving, and a church being planted. The mission of preaching and seeing converts leads

to church planting. Simply put, church planting is essential to God's strategy of reaching the world. We want to be a church planting church. As we pray for our church family, we're asking God to allow us to play a part of planting churches over the years. Some of those churches will have very deep connections to City Church. These planters will likely come on staff as church planting residents. Other church planters will have more shallow connections. We will help fund, coach, and train these planters, but our church family won't know them as deeply or personally. Either way, the mission of God moves forward!

PART 2: Adoption and Orphan Care.

Like church planting, we believe orphan care is central to the heart of God. When you think of the various metaphors used in the Bible to describe the gospel, marriage and adoption rise to the top. Think about adoption as a metaphor for the Gospel. Picture a family looking at an orphan, totally helpless. Apart from their intervention, this orphan is hopeless. But then this Jesus-loving, Gospel-soaked family steps in and adopts this child. They are no longer an orphan, but a son or daughter. They are no longer fatherless, they now have a dad. The Bible says that was our situation before our salvation. We were an orphan, totally helpless. Apart from God's intervention, we are hopeless. But then Jesus stepped in, was crucified in our place. We are no longer an orphan, but a son or daughter. We are no longer fatherless, but now have a perfect heavenly Father (Ephesians 1:5). As a person grows in their awareness of the Gospel, we actually believe it moves us toward the fatherless. This is one of the reasons James 1 says that true religion runs after widows and orphans. But there is also a missional component to adoption. Physical adoption is often the precursor to spiritual adoption. When gospel-soaked parents adopt children, God often uses them to save.

We are praying for families to adopt. In addition to that, we are praying that by the grace of God, we'd reverse the foster system's current waiting list. Rather than kids waiting on families to foster, we want foster agencies in the area to have a list of Jesus-loving families waiting for kids to foster.

4. OUR STRATEGY HAS A LOCAL AND A GLOBAL EMPHASIS.

The great commission does not give the church the luxury of solely focusing on their local area. Jesus commands his followers to make disciples of "all nations." That means our church must have a focus to make disciples in the Lycoming County Area and around the world.

APPENDIX 1 | MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

When anyone enters into a relationship with God by grace from, and faith in, the person and work of Jesus Christ, they are entering into two covenants. The first is to journey with God for the rest of their lives and love Him fully. The second is to journey with His other children in the community of the local church. Your membership in a church is an official recognition of this. The purposes of the City Church Membership Covenant are:

1. To join the Spirit in forming an authentic church community that reflects the relationship between the Father, Son, and Spirit.
2. To clarify the on-going blessings and responsibilities of each member.
3. To encourage consistency, accountability, and loving unity within the church family.
4. To accomplish God's call for the City Church family.

This agreement does not imply that you will never fall short of the goals, but that the desire of your heart is to fulfill to the best of your ability each of the responsibilities stated. We trust that our commitment will be a personal blessing to your own journey in Christ, as well as a blessing to those around you.

WITH THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP COVENANTS THE FOLLOWING:

1. We covenant ourselves to lovingly care for you and seek your growth in Christ (Heb 13:17; Thes 5:12).
2. We covenant to provide teaching, preaching, and counsel from the Scriptures (Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 5:17-18).
3. We covenant that this teaching will span the whole counsel of God's Word (Acts 20:27-28).
4. We covenant to help you in times of need (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35; James 5:14-17).
5. We covenant that your elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-13 & 5:17-22, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4).
6. We covenant to pray for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14).
7. We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31).
8. We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1).
9. We covenant to help you become equipped to serve Christ (Eph. 4:11-13).
10. We covenant to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-5).
11. We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church members (1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 3:17, 1 Timothy 4:12).

WITH THE GUIDING HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, I, THE UNDERSIGNED COVENANT THE FOLLOWING:

1. I am a Christian who has **been saved from my sins by the grace of Jesus Christ**. I have been **baptized** by immersion to give testimony of my identification with the body of Christ and obedience to the Scriptures.
2. I have read and understood the **City Church doctrinal statement and agree to not be divisive** to its teaching. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Hebrews 13:7, 17; Ephesians 4:1-3).

3. I will endeavor to **maintain a close relationship with the Lord** through regular personal Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of the other spiritual disciplines. My journey in Christ will be evident through my regular participation in the corporate worship services and involvement in a Home Group or class (Psalms 119:97, 105; Acts 2:24-47; Hebrews 10:23-25).
4. I will strive to **properly manage the resources God has given me**, including my time, body, gifts and talents, attitude, finances, and possessions (Ephesians 4:1-16, 5:15-18; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:22-26; Proverbs 3:9-10). **This includes regular giving to City Church that is sacrificial and cheerful** (2 Corinthians 8-9).
5. **I commit myself to the City Church family and agree to aid in fulfilling its missional purpose** to both be and bring the gospel to the Lycoming County area. I recognize that this will be accomplished by pursuing City Church's core values of Gospel, Community, and Mission.
6. **I commit to using the spiritual gift(s) God has given me** for the building up of the church, both at City Church and universally (1 Peter 4:10-11; Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-31). I understand that serving regularly is an expectation and membership requirement. **I am currently serving in the following capacity at City Church:**

-
7. I covenant to **practice the humility and sacrificial attitude of Christ** by considering the needs of others (Philippians 1:1-11), not gossiping (Proverbs 16:28; Matthew 18:15-17), and seeking spiritual friendships (Proverbs 17:17).
 8. I covenant to have friendly Christian relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ from other churches, but **I will not function in leadership or as a member in another church family** (Hebrews 13:17).
 9. I covenant to **follow the biblical procedures of church discipline**, and submit myself to discipline if the need should ever arise (Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1-5).
 10. I covenant to submit to the authority of the **Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues** (Psalms 119; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

God enabling me, I will strive to consider my commitment to this membership covenant on a yearly basis. I understand that it is an evaluative tool, as well as an affirmation of my continuing convictions and purpose. My responsibility will be to notify the City Church leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding City Church.

PLEASE SIGN & GIVE TO CITY CHURCH

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and having been baptized, and being in agreement with City Church's theology, ecclesiology, and culture, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the City Church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the above.

Signature_____ Date_____

Signature (Spouse)_____ Date_____

Printed Names_____

Phone_____ Email_____

Address_____

ElderSignature/Printed Name_____

APPENDIX 2 | BACKGROUND CHECK

APPENDIX 3 | STATEMENT OF FAITH

We recognize that the unity of the church universal is based solely on the person and work of Jesus and not on absolute agreement on other doctrines outside the atoning work of Jesus. While we as a local fellowship of believers understand that some believers do not agree with all of the following doctrinal beliefs, we ask that all incoming members agree with the following statement of faith:

1. THE TRI-UNE GOD

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who know, love, and glorify one another. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect both in his love and in his holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration. Immortal and eternal, he perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and providentially brings about his eternal good purposes to redeem a people for himself and restore his fallen creation, to the praise of his glorious grace.

2. REVELATION

God has graciously disclosed his existence and power in the created order, and has supremely revealed himself to fallen human beings in the person of his Son, the incarnate Word. Moreover, this God is a speaking God who by his Spirit has graciously disclosed himself in human words: we believe that God has inspired the words preserved in the Scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which are both record and means of his saving work in the world. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is utterly authoritative and without error in the original writings, complete in its revelation of his will for salvation, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. We confess that both our finitude and our sinfulness preclude the possibility of knowing God's truth exhaustively, but we affirm that, enlightened by the Spirit of God, we can know God's revealed truth truly. The Bible is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. As God's people hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the gospel.

3. CREATION OF HUMANITY

We believe that God created human beings, male and female, in his own image. Adam and Eve belonged to the created order that God himself declared to be very good, serving as God's agents to care for, manage, and govern creation, living in holy and devoted fellowship with their Maker. Men and women, equally made in the image of God, enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus and are both called to move beyond passive self-indulgence to significant private and public engagement in family, church, and civic life. Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one-flesh union that establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations for men and women, such that marriage ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and his church. In God's wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways. God ordains that they assume distinctive roles which reflect the loving relationship between Christ and the church, the husband exercising headship in a way that displays the caring, sacrificial love of Christ, and the wife submitting to her husband in a way that models the love of the church for her Lord. In the ministry of the church, both men and women are encouraged to serve Christ and to be developed to their full potential in the manifold ministries of the people of God. The distinctive leadership role within the church given

to qualified men is grounded in creation, fall, and redemption and must not be sidelined by appeals to cultural developments.

4. THE FALL

We believe that Adam, made in the image of God, distorted that image and forfeited his original blessed-ness—for himself and all his progeny—by falling into sin through Satan’s temptation. As a result, all human beings are alienated from God, corrupted in every aspect of their being (e.g., physically, mentally, volitionally, emotionally, spiritually) and condemned finally and irrevocably to death—apart from God’s own gracious intervention. The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled to the God under whose just and holy wrath we stand; the only hope of all human beings is the undeserved love of this same God, who alone can rescue us and restore us to himself.

5. THE PLAN OF GOD

We believe that from all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation, and to this end foreknew them and chose them. We believe that God justifies and sanctifies those who by grace have faith in Jesus, and that he will one day glorify them—all to the praise of his glorious grace. In love God commands and implores all people to repent and believe, having set his saving love on those he has chosen and having ordained Christ to be their Redeemer.

6. THE GOSPEL

We believe that the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ—God’s very wisdom. Utter folly to the world, even though it is the power of God to those who are being saved, this good news is christological, centering on the cross and resurrection: the gospel is not proclaimed if Christ is not proclaimed, and the authentic Christ has not been proclaimed if his death and resurrection are not central (the message is “Christ died for our sins . . . [and] was raised”). This good news is biblical (his death and resurrection are according to the Scriptures), theological and salvific (Christ died for our sins, to reconcile us to God), historical (if the saving events did not happen, our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins, and we are to be pitied more than all others), apostolic (the message was entrusted to and transmitted by the apostles, who were witnesses of these saving events), and intensely personal (where it is received, believed, and held firmly, individual persons are saved).

7. THE REDEMPTION OF CHRIST

We believe that, moved by love and in obedience to his Father, the eternal Son became human: the Word became Flesh, fully God and fully human being, one Person in two natures. The man Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel, was conceived through the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary. He perfectly obeyed his heavenly Father, lived a sinless life, performed miraculous signs, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. As the mediatorial King, he is seated at the right hand of God the Father, exercising in heaven and on earth all of God’s sovereignty, and is our High Priest and righteous Advocate. We believe that by his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus Christ acted as our representative and substitute. He did this so that in him we might become the righteousness of God: on the cross he canceled sin, propitiated God, and, by bearing the full penalty of our sins, reconciled to God all those who believe. By his resurrection Christ Jesus was vindicated by his Father, broke the power of death and defeated Satan who once had power over it, and brought everlasting life to all his people; by his ascension he has been forever exalted as Lord and has prepared a place for us to be with him. We believe that salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved. Because God chose the lowly things of this world, the despised things, the things that are not, to nullify the

things that are, no human being can ever boast before him—Christ Jesus has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

8. THE JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS

We believe that Christ, by his obedience and death, fully discharged the debt of all those who are justified. By his sacrifice, he bore in our stead the punishment due us for our sins, making a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice on our behalf. By his perfect obedience he satisfied the just demands of God on our behalf, since by faith alone that perfect obedience is credited to all who trust in Christ alone for their acceptance with God. Inasmuch as Christ was given by the Father for us, and his obedience and punishment were accepted in place of our own, freely and not for anything in us, this justification is solely of free grace, in order that both the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners. We believe that a zeal for personal and public obedience shows from this free justification.

9. THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that this salvation, attested in all Scripture and secured by Jesus Christ, is applied to his people by the Holy Spirit. Sent by the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, and, as the "other" Paraclete, is present with and in believers. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and by his powerful and mysterious work regenerates spiritually dead sinners, awakening them to repentance and faith, and in him they are baptized into union with the Lord Jesus, such that they are justified before God by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. By the Spirit's agency, believers are renewed, sanctified, and adopted into God's family; they participate in the divine nature and receive his sovereignly distributed gifts. The Holy Spirit is himself the down payment of the promised inheritance, and in this age indwells, guides, instructs, equips, revives, and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

10. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

We believe that those who have been saved by the grace of God through union with Christ by faith and through regeneration by the Holy Spirit enter the kingdom of God and delight in the blessings of the new covenant: the forgiveness of sins, the inward transformation that awakens a desire to glorify, trust, and obey God, and the prospect of the glory yet to be revealed. Good works constitute indispensable evidence of saving grace. Living as salt in a world that is decaying and light in a world that is dark, believers should neither withdraw into seclusion from the world, nor become indistinguishable from it: rather, we are to do good to the city, for all the glory and honor of the nations is to be offered up to the living God. Recognizing whose created order this is, and because we are citizens of God's kingdom, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, doing good to all, especially to those who belong to the household of God. The kingdom of God, already present but not fully realized, is the exercise of God's sovereignty in the world toward the eventual redemption of all creation. The kingdom of God is an invasive power that plunders Satan's dark kingdom and regenerates and renovates through repentance and faith the lives of CITY CHURCH individuals rescued from that kingdom. It therefore inevitably establishes a new community of human life together under God.

11. GOD'S NEW PEOPLE

We believe that God's new covenant people have already come to the heavenly Jerusalem; they are already seated with Christ in the heavenlies. This universal church is manifest in local churches of which Christ is the only Head; thus each "local church" is, in fact, the church, the household of God, the assembly of the living God, and the pillar and foundation of the truth. The church is the body of Christ, the apple of his eye, graven on his hands, and he has pledged himself to her forever. The church is distinguished by her gospel message, her sacred ordinances, her discipline, her great mission, and, above all, by her love for God, and by her members' love for one another

and for the world. Crucially, this gospel we cherish has both personal and corporate dimensions, neither of which may properly be overlooked. Christ Jesus is our peace: he has not only brought about peace with God, but also peace between alienated peoples. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both Jew and Gentile to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. The church serves as a sign of God's future new world when its members live for the service of one another and their neighbors, rather than for self-focus. The church is the corporate dwelling place of God's Spirit, and the continuing witness to God in the world.

12. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus himself. The former is connected with entrance into the new covenant community, the latter with ongoing covenant renewal. Together they are simultaneously God's pledge to us, divinely ordained means of grace, our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipations of his return and of the consummation of all things.

13. THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

We believe in the personal, glorious, and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ with his holy angels, when he will exercise his role as Final Judge, and his kingdom will be consummated. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust—the unjust to judgment and eternal conscious punishment in hell, as our Lord himself taught, and the just to eternal blessedness in the presence of him who sits on the throne and of the Lamb, in the new heaven and the new earth, the home of righteousness. On that day the church will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering and triumph of Christ, all sin purged and its wretched effects forever banished. God will be all in all and his people will be enthralled by the immediacy of his ineffable holiness, and everything will be to the praise of his glorious grace.

APPENDIX 4 | CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Throughout its pages, the Bible sounds a recurring theme: Those God loves, He disciplines.⁶

Discipline is a sometimes challenging process of God correcting His people's thoughts, words, and behavior so they can fulfill their calling to become like Him. God disciplines His people through a variety of means.

He calls His people first to self-discipline. Each Christian is called to hear the Word of God as he reads the Bible and hears the Bible taught and applied. As he compares his life to God's Word, he adjusts himself to conform to his Savior. But individual interaction with God through His Word is not the only means that God uses to make His children holy.

God also uses His people. "Brothers," writes Paul, "if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness ..." As members of City Church, we take seriously our responsibility to "restore" members who fail to allow God to discipline them personally for their sins. This means that beginning with private confrontation and, if necessary, leading to public rebuke, we seek to

⁶ And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." (Hebrews 12:5-6 ESV, see also verses 7-13)

help one another overcome any refusal to repent of those words and actions that the Bible clearly defines as sin.

This includes not only sinful words and behavior, but also refusal to turn from heretical doctrine. Jesus outlined a process for addressing another believer's sin in Matthew 18:15-17. **As a church we agree that this is the way for us to approach someone who refuses to appropriate God's grace for change.**

Initially, church discipline should be informal: **If a Christian sees sin in a brother or sister that appears to be continual, he should approach that person and inquire about it.** If in fact there is unrepentant sin and a refusal to repent, then the concerned brother or sister should involve one or two others, which may include a pastor and/or an elder. If this group confirms that, in fact, sin continues without repentance, the process must move to formal church discipline, because...

God also uses pastors to make his children holy. When the church begins to formally discipline a member, the church's pastors and/or elders inquire with the individual member in question to confirm fact and to appeal for change. If change is not forthcoming, the elders will inform the church of the member and his sin, urging members to contact the member and appeal for repentance. During this time, the member under discipline may not participate in the Lord's Supper or attend meetings for the purpose of fellowship. Instead, his participation with members should revolve around his need for change. If, after a reasonable period of appeal, no repentance is forthcoming, the elders will inform the church again, this time announcing that they must revoke membership and that the church must now treat the unrepentant person as they treat unbelievers. **In other words, when they interact with this person they should have "fellowship" as the Bible defines it, but they should appeal for the former member to put his faith in Jesus' work on the cross for them and to turn from his sin.**

Church discipline has nothing to do with "shunning" a person. It involves first confronting in love and gentleness and, if unsuccessful, withholding fellowship. **It is not rejection of a relationship but a change in the nature of a relationship.** If a person under discipline is not factious or disruptive or a harmful influence, he is welcomed to attend all church meetings that are open to unbelievers. The elders may decide to abbreviate or eliminate the process of appeal for repentance if the sin is especially notorious, or if the member proves to be factious, disruptive or leading others into sin or error. In these cases, the elders may ask church members to avoid all contact with an individual in order to mitigate his sinful influence.

At times a member may seek to withdraw from the church to avoid church discipline and its consequences. **Just as a good shepherd will go after a sheep that has wandered from the flock** (Matt. 18:12-14; Ezek. 34:4,8-16), **so shall the pastors, elders, and members of this church seek to restore a wandering member to the Lord through biblical discipline.** Therefore, discipline may be instituted or continued either before or after a member seeks to withdraw from membership if the elders determine that such discipline may serve to guard and preserve the honor of God, protect the purity of the church, or restore the wandering member to the Lord. While the church cannot force a withdrawing member to remain in this congregation, the church has the right and responsibility to encourage restoration, to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, and to make a final determination as to the person's membership status at the time withdrawal is sought or acknowledged. In doing so, the elders, at their discretion, may temporarily suspend further disciplinary proceedings, dismiss any or all charges pending against the accused, or proceed with discipline and pronounce an appropriate censure. If a member leaves the church while he is under the disciplinary process or while a censure against him is still in effect, and if the elders learn that he is attending another church, the elders may inform that church that the person is currently under church discipline and may ask that church to encourage the accused to repent of his sin and to be restored to the Lord and to any people whom he has offended. Such communications enhance the possibility that a person may finally repent of his sin, and, at the same time, serve to warn the other church to be on guard against the harm that the accused might do to their

members (see Matt. 18:12-14; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:6-14; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:16-18; 4:9, 14-15; 3 John 9-10).

Once the elders make a sin publicly known, they also commit to inform the church of repentance and restoration to fellowship as appropriate to the situation and the good of the church. Christians who attend City Church and have been excluded from fellowship from another church will not be allowed to participate in fellowship of City Church unless they repent of their sins and make confession and restitution with their former church or the elders of City Church are able to determine that the former church did not apply church discipline according to Scripture.

I, the undersigned, have read, understand and agree to the terms of Church Discipline outlined above.

(PRINT NAME) _____ Date _____

(SIGN NAME) _____ Date _____

APPENDIX 5 | FOLLOW UP CONVERSATION

WHAT ARE MY NEXT STEPS?

Thank you so much for completing Discover City Church. You are now all set for your last step toward Covenant Membership at City Church. It is your responsibility to email Earl Neff at earl@citychurchpa.org to set up a follow-up conversation.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT DURING THE FOLLOW UP CONVERSATION?

This is a chance for us to get to sit down with you and your family for a few minutes to get to know you, to hear the story of how God has rescued you, to hear about what God is currently doing in your life and in your family, and to answer any additional questions you have. We view the follow-up conversation as a way to get to know and serve every person who becomes a part of the City Church family.

WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING TO THE FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION?

You need to have a few things ready and with you when we meet together.

1. You need to have your **church membership covenant signed**. (Appendix 1)
2. You need to have a **background check filled out**. To serve in any ministry dealing with minors, a background check is a necessity. So we like to get that completed for all of our covenant members to help in clearing the pathway toward serving in those areas. (Appendix 2)
3. You need to have the **church discipline statement signed**. (Appendix 4)
4. You need to have the **new members questionnaire filled out**. (Appendix 7)

APPENDIX 6 | NEW MEMBER QUESTIONS

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name:

Date of Birth:

Address:

Home Phone:

Cell Phone:

Occupation:

Work Phone:

Marital Status:

Wedding Date:

CHILDREN'S INFORMATION

Name 1:

D.O.B.

notes:

Name 2:

D.O.B.

notes:

Name 3:

D.O.B.

notes:

Name 4:

D.O.B.

notes:

Name 5:

D.O.B.

notes:

Name 6:

D.O.B.

notes:

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Previous Church Membership:

Baptized (date/location):

How Introduced to City Church:

Began Attending:

CONVERSION QUESTIONNAIRE

For the following questions, please model your answers after Paul's conversion story to King Agrippa in Acts 26:4-23. In this section, you will see that Paul's story includes who he was before he became a Christian, how he met Jesus, and how his life has changed after becoming a Christian. He concludes his account by giving a statement of his beliefs.

If you are a Christian, give an account of how you came to faith:

Finish the following statement using less than 1/4 page: I know I am a Christian because...

If you were baptized after you became a believer, when this occurred:

APPENDIX 7 | DISCOVER OVERVIEW

THE VISION AND VALUES

Nature of the Church

1. The Church is Personal to Jesus (Acts 9:4-5)
2. The Church is Special to Jesus (Acts 20:28)
3. Defining Marks of the Church
 - Regenerate church membership (Acts 2:38-41)
 - Qualified leadership (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1:5-9)
 - Preaching & worship (2 Timothy 4:2)
 - Rightly administered sacraments (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11)
 - Spirit unity (theological, relational, philosophical, and missional unity)
 - Holiness (Hebrews 12:14; Matthew 18; 1 Corinthians 5; Proverbs 27:17)
 - The great commandment to love (Matthew 22:34-40)
 - The great commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)

Church Membership

Reason 1: Church membership is implied in church gatherings

Reason 2: Church membership is implied in church discipline (1 Corinthians 5:1-2; 9-13)

Reason 3: Church membership is implied with church leadership (Heb 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-2)

Reason 4: Church membership is implied in record keeping (Acts 2; 1 Tim 5; Acts 6, etc.)

Reason 5: Church membership is implied by the body (1 Corinthians 12:12-20)

Reason 6: Church membership is clearly taught (Hebrews 13:17)

A church member commitments; (1) To Jesus, (2) to church leadership, (3) church body.

Consequence of missing one commitment; (1) rebels, (2) consumers, (3) actors

The Mission: To extend the glory of God by making disciples through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Part 1: Extending the Glory of God (Philippians 1:20-21)

Part 2: By Making Disciples

Part 3: Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Church Distinctives

Distinctive 1: Everything Begins in the Family

There is the Universal church (Hebrews 12:22-23)

There is the Local church (Acts 8:1; Galatians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 1:2; etc.)

There is the Familial church (1 Timothy 3:5)

The church is only as strong as the families that make up the church.

Most do local church at the expense of the universal and familial church. (1 Tim 3:4-5)

Church Distinctive

Distinctive 2: Everything Serves the Mission

A simple disciple-making strategy promotes spiritual maturity.
A simple disciple-making strategy promotes families.
A simple disciple-making strategy promotes gospel extension.
Lastly, simple does not equal easy.

Distinctive 3: Everything Ends in Multiplication

Multiplication is implied in the Great commission (Matthew 28:19-20)
Multiplication on a personal level (Philippians 4:8-9)
Multiplication on a corporate level
– We are a church-planting church.

Distinctive 4: Redemption leads to Racial Reconciliation

God's intent is to rescue people from every ethnicity (Revelation 5:9-10)

CORE VALUE 1: GOSPEL

What is the Gospel?

Part 1: The just and gracious God of the universe (Romans 1:20-21; 2-11; 3:24)
Part 2: Looked upon hopelessly sinful people (Genesis 3; Romans 3:23; Eph 2:10)
Part 3: And send His Son, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over sin in the resurrection (Rom 3:25)
Part 4: That all who have faith in Him will be reconciled to God forever (Rom 3:24-26)

What does it mean to be Gospel-centered?

"To be Gospel-centered means that you're progressively seeing everything starts with the Gospel and is sustained by the Gospel."

Baptism at Citychurch

1. What is the meaning of baptism? (A symbol of salvation, not a means of salvation)
2. Who should be baptized? (Baptism follows saving faith)
3. Circumcision and baptism as symbols. (Colossians 2:11-12)
4. Should we baptize infants? (*"Baptism is a sign of faith in Jesus and it happens as an outward sign of that faith. This means until someone is of the age to make a profession of that faith in Christ they should not be baptized."*)

Communion at Citychurch

1. What is communion? (an ordinance established by Christ)
2. What does communion symbolize? (Remembrance & Proclamation)
3. What does communion do? (No "special grace" held in high regard for Christ' sake)
4. Who should take communion? (A believer in right standing with God, 1 Cor 11:28-29)
5. When and how often should we observe communion? (at least once per month)

Teaching at Citychurch

(Two-handed approach; closed on non-negotiable truths that cannot be compromised and open on negotiable truths that have no consequence on eternity and little on earth.)

1. Clarity - rightly defining, explaining, and presenting Biblical truth in a way people can understand.
2. Integrity - first, by keeping Scripture central and second, not dismiss a view by misrepresenting its argument.
3. Humility - Paul exhorts us to speak the truth in love.

CORE VALUE 2: COMMUNITY

The Path of the Journey of Church Membership

- Begins as interesting (starting point, general appeal)
- Continues because it is "cool" (the intrigue builds)
- Develops to "Awesome Hill" (relationships begin to develop)
- Descends to "Cruddy Valley" (recognize people are flawed)
- Ascends to "Family Mountain" (genuine relationships)

Importance/Definition of Home Groups

"A home group is a gospel community (family) that lives out the mission of God together in a specific area and to a particular people group by displaying the gospel in tangible forms and declaring the gospel to others (missionaries)."

Home Groups & Gospel, Community, and Mission

1. First Component - Gospel
(how the church family learns that the gospel applies to every area of life.)
2. Second Component - Community
(the church is God's primary means of addressing relational needs)
3. Third Component - Mission
(understanding that where God places you is where God wants to use you!)

Church Government & Eldership at Citychurch

1. How is the church led or government?
(Elders primarily prepare the deacons and members to do ministry through their leadership, oversight, and teaching, Ephesians 4:11-16)
2. What are elders?
(Elders are the group of qualified, competent men who God has charged to shepherd the local church; Philippians 1:1; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:2)
3. All New Testament Churches had Elders
 - Elders were in all the churches that Paul founded. (Acts 14:23)
 - Elders were in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15:2)
 - Elders were in Ephesus (Acts 20:17)
 - Elders in all the churches of Crete (Titus 1:5)
 - Elders in all the churches in the Dispersion of the Roman Empire (James 1:1; 5:14)
 - Elders in all churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, & Bithynia (1 Peter 1:1; 5:1)

The Local Church is governed by Christ (Matthew 16:18)

Church governance begins with Christ who mediated through the authority of apostles and their close associates (Eph 2:20; 1 Cor 2:12-13; 7:17; 14:37-38, 2 Thes 3:14) which we receive today as preserved in the inspired writings of the New Testament. Elders are those leaders who are charged under Christ with the leadership of the church.

Responsibilities of Elders

Elders duties include ruling (1 Tim 4:17), managing (1 Tim 3:3-4), tending (1 Pet 5:2-5), living exemplary lives (Heb 13:7), using authority (Acts 20:28), teaching (Eph 4:11, preaching (1 Tim 5:17), doctrinal instruction (Tit 1:9), and discipline (Matt 18:15-17).

Members are the Christians who are actively participating in the life of the local church so that it is but up for God's purposes. (1 Cor 12:1-31; esp 12:24).

Qualifications of Elders

1 Timothy 3:1-7 specifies above reproach, husband of one wife, sober minded, self-controlled, respectable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, manage his own household well, not a recent convert, and well thought of by outsiders.

Reflection – Pastoral Care and Church Discipline at Citychurch

How church leadership is to be viewed – 1 Corinthians 6:1-8

How the church should deal with a sinful member – 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 9-13

Service at Citychurch

Why do we serve?

1. It's command (Galatians 5:13)
2. We serve to glorify God (Romans 12:1; 1 Peter 4:11)
3. Serving builds up or edifies others (Ephesians 4:11-12)

Where to serve?

1. Consider your spiritual abilities. (divine enablements to enable meaningful service)
2. Consider your ministry passions
3. Consider your opportunities
4. Continue praying (John 16:13)

What does serving look like at Citychurch?

1. Serving the Body (Eph 4:15-16; Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:2)
2. Serving the Community (Matthew 5:14-16)
3. Serving Internationally (Matthew 28:28-29)

CORE VALUE 3: MISSION

A Missionary God and a Missionary People (Matthew 28:18-20)

The Mission defined (make baptized disciples that observe Biblical truth)

The Mission's power (all authority in heaven & earth given to Christ, and will be with His people to the end of the age)

The Mission personalized (go therefore...)

The Personal Component of Mission

Everyday people doing everything things with Gospel intentionality

Our Church Family's strategy has two primary parts:

1. Church planting
2. Adoption and Orphan Care

Our Strategy has a local and a global emphasis

Response: Membership Covenant

The purpose of Discover Citychurch is to prepare for commitment to the church, which we term "covenant membership." It is our means of incorporating all the concepts that were presented in the Discover Citychurch syllabus. It is our way of forming an authentic church community that reflects the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, clarify the on-going blessings and responsibilities of each member, encourage consistency, accountability, and loving unity within the church family, and ultimately accomplish God's call for the Citychurch family.