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# INTRODUCTION

You are probably in **FIRSTSTEPS** for at least one of four reasons: **1)** you are new to The Grove, **2)** you are new to your faith, **3)** you're re-establishing your relationship with God, or **4)** you simply want to strengthen your walk with God. Whatever your reason, we are excited that God has put you in our local church. We are honored to be part of God's plan to develop you into the person He has called you to be. We eagerly look forward to doing life with you and advancing the Kingdom of God together.



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**FIRSTSTEPS** is very important to us at The Grove. It helps us get on the same page by answering three key questions:

1  
**WHO**  
ARE  
WE?

2  
**HOW**  
DO WE  
GROW?

3  
**WHAT**  
IS MY  
PART?

Please, plan to attend every single week of **FIRSTSTEPS**. If you miss a week, you can pick it up the next time it is offered. After attending all three weeks, if you are interested, you can pursue partnership. Our goal for the next three weeks is to discover what a balanced, integrated, and healthy life of a disciple of Jesus looks like, specifically within the context of The Grove.

In particular, we're going to unpack **OUR MOTIVATION** and **OUR MISSION**, discuss **OUR METHOD** that defines our walk with God, and explore **OUR PURSUITS** which, as we develop them, will form a sound spiritual foundation throughout the rest of our lives.

The two people most responsible for your growth as a Christian are Jesus and you!

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# OUR MOTIVATION



## BECAUSE GOD ...

*"... so love the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* **John 3:16**

# OUR MISSION



## WE WILL ...

*Fight to rescue people from death to life by being disciples who make disciples.*

# OUR METHOD



## GATHER | Sunday Gatherings

Sit One then Serve One



## EQUIP | Discipleship Groups

Be Trained then Make Disciples



## SEND | Here & There

Go Out then Bring Others In

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# OUR PURSUITS

- 1** **LOVE GOD** | Deepening our love for God demonstrated in our obedience to His Word.
- 2** **PRAYER** | Laboring continuously in personal and corporate prayer.
- 3** **WORSHIP** | Worshiping the Lord out of thanksgiving and joy for who He is and what He has done.
- 4** **YIELD** | Following the Holy Spirit to do what He has called us to do and go where He has called us to go.
- 5** **LOVE OTHERS** | Increasing in our love for others shown through serving, encouraging, challenging, and forgiving one another.
- 6** **DISCIPLESHIP** | Pursuing the next one to disciple.
- 7** **STEWARDSHIP** | Stewarding our time, talents & treasures for the mission of God.
- 8** **NEXT GENERATION** | Equipping the next generation to take the gospel further.
- 9** **MULTIPLICATION** | Planting churches that plant churches.
- 10** **UNREACHED** | Taking the gospel to unreached places.
- 11** **UNITY** | Working to reflect & proclaim the diversity of the Kingdom.
- 12** **JUSTICE** | Defending, providing and seeking justice for the widow, the orphan, the poor, the marginalized and the refugee.

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WHO

ARE

WE?



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Throughout God's Word we see clearly who God is and how much He loves us, this serves as **OUR MOTIVATION.**

# BECAUSE GOD . . .

*"For God so love the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*

John 3:16



## WHO IS **GOD**?

HE IS **HOLY.**

*"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"*

Revelation 4:8

HE IS **WORTHY.**

*"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."*

Revelation 4:11

HE IS OUR **RESCUER.**

*"He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."*

Colossians 1:13-14

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# WE WILL...

**FIGHT TO RESCUE PEOPLE FROM DEATH TO LIFE BY BEING DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES.**

THE RESCUER HAS **INVITED** US TO JOIN HIS RESCUE

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

Acts 1:8

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation."*

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## THE RESCUER HAS **COMMANDED** US TO MAKE DISCIPLES

*“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.’”*

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In light of **OUR MOTIVATION** and **OUR MISSION** this week we will start with answering the question: **WHO ARE WE?** Remember: our overall goal in **FIRSTSTEPS** is to discover what a balanced, integrated, and healthy life of a disciple of Jesus looks like, specifically within the context of The Grove. We believe that, over time, as you incorporate **OUR MOTIVATION, OUR MISSION, OUR METHOD,** and **OUR PURSUITS** into your life, your life will be transformed. As you put them into practice, they will form sure foundations from which you can effectively follow and glorify Jesus throughout your life. Each week, we'll look at one part of **OUR METHOD** and four of **OUR PURSUITS**.

# METHOD

# 1

## GATHER

### Sunday Gatherings

*“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”*

Hebrews 10:24-25

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As individuals, we gather with people in a variety of settings throughout the week, but we believe that gathering together with the whole church is foundational to our walk with Christ.



## SIT ONE

Find the gathering time that fits you best and commit to attend as often as you possibly can. Don't let the weather, your feelings, fatigue, or other distractions keep you from coming. We believe that when we gather together during The Grove weekend gatherings for worship and hearing from God's Word, we are not just having a group meeting. We are gathering together in God's presence to ask Him two questions: **What is it that I want to say to You today** and **what is it that You want to say to me today?** Then when we respond to what God says on a weekly basis our lives can be transformed.



## SERVE ONE

In addition to attending a weekend gathering, we encourage everyone to serve in some way during the other weekend gathering. Join one of our teams: Kids Ministry, Student Ministry, Connections, Production, Worship, Facilities—just to name a few. This is a great opportunity to get more connected, to explore and develop your particular talents and gifts, and to contribute to our overall goal of helping others experience all that God has for them.

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# PURSUIITS

## 1 - 4

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### **DEEPENING** OUR LOVE FOR GOD DEMONSTRATED IN OUR OBEDIENCE TO HIS WORD.

The age old adage goes like this: “If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.” Eternal truth, healthy food for our souls, and trustworthy direction on how to live are all to be found in the Bible. You want your marriage to change, it’s here; you want your community to change, it’s here. Relationships, wisdom, direction—it’s all in the Bible. God will speak to you and transform you as you engage in His Word on a regular basis.

*“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”*

Matthew 24:35

*“Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”*

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*“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for ever good work.”*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

*“Your word is a lamp to my feet and alight to my path.”*

Psalm 119:105

*“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”*

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# HOW DO I HEAR GOD SPEAK FROM HIS WORD?

## PREPARE

My approach to Scripture is important. Just as we prepare for a game or a test, we must prepare our hearts and minds to hear from God.

### APPROACH TO HELP ME PREPARE TO HEAR FROM GOD:

1. **Prayerfully.** Approaching Scripture apart from prayer is one of the most counterproductive things we can do.
2. **Humbly.** We should never take for granted that the creator would befriend the work of His Hands. Me and you. But He did.
3. **Desperately.** If you read your Bible, you'll never get the impression that it's meant to be a hobby. It is your food. Your soul will die without the Bible.
4. **Studiously.** The purpose of studying is to stoke our worship, to deepen our love, to fuel our mission and to sustain our lives.
5. **Obediently.** Obedience is not about keeping a set of rules, it's about living according to our design.
6. **Joyfully.** God is happier than the happiest person you know. God's Word often feels like a duty and not a delight, but discipline will give way to delight. Press through.
7. **Expectantly.** Go into reading expecting to hear from God. God's Word saves and it will overhaul your life. Often, we get out what we expect.
8. **Communally.** It's a gift to understand the Bible with others...not alone. It protects us from veering off track.
9. **Be Ready to Look for Jesus.** Everything in the Bible points to Jesus.

Prep is everything. It's good to keep these as reminders before you open your Bible.

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# IMMERSE

1. **Choose a reading plan.** This eliminates the daily decision of “What should I read?” The “You Version” Bible app has great reading plans. Pick a plan that allows you to not rush but be able to sit in God’s word daily.
2. **Get up Early.** Rising Early Sets Your Day. It Gives You Focus On His Kingdom, His Will and His Strength. It Prepares You For Battle. Jesus did it...*And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.* **Mark 1:35**
3. **Prepare.** Pray. Thank God. Ask for focus.
4. **Read & Reflect on God’s Word**  
Read the passage...
  - i. What does it say about God? What do you learn about God?
  - ii. What does it say about humanity?
  - iii. What is there to apply? Is there something to do? Is there a reshaping of my thinking?
  - iv. How will I obey today?

# RESPOND

God has now spoken to you. Respond in Prayer (see next pursuit).

## SHARE

- Share what you learned with someone today
- Ask God to give you an opportunity to share
- Join a daily reading accountability group.

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## LABORING CONTINUOUSLY IN PERSONAL AND CORPORATE PRAYER.

The quality of our relationships often depends on the quality of our communication. Communicating is a fundamental part of our everyday lives. We make requests, exchange ideas, and listen to what others are saying. It's very natural to us. God wants communication with Him to also be natural to us. It is His desire that we develop a life-giving prayer life. At its core, prayer is communication and conversation with God. God wants us to cultivate our ability to communicate and converse with Him. He wants us to learn to hear what He is saying to us. Growing in our prayer life will enhance the quality of our relationship with Him.

*“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went to a desolate place, and there he prayed.”*

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*“I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in your words.”*

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*“The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

Philippians 4:5-7

*“Pray then like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.’”*

Matthew 6:9-13



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# HOW DO I HEAR FROM GOD THROUGH PRAYER?

## JESUS ON PRAYER

Prayer is not a monologue, but a dialogue with God.

**Matthew 6:5–8,** <sup>5</sup> “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>7</sup> “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Let’s sum up what He said:

- Don’t be fancy or try to impress
- Prayer is about connecting to God
- Motives matter

**Matthew 6:9-15,** <sup>9</sup> “Pray then like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. <sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread, <sup>12</sup> and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. <sup>14</sup> For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, <sup>15</sup> but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.’”

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There are 6 petitions. 3 About Him. 3 About us.

### **About God...**

1. Hallowed be your name – I praise you/thank you
2. Your Kingdom come – I submit to you
3. Your will be done – I want what you want

### **About Us...**

1. Give us our daily bread – God I need...
2. Forge us our debts – Forgive me for
3. Lead us not into temptation – Protect me

## **GROWING YOUR TIME IN PRAYER**

Spend 1 minute on each, and then increase to 2 min, and then 3 min...

1. Praise & Thank God
2. Confess
3. Read the Word
4. Mediate on His Word
5. Respond to the Word
6. Ask God For...
7. Pray for someone else
8. Ask for protection
9. Listen
10. Praise

The primary way that God speaks is through the Bible.

The primary content of our prayer is responding to what God is saying through His Word.

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## **GROWING YOUR TIME IN PRAYER**

Spend 1 minute on each, and then increase to 2 min, and then 3 min...

1. Praise & Thank God
2. Confess
3. Read the Word
4. Mediate on His Word
5. Respond to the Word
6. Ask God For...
7. Pray for someone else
8. Ask for protection
9. Listen
10. Praise

The primary way that God speaks is through the Bible.

The primary content of our prayer is responding to what God is saying through His Word.

## WORSHIPING THE LORD OUT OF THANKSGIVING AND JOY FOR WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE HAS DONE.

People are wired to worship. Each and every week people sing the praises of other people for who they are and what they have done. The problem: each and every one of those people will let us down. They are not worthy of our worship. There is only One that is worthy of our worship and that is God. He created us for worship and desires for us to rightly recognize Him for who He is and what He has done. He is Holy, Righteous and Almighty. As we shift our focus from worshiping the created to worshiping the Creator, we will begin to experience more of who God is and what He wants for our lives.

*“Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.”*

Psalm 29:2

*“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.”*

Psalm 95:6-7

*“Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!”*

Psalm 150:6

*Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’”*

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*“But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

John 4:23-24

*“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”*

Romans 12:1

*“And he said with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.’”*

Revelation 14:7



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# WORSHIPING GOD IN SPIRIT & TRUTH

**TRUE WORSHIP** is God-centered. As we prepare our hearts for worship let's remember that worship is about God, not us.

**TRUE WORSHIP** is Christ-focused. We worship Jesus; Jesus is the focus of worship because He is the focus of the Father's work.

**TRUE WORSHIP** is Spirit-empowered. Only those who have been made alive by the power of the Holy Spirit can truly worship God; these are the true worshipers God seeks.

**TRUE WORSHIP** is Word-based. God's Word (the Bible) is the basis of everything we do in worship (singing, praying, testifying, teaching). Why? Because God works by His Word and His Word is true.

**TRUE WORSHIP** engages both mind and heart. True worship requires that we engage God with our minds as we study His Word and seek to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. At the same time, it requires that we engage God with our hearts as the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our lives overflows and causes us to praise God in complete delight.

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**TRUE WORSHIP** is edifying. Though worship is all about God, it will benefit us and cause us to grow in our love for Him and one another, for worship has both a vertical (God-ward) and a horizontal (other people) direction.

**TRUE WORSHIP** is more than Sunday. As believers in Christ, we are not to neglect gathering together. However, true worship is an everyday matter. We are to give our entire lives over to God as living and holy sacrifices. That means we worship God in how we live, work and play every single day of our lives.



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## **FOLLOWING** THE HOLY SPIRIT TO DO WHAT HE HAS CALLED US TO DO AND GO WHERE HE HAS CALLED US TO GO.

It has been said many times and many ways, to be a great leader you first have to be a great follower. In John 14, Jesus paints a clear picture for the disciples of the great ministry that He was calling them into, but that great ministry would require them to be great followers who were equipped and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that through the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit, we will do the works that He did and even greater works. The key to living out that ministry and leading others to into a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ is the ability of each of us to humble ourselves to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit.

*“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”*

Ezekiel 36:26-27

*“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to remembrance all that I have said to you.”*

John 14:26

*“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.”*

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*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”*

**Galatians 5:22-26**

*“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*

**Ephesians 4:30**



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# 5 STEPS TOWARD WALKING BY THE SPIRIT

## 1. ACKNOWLEDGE

First, we must acknowledge from our hearts that we are helpless to do good apart from the enablement of the Holy Spirit. As Paul says in Romans 7:18, “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing.” So, the first step of walking by the Spirit is: Admit this fact and let it have its devastating effect on our pride. We cannot do anything pleasing to God without the constant enablement of the Spirit.

## 2. PRAY

Second, since it is promised in Ezekiel 36:27 that God will put His Spirit within us and cause us to walk in his statutes, pray that He does it to you by His almighty power. Many of you know the glorious, liberating experience of having an irresistible desire for sin overcome by a new and stronger desire for God and his way. And as you look back, to whom do you attribute that new desire? Where did it come from? It came from the merciful Holy Spirit. Therefore, let us pray like Paul did in 1 Thessalonians 3:12 for that chief fruit of the Spirit: “Now may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all men.”

## 3. TRUST

The third step involved in walking by the Spirit is faith. We must believe that since we have come under the gracious sway of God’s Spirit, “sin will no longer have dominion over us” (Romans 6:14). This confidence is what Paul meant by “reckoning ourselves dead to sin and alive to God” (Romans 6:11).

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We simply count on it that the Spirit who made us alive when we were dead in sin wills our holiness and has the power to achieve what He wills. The reason we can is that we know that God will cause his children to be led by the Spirit. And the way we know this is because of Romans 8:14, where Paul says you can't even be a child of God unless you are led by the Spirit. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." If you are a child of God, you have a solid and unshakable promise that God will give you victory over those powerful desires of the flesh.

## 4. ACT

The fourth step in walking by the Spirit after you have acknowledged your helplessness without him, prayed for his enablement, and trusted in his deliverance is to act the way you know is right. Notice: this is not step number one. If this were step number one, all our actions would be works of the flesh, not fruit of the Spirit. Only after we have appealed for the Spirit's enablement and thrown ourselves confidently on his promise and power to work in us, do we now work with all our might. Only when we act with that spiritual preparation, will we be able to say with Paul in Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (see also Romans 15:18, 19).

## 5. THANK

The final step in walking by the Spirit is to thank God for any virtue attained or any good deed performed. If without the Spirit we can do no right, then we must not only ask His enablement for it but also thank Him whenever we do it. Just one example from 2 Corinthians 8:16. Paul says, "Thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus." Titus loved the Corinthians. Where did that come from? God put it in his heart. It was a fruit of the Spirit. So what does Paul do? He thanks God. And Titus should, too. Thanks be to God who puts love in our hearts!

*\*Thanks to John Piper for sharing these five things that we must do so that it can be truly said that we are walking by the Spirit. For a more detailed unpacking of each point check out his message: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/let-us-walk-by-the-spirit>.*

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# GOING DEEPER



1

What weak spots or obstacles do you see in you establishing and strengthening a strong foundation in personal Bible reading, prayer, and worship?

2

What simple practical steps is God leading you to take to overcome those obstacles?

3

How do you tend to “shush” the Holy Spirit? What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do and/or where He has called you to go that you have been resisting? How can you humble yourself to His control in your life?

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Throughout God's Word we see clearly who God is and how much He loves us, this serves as **OUR MOTIVATION.**

# BECAUSE GOD . . .

*"For God so love the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*

John 3:16



## THE ISSUE OF **SIN** AND **SEPARATION.**

*"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that he cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear."*

Isaiah 59:1-2

*"There is no one who calls on your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities."*

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Throughout God's Word we are challenged to embrace God's calling in our lives, this is **OUR MISSION.**

# WE WILL...

FIGHT TO RESCUE PEOPLE **FROM DEATH TO LIFE**  
BY BEING DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES.

*"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross."*

Colossians 2:13-14



WE ARE **DEAD** IN OUR SIN.

*"For all have sin and fall short of the glory of God."*

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## WE GO **FROM DEATH TO LIFE** THROUGH JESUS.

*“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”*

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## WE FIND LIFE THROUGH **REPENTANCE** AND **FORGIVENESS**.

*“For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”*

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In light of **OUR MOTIVATION** and **OUR MISSION** this week we will start with answering the question: **WHO ARE WE?** Remember: our overall goal in **FIRSTSTEPS** is to discover what a balanced, integrated, and healthy life of a disciple of Jesus looks like, specifically within the context of The Grove. We believe that, over time, as you incorporate **OUR MOTIVATION, OUR MISSION, OUR METHOD,** and **OUR PURSUITS** into your life, your life will be transformed. As you put them into practice, they will form sure foundations from which you can effectively follow and glorify Jesus throughout your life. Each week, we'll look at one part of **OUR METHOD** and four of **OUR PURSUITS**.

# METHOD

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### EQUIP

#### Discipleship Groups

*“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 with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”*

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We believe Discipleship Groups are the best environment in which we become equipped for life and ministry. Discipleship Groups are where we grow as Christians.



## BE TRAINED

Join a Discipleship Group where you can be encouraged and equipped to live the life for which God has designed you. It is in the context of ongoing fellowship (Acts 2:42-47) that you can develop genuine accountability (Proverbs 27:17; James 5:16) which has tremendous benefits for both yourself and others.



## MAKE DISCIPLES

Use what God has put in your life and lead a Discipleship Group yourself. We grow the most as we are seeking to lead others into growth. We have the opportunity to call others to follow us as we follow Christ. It is through leading a Discipleship Group that you can truly help people connect relationally with others, be challenged spiritually by others, and develop a heart to lead others so that more people can be reached.

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### **INCREASING** IN OUR LOVE FOR OTHERS SHOWN THROUGH SERVING, ENCOURAGING, CHALLENGING, AND FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER.

The Beatles made a bold statement in their song “All you need is love.” Well, you actually need God and others in order to truly express love. Our love for God and others is not only evidence of the presence of Christ in our lives, but it also holds the power to transform our lives. Love is selfless. It encapsulates a care for others and their wellbeing. We are to love one another the way that Jesus loved us (John 13:34-35), which means that we will serve one another, encourage one another, challenge one another, and forgive one another.

*“A new command I give you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

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*“You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.”*

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*“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”*

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*“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*

Ephesians 4:30

*“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”*

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# 9 COMMUNITY BUILDING PRACTICES

- 1. AFFIRM** one another's strengths, abilities, and gifts.  
*(Romans 12:10; James 5:9; Romans 12:3-8)*
- 2. AFFIRM** one another's equal importance in Christ.  
*(Romans 15:7; 1 Corinthians 12:25; 1 Peter 5:5; James 2:1)*
- 3. AFFIRM** one another through visible affection.  
*(Romans 16:16; James 1:19; Ephesians 4:32; 1 Thessalonians 3:12)*
- 4. SHARE** one another's space, goods, and time.  
*(Romans 12:10; 1 Peter 4:9; Galatians 6:10)*
- 5. SHARE** one another's needs and problems.  
*(Galatians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13)*
- 6. SHARE** one another's beliefs, thinking, and spirituality.  
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# 9 COMMUNITY BUILDING PRACTICES

- 1. AFFIRM** one another's strengths, abilities, and gifts.  
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**7. SERVE** one another through accountability.

*(James 5:16; Romans 15:14; Ephesians 4:25)*

**8. SERVE** one another through forgiveness and reconciliation.

*(Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13; Galatians 5:25; James 4:11; Matthew 5:23-24, 18:15)*

**9. SERVE** one another's interests rather than our own.

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## 6

# PURSUING THE NEXT ONE TO DISCIPLE.

There are some things that we grow out of in this life: our clothes, our taste in music, our diet fads, our hobbies. There are also some things that we should grow out of, but don't: taking naps, watching Disney movies, sleeping with a sound machine. One thing as a follower of Jesus that we will never grow out of is the call to be a disciple that makes disciples. When one season of discipleship ends, a new one should begin. There are never enough disciple makers that we can just sit back and let others do the work of personally investing in another person's spiritual growth as a disciple to the point where they then start making other disciples. We believe the best way to make disciples is in the intentional one-on-one relationship between a mature believer and one who is new to the faith.

*“When Jesus called His first disciples He said: ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’”*

Matthew 4:19

*“Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’”*

Matthew 9:37-38

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*“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.”*

Luke 6:40

*“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples ... You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”*

John 15:8, 16

*“When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”*

Acts 14:21-22

*“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”*

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# 5 MISSIONAL PRACTICES TO REACH AND RESTORE THE WORLD

In Genesis Chapter 12, God said to Abraham...

*<sup>2</sup>And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.* **Genesis 12:2**

God blessed Abraham. He blessed him spiritually, relationally and financially. Not only did God bless him by receiving blessings, but he blessed him to BE A BLESSING. God has called us to be a blessing to accomplish Jesus' mission.

The acronym BLESS is made up of these 5 missional practices:

**BEGIN**  
WITH  
PRAYER

**LISTEN**

**EAT**

**SERVE**

**SHARE**

## 1. BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Pray for people in your life who are far from God. Ask God, "How do you want to use me to bless the people in my life?"

## 2. LISTEN

Be slow to speak, but quick to listen. Ask questions. The best way to learn about someone is to listen to their story and what's going on in their life. By listening we are better equipped to pray and serve them.

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### 3. EAT

Share meals and life with people in your life who do not know God. This takes time, but this is an incredible way to build a relationship.

### 4. SERVE

Be attentive to opportunities God provides you to care for people and attend to their needs. If you listen and eat with people, they will tell you how to love them and you will learn how best to serve them.

### 5. SHARE

Once you build relationship and earn trust, look for ways you can share the Gospel and how Jesus changed your life.

These practices, empowered by the Holy Spirit, will enable you to participate in the strategy that God has invited you into to reach the world. **Do one of these missional practices everyday and you will see God move in powerful ways!**

## MY 100

Jesus commanded us to make disciples. God has strategically placed people in your life so that you could be one to love them, serve them share the gospel with them and disciple them. “MY 100” is your list of those relationships. This list will help you be intentional to BLESS them, as well as produce your future disciples.

#### WHO SHOULD BE ON MY 100 LIST?

- Anyone who is not a Christ follower.
- Anyone whose beliefs are not evident.
- Anyone who claims to be a Christian and yet there is no visible fruit (words, actions, commitments).

Pray daily for 4 people from this list and you’ll be looking to further BLESS them. This list, if used, can potentially provide disciples for years to come.

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## STEWARDING OUR TIME, TALENTS, AND TREASURES FOR THE MISSION OF GOD.

There are two things that most everyone would say they need more: time and money! It seems like both of these slip past us like sand through our fingers. The reality is that we have all the time, talent, and treasure that God desires us to have to meet the needs of our lives, but also to further His mission through our lives. The critical factor is learning to steward the resources that God has given us. That begins with acknowledging that everything that we have comes from God as we see in Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.” We want to be a people who utilize what God has entrusted to us to help others move from death to life, so we can hear these words from God, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

*“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”*

Ephesians 5:15-16

*“So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.”*

Psalm 90:12

*“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.”*

Romans 12:6

*“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”*

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*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

Matthew 6:19-21

*“But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world ... As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.”*

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# HOW TO BE PRODUCTIVE ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

**RECOGNIZE** that God created you to be productive.  
(*Genesis 1:28*)

**KNOW** that Jesus requires a return on your life.  
(*Matthew 15:14-30*)

**SEEK** after living productively because this is important to God.  
(*Ephesians 5:15-17; Psalm 90:12*)

**ACTING** in God's power, work for the peace and prosperity of all.  
(*Jeremiah 29:7; Matthew 5:16*)

**RECOGNIZE** that doing good works is how God describes being productive.  
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**WORK** your hardest in all you do for God's glory. You will be rewarded.  
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**MAKE** loving God and loving others a motivating factor in all you do, including work.  
*(Matthew 22:37-40)*

**SEEK** to be as wise and effective you can be at what God has called you to.  
*(Proverbs 6:6-8)*

**FIGHT** laziness. It only makes life harder for others and is inherently destructive.  
*(Proverbs 18:9)*

**SEEK** a deeper understanding of God's grace to us in Christ, because it cultivates productivity  
*(Titus 3:4-8)*

**CONTINUALLY** renew your mind to help you follow God's will for what you should accomplish.  
*(Romans 12:2)*

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## EQUIPPING THE NEXT GENERATION TO TAKE THE GOSPEL FURTHER.

If the statistics are to be believed, the next generation is leaving the church at an alarming rate. The data is fluid, but a conservative estimation suggests upwards of 70% of teenagers stop attending church upon graduation, and only ½ of those students return later in life. Many blogs, books, and articles have been written about why students are leaving the church, and there is no one prevailing reason why. This is why we intentionally pass on God's truth to the next generation in a relevant, appealing way. We are called to raise, equip, and empower the next generation to serve God and influence culture in all walks of life, locally and globally. Generations who work together bring out the best in everyone.

*“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”*

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*“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

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*“So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us ... For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.”*

1 Thessalonians 2:8, 11-12

*“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”*

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# 5 WAYS TO PASS ON FAITH TO THE NEXT GENERATION

## 1. GRAB THEM WITH PASSION

Increasingly, people do not go to church because they feel like they have to. This is true especially among the young. Newer generations will not give Christianity a second thought if it seems lifeless, rote, and uninspiring. They will only get serious about the Christian faith if it seems like something seriously worth their time. We would do well to pay attention to Romans 12. “Let love by genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord” (9-11). If we are to grab the next generation with the gospel, we must grab them with passion. And to grab them passion, we must be grabbed with it ourselves.

## 2. WIN THEM WITH LOVE

Jesus said it best: “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). Give up on relevance, and try love. If they see love in you, love for each other, love for the world, and love for them, they will listen. Love won’t guarantee they young people will never walk away from the church, but it will make it a lot harder. It won’t guarantee that non-Christians will come to Christ, but it will make the invitation a whole lot more attractive.

## 3. HOLD THEM WITH HOLINESS

The one indispensable requirement for producing godly, mature Christians is godly, mature Christians. Granted, good parents still have wayward

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children and faithful mentors don't always get through to their pupils. But in the church as a whole, the promise of 2 Timothy 1 is as true as ever; if we are holy, we will be fruitful. Personal connections with growing Christians is what the next generation needs more than ever. If your walk matches your talk, if your faith costs you something, if being a Christian is more than a cultural garb, they will listen to you.

## 4. CHALLENGE THEM WITH TRUTH

Whether they accept it all or not, the next generation wants to know what we actually believe. They want the truth straight up, unvarnished, and unashamed. They are not incapable of learning. We need to challenge them to think deeply, to be able to articulate their faith, and to live out the truth in their lives. Shallow Christianity will not last in the coming generation and it will not grow. Cultural Christianity is fading. The church must go big on truth with this next generation, so that it can go big on spreading the truth of the gospel to the next generation.

## 5. AMAZE THEM WITH GOD

The gospel is not a message about what we need to do for God, but about what God has done for us. So get them with the good news about who God is and what he has done for us. Give them a God who is holy, independent, and unlike us, a God who is good, just, full of wrath and full of mercy. Give them a God who is sovereign, powerful, tender, and true. Give them a God with edges. Give them an undiluted God who makes them feel cherished and safe, and small and uncomfortable too. Give them a God who works all things after the counsel of his will and for the glory of his name. Give them a God whose love is lavish and free. Give them a God worthy of wonder and fear, a God big enough for all our faith, hope, and love.

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# 2

## GOING DEEPER



1

What obstacles do you face in serving, encouraging, challenging, and forgiving one another? What steps can you take to live out the “one another” commands this week?

2

Have you been discipled? If so, what were the benefits to you spiritually? Have you discipled someone else in the past? What would it look like for your to pursue the next one to disciple?

3

Make a list of how God has blessed you with time, talents and treasures. What are some simple ways that you can become a better steward of all that God has entrusted to you?

4

Why is so important for us to invest in this next generation? If you still have kids at home, how are you equipping them to own their faith and take the gospel wherever they go? If you don't have kids at home, how can you come alongside others to equip the next generation to take the gospel into our world?

# 2

## GOING DEEPER



1

What obstacles do you face in serving, encouraging, challenging, and forgiving one another? What steps can you take to live out the “one another” commands this week?

2

Have you been discipled? If so, what were the benefits to you spiritually? Have you discipled someone else in the past? What would it look like for your to pursue the next one to disciple?

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Throughout God's Word we see clearly who God is and how much He loves us, this serves as **OUR MOTIVATION.**

# BECAUSE GOD . . .

*"For God so love the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*

John 3:16



## GOD SAVES US FOR HIS **GLORY.**

*"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."*

Habakkuk 2:14



## GOD SAVES US BY HIS **GRACE.**

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."*

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# WE WILL...

FIGHT TO RESCUE PEOPLE FROM DEATH TO LIFE  
**BY BEING DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES.**

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?



WE **FOLLOW** JESUS.

*"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'"*

Matthew 16:24



WE **INCREASE** IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

*"So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, 'If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.'"*

John 8:31-32



WE **BEAR** FRUIT.

*"And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy."*

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# HOW DO WE **MAKE DISCIPLES**?



## WE **ACTIVATE** OTHERS FOR THE RESCUE MISSION.

*“You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”*

2 Timothy 2:1-2



## WE **HELP** THEM PURSUE **MATURITY** IN CHRIST.

*“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”*

Colossians 1:28-29



## WE **MODEL** FOR THEM HOW TO **PROCLAIM** THE TRUTH.

*“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”*

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In light of **OUR MOTIVATION** and **OUR MISSION** this week we will start with answering the question: **WHO ARE WE?** Remember: our overall goal in **FIRSTSTEPS** is to discover what a balanced, integrated, and healthy life of a disciple of Jesus looks like, specifically within the context of The Grove. We believe that, over time, as you incorporate **OUR MOTIVATION, OUR MISSION, OUR METHOD,** and **OUR PURSUITS** into your life, your life will be transformed. As you put them into practice, they will form sure foundations from which you can effectively follow and glorify Jesus throughout your life. Each week, we'll look at one part of **OUR METHOD** and four of **OUR PURSUITS**.

# METHOD

## 3

### SEND

Here & There

*“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him ... Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.’”*

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As a church, we want to gather and equip people, so that we can send them out on mission both HERE (where we live, work, and play) and THERE (to the ends of the earth). You cannot depend on someone else reaching and discipling others, it is your privilege and responsibility. Don't wait on someone else to go, instead be like Isaiah and say "Here I am! Send me."



## GO OUT.

Be "outward-focused." You bring the Kingdom with you wherever you go. Pray for and look for opportunities to tell your story and God's story. Every day we have the opportunity to take the gospel with us into our neighborhood, workplace, and community. God is calling us to go out with His good news both here, but also to the ends of the earth. We all need to live with a sent mindset.



## BRING OTHERS IN.

Learn to be an "inviter." Invite people to weekend gatherings, community groups, your home, and other activities. Ultimately, our invitation is for people to come into relationship with Jesus Christ, so that they can move from death to life. Wherever you find yourself and whoever you are in conversation, you can invite them to experience the love of God.

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# PURSUIITS

## 9 - 12

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### TAKING THE GOSPEL TO UNREACHED PLACES.

We often make assumptions that prove to be very wrong. Those assumptions could cost us an opportunity, a friendship, or even our job. One of the biggest assumptions that most people in the church make is that “everyone has already heard the gospel of Jesus Christ.” We assume that because of time and technology the gospel is easily in reach of the over 7 billion people that call the earth their home. The reality is that there are people across the street and around the world who have never had someone clearly explain to them who Jesus is and what He has done for them. We believe that it is our God-given responsibility to be ready and to share the gospel with anyone, anywhere, any time until the whole world has had the chance to hear the gospel from the lips of a follower of Jesus.

*“And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”*

Matthew 24:14

*“And he said to them, ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.’”*

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*“For so Lord has commanded us, saying, ‘I have made a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’”*

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*“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’”*

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*“Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’ So then, those who are of faith.”*

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# A 5 STEP JOURNEY FOR SHARING THE GOSPEL

## 1. GET CONNECTED

You can pursue this with anyone by asking two kinds of questions: “Who are you?” questions to learn about their background, and “How are you?” questions to learn about their current concerns. Take time to get acquainted with them, their family. Be friendly and open.

**Transition #1: “Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?”**

## 2. GET TO GOD

Step Two is accomplished with a question and an observation. The step two question is: “Most religions are alike, aren’t they?” Then make the observation: “We are all trying to please God, so we can go to heaven some day, and we are all trying to pay off our sin debt. We all sin, don’t we? Even good people sin. Sinning is easy, but paying off our sin debt to God is much more difficult, isn’t it?”

**Transition #2: “In your religion, what are you doing to get your sins forgiven?”**

## 3. GET TO LOSTNESS

After asking the person what are some of the things they are doing in their religion to please God and get their sins forgiven, let them tell you two or three things they are doing. Listen attentively and don’t be afraid to ask questions along the way.

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Wrap up the section by asking them three questions:

“Are your sins paid off yet?”

“When do you think your sins will be paid off?”

“On Judgment Day, do you know that your sin debt will be paid?”

**Transition #3: “What I believe is different; I know that my sins are forgiven. It is not because I am a good person, although I do try. I know my sins are forgiven, because God himself has made a way for our sins to be forgiven.”**

## 4. GET TO THE GOSPEL

Share the gospel. You can find some great gospel presentations here: <https://www.sonlife.com/blog/sharing-the-gospel/>. Finish by saying, “And that is why I know my sins are forgiven.”

**Transition #4: “According to the Bible, if we surrender our life to Jesus as Lord and believe that He has paid for our sins through His sacrifice and that God has raised Him from the dead, our sins will be forgiven.”**

## 5. GET TO A DECISION

To bring your conversation to a decision, ask two questions:

**“This makes sense, doesn’t it? Although we cannot pay off our own sin debt, God has made a way for our sins to be forgiven through Jesus’ sacrificial death and resurrection.”**

**“Do you believe what I have told you: that Jesus died for our sins and was raised again?”**

*\*Thanks to Mike Shipman for this simple model that he uses to share the Gospel with Muslims, but is applicable to sharing the gospel with anyone. Read more from his book “Any3: Anyone, Anywhere, Any Time: Lead Muslims to Christ Now!” or the overview in this article: <http://themissionnetwork.org/files/2014/12/Shipman-Any-3-Overview.pdf>*

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## PLANTING CHURCHES THAT PLANT CHURCHES.

Don't we already have enough churches out there? Why don't we just grow a bigger and bigger church? Couldn't we use those resources to help out people at our church? These are just a few of the questions that people ask when the topic of church planting comes up in most churches. So, why plant churches? First, the foundation is that Jesus has called us to plant churches where new believers can worship, grow, and ultimately be unleashed to reach more people. Second, the reality is that new churches best reach new people most effectively and reach the unchurched to a greater proportion than established churches. Simply put, we plant churches that plant churches because we are a Kingdom-minded church that is more concerned about The Church, than just our church.

*“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

Matthew 16:18

*“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.’”*

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*“And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed ... And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.”*

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*“Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well.”*

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*“What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. 9 For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building.”*

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# 5 REASONS ESTABLISHED CHURCHES SHOULD PLANT CHURCHES

## 1. REACHES LOST PEOPLE

The first reason is simple. It's one on which, hopefully, all of us can agree. Lost people need Jesus. People will be won to Jesus in the churches we plant and in our church. Some that may be less receptive to our church will be very receptive to our plant. That's why we want to plant churches that plant churches that plant churches.

## 2. FOLLOWS A BIBLICAL PATTERN

When we look throughout the New Testament, we see church planting as an established pattern. I will be the first to tell you the Bible never mentions church planting. It never comes out and says, "Plant churches," but it's clearly assumed. It's the first thing the disciples did when they responded to the commissions of Jesus. They planted churches. Most of the churches recorded in the New Testament were involved in sending people in some form or another to start other churches. Church planting is an overwhelmingly Biblical passion and we need to support it. We were all started at some point. Let's model that spirit again and start more churches.

## 3. ESSENTIAL FOR SURVIVAL

For any movement to thrive, it has to plant churches. Statistically speaking, if a population just wants to "break even," it has to plant at least at a three percent level—a denomination of 100 churches has to plant 3 to stay even considering attrition. A five percent increase is needed to grow. Ten percent is needed to thrive. If we honestly believe

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our movement is the place to land theologically, then we need to support it by planting churches.

## 4. BENEFITS THE PLANTING CHURCH

Jeff Farmer did his Ph.D. dissertation on how church planting impacts mother churches. He studied seventy-five churches of different sizes that were planting churches and compared them with seventy-five that were not. Comparing churches of similar sizes and backgrounds, he found churches that were planting churches were healthier than those that did not. The data did not simply reflect the tendency that healthy churches are more likely to plant churches. It showed that the planting of churches actually makes churches healthier as an end result. When people hear stories of life change at the new church, they start to see their community differently. “Maybe it could happen here, too?” The rising tide of church planting lifts boats all along the way.

## 5. NECESSARY TO REACH NORTH AMERICA

If we're going to reach North America for the gospel, it's going to take thousands upon thousands of more churches. North America is huge, geographically, but even more than that, it's incredibly diverse culturally. Too many people look across North America and think it's uniformly flat like a pancake. Look closer. It's not a pancake. It's a waffle. There are thousands of little divots with people living in them who have customs, cultures, and contexts that are vastly different from each other. I believe that Jesus is calling us to go into all those divots of the waffles to evangelize, and if there's enough of a population, to plant churches in those divots that will plant churches that plant churches.

*\*Thanks to Ed Stetzer for challenging established churches to be engaged in church planting. Read more from his book “Planting Missional Churches” or the entire article here: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2014/june/5-reasons-established-churches-should-plant-churches.html>*

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## WORKING TO REFLECT AND PROCLAIM THE DIVERSITY OF THE KINGDOM.

Hardly anyone in the American church thinks that ethnic diversity is a bad thing. And yet take a look at most of our churches, and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous criticism still has some bite to it: "Eleven o'clock on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America." A mild desire to see diversity isn't going to create multi-ethnic diversity in our churches. For diversity to truly take hold, it takes intentionality. We want to be a people where the diversity of the Kingdom is reflected in our leadership, in our gatherings, in our community groups, and in our homes.

*"Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!"*

Psalm 117:1-2

*"And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."*

Daniel 7:14

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, ..."*

Matthew 28:19a

*"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."*

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*“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

Galatians 3:28

*“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.”*

Ephesians 2:14-16

*“My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.”*

James 2:1

*“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”*

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# HOW TO PURSUE DIVERSITY IN OUR CHURCH & COMMUNITY

IN ORDER TO PURSUE DIVERSITY, WE MUST MOVE FROM **IGNORANCE** TO **AWARENESS** TO **INTERACTION** TO **GOSPELIZED COMMUNITY**.

## IGNORANCE

Most of us grow up around people like us, we work with people like us, and we socialize with people like us. We aren't willfully hateful, but we simply don't know much about people from different backgrounds. So we—especially those of us in the majority culture—fill in the gaps with presuppositions and stereotypes. We assume that “black people” or “Hispanic people” all think, act, or feel a certain way.

## AWARENESS

Admitting our ignorance leads us to the next step along the spectrum to awareness. Perhaps we watch something on the news, or make a new friend, or have some personal experience that forces us to recognize cultural differences. Awareness is unsettling, because it challenges a lot of what we assumed was simply “normal.”

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## INTERACTION

Most of the time our society thinks awareness is success. But it's the jump from awareness to interaction that really begins to change us. We develop personal relationships with people from other ethnicities and backgrounds. We respect them. We listen to them. We assume the best about them. And we ask a lot of questions. I'll be honest: this is uncomfortable and difficult work. But we at The Grove have grown tremendously by simply asking questions and being humble enough to hear the answers.

## GOSPELIZED COMMUNITY

The end goal, though, isn't just interaction. It's gospelized community. Our society wants us to be aware. At key moments of national tragedy, they may want us to interact. But they can't offer a way for us to love each other like family. But we in the church know that we are a family—black, white, Latino, Asian, Arab, and everything in between. There's really only one race—the human race, one problem—sin, and one solution—the blood of Jesus Christ. As the old saying goes, the ground is level at the foot of the cross.

*\*Thanks to Chris Green and J.D. Greear for expressing so clearly this process of becoming multi-ethnic. Read more here: <http://bit.ly/diversityplumbline>*

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## DEFENDING, PROVIDING, AND SEEKING JUSTICE FOR THE WIDOW, THE ORPHAN, THE POOR, THE MARGINALIZED AND THE REFUGEE.

Sometimes, people need to hear the Message; but, sometimes, people need to see the Message through the way that we live and love. We are called to be visible expressions of the love and kindness of God. We are called to be a source of help for the needy. We are also called to bring help in areas of social injustice. Our voices need to be heard where people are oppressed. And, our words need to be backed by practical deeds. As a church and as individuals, we are committed to doing our part to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those who desperately need to experience His love and grace.

*“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”*

Matthew 5:16

*“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me ...Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”*

Matthew 25:35-36, 40

*“...learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.”*

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*“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”*

James 1:27

*“Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. The LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!”*

Psalm 146:5-10



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# PURSuing JUSTICE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

TAKING OUR CUE FROM PSALM 146 WE CAN IDENTIFY 5 GROUPS OF PEOPLE WE OUGHT TO BE CONCERNED FOR:

## 1. THE OPPRESSED

Who in your church or neighborhood is experiencing vocational, financial, or relational hardship? How can you address their needs?

## 2. PRISONERS

Are there those in your community who are literally imprisoned? Not just those in jail, but perhaps housebound, or subject to domestic slavery? How might you witness to the freedom of the gospel?

## 3. THE BLIND (THE SICK)

Who in your community or church is in need of physical assistance? Whether permanent or temporary, how can you help to alleviate their suffering, and help them back towards health in its widest sense?

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## 4. THE SOJOURNERS (THE OUTSIDERS)

Are there those in your community who are not at “home” for one reason or another? Perhaps they’re homeless, immigrating from another country, or simply a communal outsider. How can you make space for them, rather than leave them out in the cold?

## 5. THE WIDOWS & THE FATHERLESS

Who in your community experiences personal difficulty because of their relational situation? Are there single, divorced, or widowed people in need of assistance or friendship? Are there children who need physical and relational support?

*\*Thanks to Stephen Um for asking these tough questions about justice. Read more from his book “Gospel Shaped Mercy” or the entire article here: <https://wavaam.com/articles/slideshows/christian-god-did-not-save-you-just-to-read-your-bible-every-day>*

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# 3

## GOING DEEPER



1

How does fear keep you from taking the gospel to unreached places, whether that is across the street or around the world? What are the steps you would need to take personally to become more effecting sharing the gospel with anyone, anywhere, and any time?

2

What objections do you have for the church and you personally to us planting churches that plant churches? What are the challenges that you think we will face at keeping this as a priority at our church and in the lives of our people? Would you be willing to go, if God called you to be a part a church plant?

3

As you consider God's value of diversity in the Kingdom, what challenges keep us from seeing and experiencing that in our church and community? What simple practical steps is God leading you to take to overcome those obstacles?

4

Why do you think our role as image-bearers is so important for how we think about social justice, mercy and compassion? How has the larger body of Christ failed at this task? How did Jesus succeed at this task? What changes can you make in your daily life to succeed at the task?

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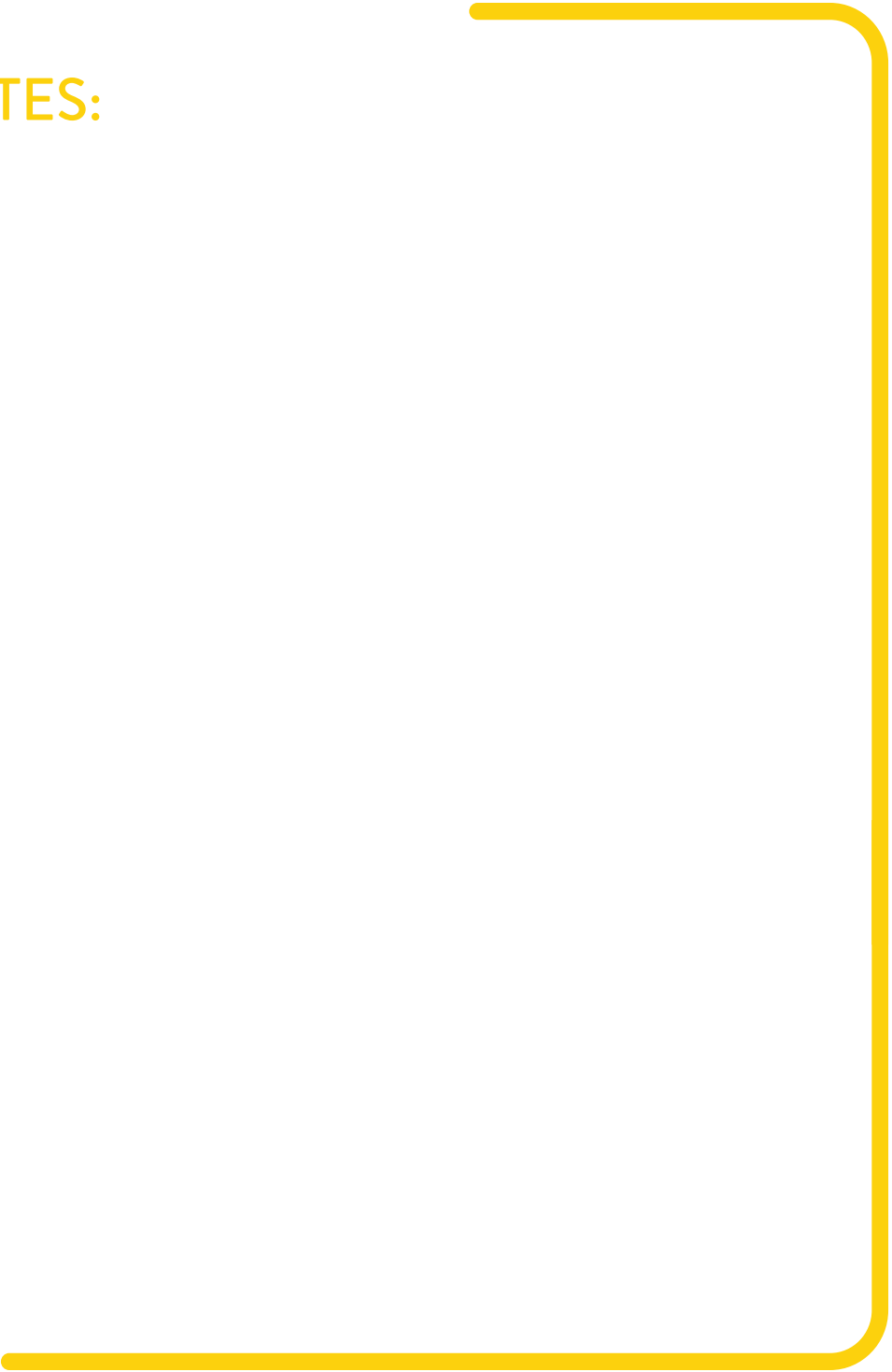
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# WHAT WE BELIEVE THE ESSENTIALS

## THE BIBLE

We believe that the entirety of Scripture (66 books of the Old and New Testaments) has been given to us by God and is accurate, inerrant, and infallible in its original form. The Holy Spirit inspired all authors of Scripture, and it is the final authority to all matters concerning life and faith. (*2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; John 17:17*)

## GOD

There is one sovereign, holy, righteous, just God over the entire universe. God the Father is Maker and Ruler over all. He is slow to anger, rich in mercy, and abounding in steadfast love. The Godhead eternally exists as three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All are one in their essence, yet three in their person, sharing the same nature, yet distinct in their works. This mystery is known as the Trinity, in which God exists in complete and eternal unity within Himself. (*Exodus 34:6-7; Mark 12:29; Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14*)

## JESUS CHRIST

Jesus is the second person of the Trinity and has eternally existed as God and the Son of God. Jesus incarnated Himself to enter into human history making Himself a man like us that He might pay the penalty of our sins, redeem us, and restore our relationship with God. Being in the exact representation of God, He is able to reveal the Father to us. Since only He has lived a perfect life, salvation can be found only through Him. All who call on Jesus as Lord and Savior will be saved. One day Jesus is coming back to judge the earth in righteousness, bringing the redeemed into eternal union with Him. (*John 1:14, 8:58; Acts 4:12; Colossians 1:15-17; 1 Timothy 1:15*)

## HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and is equally God. The Holy Spirit has eternally existed like the Father and Son and lives in all believers as an assurance of our salvation in Christ. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Holy Spirit also intercedes for the saints, illuminates Scripture, helps in our weakness, and gives the believer spiritual gifts to minister to the church. (*Acts 5:3-4; John 16:7-11; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 1:13; Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 14*)

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## **HUMANITY**

Man was created by God, in His image, to be in intimate fellowship with and worship of Him. However, man rebelled against God by sinning, causing separation from God. Now all man is born sinful, falling short of God's glorious standard, and is in need of salvation.

*(Genesis 1:26-28, 3:1-24; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3)*

## **CHURCH**

The Church is the living Body of Christ on earth; Christ is its head and source of life. The Body is composed of those who have received Him personally. The Church exists to celebrate the living God, cultivate personal growth in Christ, love one another in Christ, and communicate Christ to the world through words and deeds.

*(Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 2:1-4)*

## **BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are both sacraments that have been practiced by Christians for generations. Baptism exists as a sign to show the world personal faith in Christ. Out of obedience to His command, we get baptized as a symbol to show our death with Christ and our new life in Christ. Likewise, the Lord's Supper is practiced to remember the Lord, and what He did for us in His death on the Cross. Believers should frequently practice the Lord's Supper as a reminder of the beauty and glory of the gospel.

*(Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32)*

## **FUTURE THINGS**

We believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth again to restore all things to Himself. We believe in the physical resurrection of the body, and the final judgment of God. We believe that those who have been redeemed in Christ will enter into eternal joy and harmony with God, while those who have chosen to reject God will suffer and be separated from God forever.

*(John 14:3; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelations 20-22)*

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN BELIEF IN THE ESSENTIALS—WE HAVE UNITY**

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

*(Ephesians 4:4-6)*

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## **IN NON-ESSENTIAL BELIEFS—WE HAVE LIBERTY**

“As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions ... The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God ...”

*(Romans 14:1, 22a)*

## **IN ALL OUR DISCUSSION ABOUT WHAT WE BELIEVE—WE SHOW LOVE**

“And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”

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# PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

This document contains the operating guidelines for The Grove Church. It is intended to be a dynamic document and will likely be revised as the church grows and takes on a greater scope of ministry. Revisions will be made according to section V. below.

## I. GOVERNMENT

Scripture provides general principles that serve as guidelines for church leadership. These guidelines have been followed in formulating a philosophy of government for The Grove Church as follows:

*(Acts 6:3, 14:23; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13: 7, 17)*

### A. CHRIST *(Colossians 1:18)*

Christ is the true source of all the Church is and does, and His glory is to be the objective of every act, function, and motive of the Body, both individually and corporately. *(1 Corinthians 10:31)*

Christ has provided His thoughts and His direction for the Body in the Word. The Bible reflects and contains His mind, His commands, His counsel, and His purpose for every believer. *(2 Timothy 3:16, 17)*

The Body is to conform to His Word, thus carrying out His will to His glory. That is the Body's reason for being. *(Colossians 3:15-17)*

### B. ELDERS

The Grove Church has chosen to be an elder led church. The elders, as overseers of the local church, are responsible for the spiritual health of the Body. They are to glorify Christ by serving the Body according to the biblical principles of love and care. In practice, the elders establish the guidelines and policies for conducting ministry and the general conduct of church business. They are to lead by precept and example, realizing they are accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ for their efforts. *(Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:24,28)*

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## **1. QUALIFICATIONS**

The qualifications for an elder are set forth in the scriptural passages: 1 Timothy 3: 1-7, Titus 1:1-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. He is to be self-controlled, hospitable, able to teach, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, not a recent convert. He has a good reputation with outsiders, is not overbearing or quick-tempered, loves what is good, is upright, holy, disciplined, above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, respectable, not given to drunkenness, manages his own family well, sees that his children obey him, does not pursue dishonest gain, and keeps hold of deep truths. An elder demonstrates through leadership a commitment to the purposes, vision and the core values of the church.

## **2. SELECTION**

Any man who aspires to the office of elder is first approved by a vote of the elders, then a vote of the partnership assembled at a duly called all-church meeting.

## **3. NUMBER AND TERM**

There will be a maximum of nine elders at any time. Each man will serve for a four-year term. Under unusual circumstances, the Elder Board may extend an elder's term one year by a majority vote, not to exceed five consecutive years. Upon conclusion of his term, he must function in a non-elder role for at least one year before becoming eligible for eldership again. A man filling an unexpired term of two years or less may be eligible to waive this one year at the end of his term and serve an additional term subject to the above prescribed selection process. The Lead Pastor serves as a perpetual elder and is one of the nine. The elders shall annually select a chairman to direct elder and all church meetings. In the absence of the chairman, the elders will select an interim chairman.

## **4. REPLACEMENT**

A vacancy created by departing elder may be filled in accordance with B.2 above. The new elder will complete the departing elder's term.

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## **5. DISMISSAL**

The dismissal of an elder because he is not fulfilling the responsibilities and/or qualifications of an elder is the responsibility of the other elders, and is accomplished by a vote of these elders. The exception is the Lead Pastor whose dismissal is covered in III B., below.

## **C. LEAD PASTOR**

The Lead Pastor is the spiritual leader of the congregation. In this unique position he provides for the equipping of the saints through a regular ministry of preaching, training, and encouraging the congregation as a whole. His goal is to mature the saints through insightful and accurate presentation and proclamation of the Word, stressing both the understanding and application of divine truths and principles. He provides vital input on planning, ministry challenges, and biblical guidance to the elders during the decision making process. He is often the primary agent in the implementation of the various programs and ministries undertaken by the church. He is accountable to the elders for the discharge of his ministry. He is also responsible for the management of the church office and supervision of all staff.

*(1 Timothy 4:11-13, 15, 16; Ephesians 4:11, 12; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, 4:2-4; Matthew 5:13)*

## **D. DEACONS**

At the discretion of the elders, deacons may be appointed to assist the elders in the discharge of the church ministry. They are delegated the authority for the execution of ministry. Each deacon is appointed annually by the elders for a specific area of service. Deacons must be partners of The Grove Church and exhibit qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

## **E. STAFF**

### **1. DEFINITION**

Staff members are defined as paid employees of the church, whether full or part-time.

### **2. LEAD PASTOR**

The lead pastor will be recruited and hired by the elders with the approval of the voting partners. His salary and benefits will be established by the elders and reviewed annually.

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### **3. CHURCH STAFF (Other than Lead Pastor)**

The Lead Pastor is the manager of the church staff. With the approval of the elders, the Lead Pastor may delegate responsibilities within the staff for the purpose of carrying out his responsibilities.

The Lead Pastor is responsible for the recruitment and management of all staff. Their salaries and benefits are established by the elders upon the recommendation of the Lead Pastor. Final offers of employment or termination require mutual agreement between the Lead Pastor and the elders. However, the hiring and termination of non-pastoral staff is at the discretion of the Lead Pastor within the constraints of the approval budget. Except for the Lead Pastor, staff members will not be eligible for elder nomination.

### **4. PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

The performance of staff members will be reviewed on at least an annual basis. The Lead Pastor is responsible for church staff reviews. The elders review the Lead Pastor.

## **II. PARTNERSHIP**

### **A. QUALIFICATIONS**

Partnership at The Grove is open to all who testify to having trusted in Christ alone as their Lord and Savior, being baptized in the faith and being in agreement with the vision, mission, values, beliefs and governance of The Grove Church. To become a partner, each person must attend all FirstSteps meetings, including the Partnership Lunch/Dinner and complete the current Partnership Commitment Form. Associate Partnership is available for those under eighteen years of age who complete the process described above. Associate partnership does not include the right to vote. Elders, pastors and deacons must be partners of The Grove Church.

### **B. EXPECTATIONS**

Partners of The Grove Church are expected to support their church by participation in worship, instruction and giving of their time, talents, and treasures to the accomplishment of the purposes of the church. Partners should take seriously the Great Commission and the admonition of the Lord Jesus Christ to love one another. (*Matt 28:19-20; 2 Cor. 9:7; Heb. 10:25; John 13:35*)

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### **C. TERM**

The term of partnership is annual unless one of the following occurs:

- 1.** The partner is not in attendance at regular gatherings for a period of six months.
- 2.** The partner asks to be dropped from the team.
- 3.** The partner is dismissed due to action, behavior, or speaking in opposition to the Mission or Doctrinal Statements of The Grove Church (see Dismissal below).

A new Partnership Commitment Form must be signed each ministry year to remain a Partner of The Grove. Without a new Partnership Commitment Form, individuals will become Former Partners with no voting privileges as described in III.B. below.

### **D. DISMISSAL**

The dismissal process for any partner of The Grove Church must follow the pattern established by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 18:15-17. If the partner refuses to repent and seek restoration of fellowship, as determined by the elders, that person is no longer a partner.

### **E. REINSTATEMENT**

A former partner in good standing can be reinstated to partnership following an interview with at least two elders and a one-month period of regular attendance.

## **III. VOTING**

### **A. ELDERS**

Voting within the eldership is preferably unanimous, but knowing the frailty of mankind, a simple majority will suffice. Exceptions are voting on major indebtedness, the purchase or long-term leases of real or other property, and the selection or dismissal of elders and amendments to this document. These exceptions shall be approved with no more than one dissenting elder vote.

### **B. PARTNERS**

Voting by the partnership is required for the following: The purchase of real property, calling or terminating a Lead Pastor, the appointment of elders, lease agreements of over 60 months and amendments to this document. A two-thirds majority vote of those present and eligible to vote is required for approval of the above-mentioned items.

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## **IV. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

### **A. ANNUAL MEETING**

In order to effectively communicate major issues and decisions, an annual all church meeting will be scheduled in January.

### **B. AGENDA**

An Agenda will be prepared and distributed to the church partners the Sunday prior to that meeting date. Agenda items submitted by a voting partner(s) will be placed on the Agenda at the discretion of the elders. Agendas for meetings called by the voting partners will be part of the petition calling the meeting. In case of emergencies, the requirement for distribution of Agendas may be waived.

### **C. SPECIAL MEETINGS**

An all church meeting may be called by petition of 10% of the voting partnership of the Church. Special meetings may be called by the elders as required.

### **D. ANNOUNCEMENT**

Except in extreme emergencies, all church meetings will be announced to the church two Sundays in advance of the meeting date.

### **E. QUORUM**

The voting partners present at a duly called all church meeting will constitute a quorum.

### **F. ATTENDANCE**

All church meetings are generally open to regular attenders and partners alike, however voting is limited to partners 18 years of age or older.

## **V. DISSOLUTION**

Upon discontinuance of this Church by dissolution or otherwise, any assets lawfully available for distribution are to be transferred to one or more organizations qualifying as an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, by a majority of partners attending at a duly called all church meeting.

## **VI. AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS TO THESE PRACTICES**

Amendments and revisions to these Practices must be presented to the voting partners at least one week prior to an all church meeting and approved by a vote in accordance to paragraph 3B above.

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# 2021 PARTNERSHIP COMMITMENT

Having trusted in Christ alone as my Lord and Savior, being baptized in the faith and being in agreement with the vision, mission, values, beliefs and governance of The Grove Church, I commit to unite with the Grove family. In doing so, I commit myself to the Lord and to the other partners of the church to protect our unity, share in , serve and support the ministry of my church.

## **AS A PARTNER OF THE GROVE CHURCH, I WILL:**

### **BELONG TO HIS BODY ...**

- by living life as a fully devoted follower of Christ
- by attending the gathering of the church faithfully and celebrating the Lord's Supper.
- by dealing biblically with conflict and refusing to gossip.
- by following the leadership in submitting myself to the care and correction of leadership should the need arise.
- by praying for its health and impact.
- by warmly welcoming those who visit The Grove.
- by in community with those who encourage and challenge me to live for Christ.

### **HELP OTHERS BELIEVE IN CHRIST ...**

- by developing relationships with non-believers and those disconnected from the church.
- by sharing the Gospel and my story of grace with others.
- by praying for the salvation of non-believers with whom I have a relationship.
- by committing to intentionally invest in others through discipling relationships.

### **BE TRAINED IN GOD'S TRUTH ...**

- by committing myself to read, understand and apply the Bible
- by availing myself to the tools and resources of the church which are designed to further my understanding of and deepen my commitment to applying God's Word.
- by preparing myself to give a "ready defense" for my faith based on God's Word.

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## BE STRONG IN A LIFE OF MINISTRY AND WORSHIP ...

- by using my gifts and serving others in ministry.
- by giving graciously and joyfully in response to what God has graciously given to me.

I recognize that these commitments are not requirements for being a Christian, but rather what it looks like to truly partner with The Grove Church. The motive of these commitments is to shape and encourage Godly character and strengthen The Grove Church.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

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