

Missional Small Groups

**Rhythms of Life
that Makes a
Difference in
the World**

A Companion Guide the 13-Step process in the book
Missional Small Groups: Appendix A

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Reflecting on Relational Revision

Learning to be Missional

When groups decide to be more than a normal group that simply lives according to the patterns of this world, they enter into a time of learning what it means to be missional. This is not a time to adopt a program for becoming missional nor is it simply a strategy to focus on being external or outreach-oriented. Instead, this is a process by which a group of people learn how the Spirit of God is moving through them to be on mission together.

Scripture #1

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. —Romans 12:1-2

- What stands out as that which makes us distinctively Christian?

Scripture #2

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?"

he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." –John 13:1-5; 12-16; 34-45

- What stands out as that which makes us distinctively Christian?

Scripture #3

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. 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. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If the head of the house loves peace, your peace will rest on that house; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for workers deserve their wages. Do not move around from house to house.

"When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, '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.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. –Luke 10:1-12

- What stands out as that which makes us distinctively Christian?

Learning the Missional Rhythms

1. Missional Communion

A way of connecting with God together that shapes our life patterns so that we are not longer shaped by those of this world but changed from the inside out and thereby impacts people in our neighborhoods.

2. Missional Relating

A way of loving one another that stands in contrast to the typical relational patterns of the culture, a life of mutual service and self-sacrifice that is visible to others and impacts them.

3. Missional Engagement

A way of being with people in our neighborhoods (friends, next-door neighbors, family members, co-workers) that puts Christ's love on display.

Getting Started

Start Simple

The place to start is to start simply. Look over the list of 21 different missional practices. There are seven for each of the three rhythms. Each person in the group should circle the three that they see as being most applicable to their situation. The the group can talk together and pick one from each rhythm, three total to work on over the next few weeks.

Chapters six, seven and eight of *Missional Small Groups* provide more insight and practical help for discovering how groups can develop these rhythms. Use the coresponding sections to help talk about how the group can begin living these rhythms.

Rhythms of Missional Communion

Worship

The church knows how to do formal worship. But what about worship in a living room? What about worship with friends?

Practicing the Presence

Nothing sets God's people apart like the presence of God. But do we actually expect to meet with God in our groups? If not why not? What might it look like to meet with God regularly and go beyond the Bible study mentality?

Alone Together

How do we practice silence and solitude as a private discipline but do it together? Usually we think of this individualistically, but there is a way of being "alone together" before God. How do we practice this?

Listening Together

How does a group of people practice the art of listening to God together? How might God speak to "you" for "me?" And how do we create space for such an experience?

Simplicity

The way we spend our time and money relates directly to our worship of God. In our culture we idolize things. If we don't let others in on this part of our lives, we won't every change this pattern.

Jesus' Meal

Traditions usually address this in one of five ways in their formal services. There is an alternative way of doing this around a meal, while at the same time not throwing out any of the current formal traditions of communion.

Sabbath

Our ability to rest relates to our ability to trust, both God and others. This practice seems to have shaped the Old Testament people of God as much as any other. What bearing does this have on us as a New Testament people? How can we practice Sabbath today in our 24/7 world?

Rhythms of Missional Relating

A Primary Group

Most people have lots of shallow relationships, but they lack a primary group of people who will walk with them and point them toward the Kingdom.

A Safe Place

How do we create relationships that are safe, where there is both honesty and freedom along with accountability and challenge?

Saying Hello

Greeting one another well is about developing listening skills. Often this simple piece is overlooked by church leadership and it undermines people's ability to relate to one another.

Pressing through Conflict

Relationships are messy. Of this there is no doubt. We must learn to work through conflict and refuse to give up on others. This requires some new relationship skills.

Face-to-Face contact

Community in our culture must call for face-to-face contact. At the same time we must deal with the reality of how the internet and cell phones are impacting our ability to interact with one another.

Build Up Each Other

Encouragement that flows out of the heart of God through his people for others is essential to God's kind of community. What does this look like in practical terms?

Family Life and Small Groups

Too many times, the group is seen as separate from the family connected to each group member. If true relationships are going to be developed then the group must determine how to connect the two.

Initiation into the Community

How does a group practice baptism in a way that communicates that new Christians are being initiated into Christ AND into Christ's community?

Rhythms of Missional Engagement

Moving into the Neighborhood

One of the keys to engagement is just being present in our neighborhoods. This requires the risk of just putting ourselves out there and beginning to engage other people.

Focus

We need to learn to say “no” to a lot of “good” stuff in order to be involved in God’s mission. This may mean saying “no” to some “church” activities so that we have time to engage the people and needs in our world.

Speaking Peace

We are present in the neighborhood as agents of peace in the midst of turmoil. What does this look like? What are some ways that work in our specific contexts to take peace to people?

Observe

What is God already doing in and through the people and systems around you? We don’t have to generate God’s mission. God is already at work. We only need to see what the Spirit is doing and get involved.

Hospitality

Opening up our homes to one another is essential to knowing each other. How do we do this in our time-starved world? How do we eat together in our fast-food world? We must address the reality of these questions.

Righting Wrongs

Ask the question: What does God want to do? There are injustices in our world that are crying out for God’s people to show up and offer justice.

Speaking the Gospel

Instead of a canned approach, we must learn to communicate Christ in relationships with others, viewing them as equals, not as people to be won over to our way.

