

Missional Life Groups



Overview

Vital congregations develop practices that nurture faith and connect to their communities with the blessings of God. These practices are grounded in scripture and reflected in our Wesleyan heritage. The practices of missional life groups foster authentic spiritual growth and transformative community engagement. The dynamics of a missional group help shift the groups focus from personal interests toward considering what God is doing in and through the group and where God is leading. Through this study the group will explore six essential keys that God uses to unlock the power of the church to reach the community.

Missional Activity

Have the group go to someplace in the community in groups of 4 or 5, such as at a Starbucks, McDonalds, Walmart...

Or, in teams of two, ask three community people the following questions:

- 1) What do you like most about this community?
- 2) What challenges are you facing?
- 3) How might the church help?

Questions for Discipleship

- How is God at work in your life?
- What Joy's or Concerns would you like for us to pray with you about this week?
- What do you feel that you must do this week to be faithful to God's call in your life this week?

This week I will

I will pray this week for the following concerns:

Missional Life Group Week 1: Missional

Gathering

Sing "Here I Am, Lord" - Hymn #593

Explanation of Mutual Invitation

Scripture Reading (Read and Consider) Luke 15:11-35

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. ¹⁷"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' ²⁰So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled

with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²² “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

²⁸ “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ ³¹ “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

(moment of silence after the reading):

Questions

1) What word, phrase, or image seems to catch your attention?

2) What might this parable tell us about the nature of God?

3) How do the brothers differ? Who might they represent?

4) Who do you most identify with in this story? Why?

5) Why do you think Jesus told this story?

6) What might the older brother have done differently that would have been more pleasing to the Father?

7) How might the church today, act in keeping with the actions and intentions of the Father in this parable?

Relationship Chart

On a large board with your group list out the various groups of people that your group feels that God wants for you to care for. Are there any overlapping groups? How might the group develop closer relationships with these persons?

Questions for Discipleship

- How is God at work in your life?
- What Joy's or Concerns would you like for us to pray with you about this week?
- What do you feel that you must do this week to be faithful to God's call in your life this week?

This week I will

I will pray this week for the following concerns:

Missional Life Group Week 2: Relationships

Gathering

Sing "Here I Am, Lord" - Hymn #593

Explanation of Mutual Invitation

Scripture Reading (Read and Consider) 1 John 4:7-12

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

(moment of silence after each reading):

Questions

1) What word, phrase, or image seems to catch your attention?

2) What has God done to demonstrate His love for us?

3) How can we know if God lives in us?

4) How have you experienced the love of God in your life? in the passage?

5) What are the different types of relationships that God has put into your life? (family, teams, clubs...)

6) Why is love so important for people to experience?

7) Who has helped you to experience God's love?

8) How do you know the right ways to express love of God to another person?

9) Who are the people that God has placed in your life that you care about?

10) Are there people that you feel God wants you to show His love to?

11) How might you show God's love to another person this week?

12) Are there people that you feel God would want for our group to show love to?

Incarnational Planning Activity

Complete the following lists:

Things I do all the time	Groups that do this	Where
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Questions for Discipleship

- How is God at work in your life?

- This week I will pray about the following Joy's or Concerns.

- What do you feel that you must do this week to be faithful to God's call in your life this week?

This week I will

Missional Life Group

Week Three: The Incarnational Key

Gathering

Sing "Here I Am, Lord" - Hymn #593

Scripture Reading (Read and Consider) Luke 10:1-11

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ² He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

³ Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴ Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

⁵ "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.'

⁶ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

⁸ "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. ⁹ Heal the sick who are there and tell them,

‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’¹⁰ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say,¹¹ ‘Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.’

(moment of silence after reading):

Questions

1) What word, phrase, or image catches your attention?

Why is this significant to you?

2) What were the disciples instructed to take with them to accomplish their mission? Why?

3) What do you think it means to find a “person who promotes peace” and for one’s peace to rest on them?

4) What dietary guidelines did Jesus give them? What is the weirdest food you’ve been offered to eat?

5) What groups, clubs, or teams have you been part of in your life? Are you currently in one?

6) Who are the people that you are interested in connecting with or joining in with? How does someone join that group?

7) What lessons can we gain from the text about how Jesus would ask us to “join in” with those in our mission field?

8) What might “healing” look like in that context?

9) What might it mean for the kingdom of God to come near to the people in that group?

12) Are there people that you feel God would want for our group to show love to?

Vitality Brainstorming

On a large board with your group list the ways that God has equipped you to be a life giver to others? Consider also who God might have you care for. Are there any ways that this group might consider collaborating to bring Life to others?

Questions for Discipleship

- How is God at work in your life?
- What Joy's or Concerns would you like for us to pray with you about this week?
- What do you feel that you must do this week to be faithful to God's call in your life this week?

This week I will

I will pray this week for the following concerns:

Missional Life Group Week 4: Key of Vitality

Gathering Song "Here I Am, Lord" Hymn #593

Explanation of Mutual Invitation

Scripture Reading (Read and Consider) Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"
²⁷ He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as yourself."
²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."
²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead."
³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.
³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.
³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.
³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.
³⁵ The

next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'³⁶ "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

(moment of silence after each reading):

Questions

1) What word, phrase, or image seems to catch your attention?

2) What did the Samaritan do that showed God's love to the stranger on the side of the road?

3) In what ways are these actions "Life Giving?"

4) How did the Samaritan's actions demonstrate that he loved his neighbor even as he loved himself?

5) How had God prepared the Samaritan to be able to give?

6) What risks did the Samaritan take on by helping the man?

7) Is there a connection between loving God and loving others?

8) How have you experienced the "Life Giving" love of God?

9) When have you had the chance to be a life giver to others?

10) Are there people that you feel God wants you to show His Life Giving love to?

11) How might you do this?

Transformational Activity

Go online and do some research on one of the issues that is facing your community. Prayerfully consider what actions you and the church could do in response.

Questions for Discipleship

- How is God at work in your life?
- What Joy's or Concerns would you like for us to pray with you about this week?
- What do you feel that you must do this week to be faithful to God's call in your life this week?

This week I will

I will pray this week for the following concerns:

Missional Life Group

Week 5: The Transformational Key

Gathering

Sing "Here I Am, Lord" - Hymn #593

Scripture Reading (Read and Consider) Isaiah 58:1-9

"Shout it aloud, do not hold back.

Raise your voice like a trumpet.

Declare to my people their rebellion

and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.

2 For day after day they seek me out;

they seem eager to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that does what is right

and has not forsaken the commands of its God.

They ask me for just decisions

and seem eager for God to come near them.

3 'Why have we fasted,' they say,

'and you have not seen it?

Why have we humbled ourselves,

and you have not noticed?'

"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please

and exploit all your workers.

4 Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,

and in striking each other with wicked fists.

You cannot fast as you do today

and expect your voice to be heard on high.

5 Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,

only a day for people to humble themselves?

Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed
and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?

Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?

6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:

to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,

to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?

7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—

when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;

then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.

9 Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

(moment of silence after reading):

Questions

1) What word, phrase, or image catches your attention? Why?

2) What are the kinds of activities does God want his people
to observe for their religious fast?

3) Why is refraining from food an insufficient form of fasting?

4) What benefits are promised for those who will practice this?

5) Have you ever experienced injustice or oppression in you
life? What could have been done to alleviate your struggle?

6) Where is injustice happening in our community/ world?

7) What needs to be done to address these issues? What can
we do as the church do to address these issues?

8) Can you think of any scriptures or Biblical stories that
might express God's will for people in these kinds of situations?

9) What will you do in response to the scripture today?

Revelational Activity

Consider what message you think God would want you to share with the people in your mission field. Take a few minutes to outline what you might say. What creative way could you share this with them ie with food, video, song, spray paint?

Questions for Discipleship

- How is God at work in your life?
- What Joy's or Concerns would you like for us to pray with you about this week?
- What do you feel that you must do this week to be faithful to God's call in your life this week?

This week I will

I will pray this week for the following concerns:

Missional Life Group Week 6: The Revelational Key

Gathering

Sing "Here I Am, Lord" - Hymn #593

Scripture Reading (Read and Consider) Acts 17:16-34

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbling trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean." ²¹ (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.) ²² Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are igno-

rant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴ “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands.

²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.

²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ²⁸ ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

²⁹ “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. ³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

³² When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.”

³³ At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴ Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

(moment of silence after each reading)

Questions:

1) What word, phrase, or image catches your attention? Why?

2) What were Paul’s main points in his speech?

3) What sources does Paul use in his presentation?

4) How do you think Paul’s words were received?

5) Why is it difficult for Christians to talk about their faith?

6) How do the people in your mission field relate to God? What references and allusions to God do you think would best connect with the people in your mission field?

Questions for Discipleship

- How is God at work in your life?
- What Joy's or Concerns would you like for us to pray with you about this week?
- What do you feel that you must do this week to be faithful to God's call in your life this week?

This week I will

I will pray this week for the following concerns:

Missional Life Group Summary Session

Gathering

Sing "Here I Am, Lord" - Hymn #593

Explanation of Mutual Invitation

Scripture Reading (Read and Consider) Luke 10:1-11

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ² He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

³ Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴ Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

⁵ "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.'

⁶ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

⁸ “When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. ⁹ Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’

¹⁰ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ¹¹ ‘Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.’

(moment of silence after the reading):

Questions:

What word, phrase, or image seems to catch your attention?

Over the past several weeks we have identified several key aspects of being missional. Lets consider each in turn:

1) What do you hear from this text that is Missional

2) What do you hear from this text that is Relational

3) What do you hear from this text that is Incarnational

4) What do you hear from this text that is Vital

5) What do you hear from this text that is Transformational

6) What do you hear from this text that is Revelational

Summary Activity

Which aspects of missional ministry feels most comfortable to you? Which one seems most challenging? What do you feel God might be asking of you through this series.?