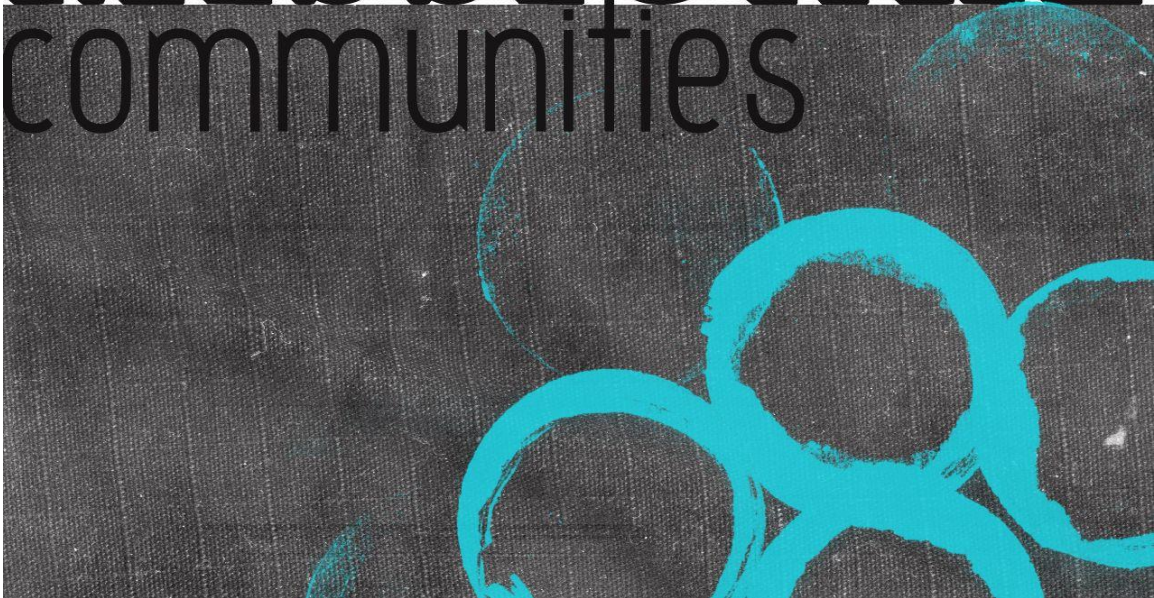


ESTABLISHING
MISSIONAL
communities



Critical Terms

Missional Community- An identified and gathered people group that missionaries enter into community with, express their faith through spiritual conversations, and explore truth through scripture specifically for the purpose of sharing the gospel.

Missional Community Leader(s)- students who have identified a specific people group to enter in, express faith and explore truth for the purpose of sharing the gospel.

They:

- 1) Recruit core team members
- 2) Attend regroup for coaching
- 3) Focus on building community in the fall
- 4) In the spring, launch a Bible/book study or some other intentional mechanism as a platform for spiritual conversation

Missional Core Team- 2 or more Christ-followers who:

- 1) Commit to pray and hold each other accountable for a specific people group.
- 2) Encourage one another
- 3) Invest their lives in people by entering community, expressing faith and exploring truth for the purpose of sharing the gospel.

What do Missional Communities look like?

Step 1: Enter Community

Make contacts and discover connections within the targeted un-churched people group.

What can this look like?

- Spending time in their context (studying, eating, hanging out)
- Greeting people in casual conversations
- Hosting a study night at your house
- Hosting a movie night at your house

Step 2: Express Faith

Invest in relationships and regularly share their faith.

What can this look like?

- Asking for prayer requests
- Sharing an attribute of the gospel
- Sharing a story of God's faithfulness in your life
- Listening to life stories and responding appropriately
- Looking at the life of Jesus in scripture

Step 3: Explore Truth

Share spiritual truths both collectively and individually with targeted people groups.

What can this look like?

- Inviting people to explore deeper in a more formal context
- Meeting in a context that is familiar to the targeted people group
- Leading people to respond to Jesus' call on their life

What are Missional Communities?

A missional community is a team of **at least 2 Missional Core Team Members** who ENTER the daily living of an identified unchurched people group, who EXPRESS their faith through conversations, and EXPLORE truth on a weekly basis in scheduled meetings.

What would this look like?

Entrepreneur, Sarah puts together a team of 3 other students, male or female. After identifying a specific people group, Dobie Residence, they are challenged on a weekly basis to ENTER COMMUNITY, EXPRESS FAITH, and EXPLORE TRUTH.

Entrepreneur, Colin, puts together a team of 3 other students, male or female. After identifying a specific group, Habitat for Humanity, they are challenged on a weekly basis to ENTER COMMUNITY, EXPRESS FAITH, and EXPLORE TRUTH.

Entrepreneur, Kelli, puts together a team of 3 other students, male or female. After identifying a specific people group, Apartment Complex, they are challenged on a weekly basis to ENTER COMMUNITY, EXPRESS FAITH, and EXPLORE TRUTH.

What is Required

To implement a missional community we recommend taking the following steps:

- 1) **Pray.** Prayerfully consider this challenge. It is not easy and this desire has to originate with God.

- 2) **People Group.** Identify a specific people group on campus from the list provided. If the people group is not on the list then it needs to meet the same characteristics.
- 3) **Team.** Identify a team. Each missional community must have at least 2 team members. Core team members need to full understand what is being asked of them.
- 4) **HCBCUT.** Once the above steps have been accomplished you must set up a meeting with a staff person to share your vision. At this time the staff person will ask you to identify a ministry plan. This is a time to ask questions from the staff to best help you establish a missional community.
- 5) **Missional Core Team.** Establish a meeting time with your missional core team where you can begin to build a team unity. Examples might include...
 - A) Meet early one morning a week to pray for missional community
 - a) Meet early one morning a week to pray for missional community
 - b) Meet on site of a missional community to evaluate strategy
- 6) **Ministry Plan.** Discuss with team the means by which you are going to Enter, Express, and Explore. Plan the entire semester what steps are going to be taken to accomplish each of those areas.
- 7) **Enter community.** Establish set meeting times to enter community. The focus of this time is for you and your team to meet new people. Examples might include...
 - a) Spending time in their context (studying, eating, hanging out, etc.)
 - b) Hosting a study night at your house
 - c) Hosting a movie night at your house
 - d) Small social outreaches
- 8) **Express Faith.** Prayerfully move those new relationships to spiritual conversations. Examples might include...
 - a) Asking for prayer requests
 - b) Sharing an attribute of the gospel
 - c) Sharing a story of God's faithfulness in your life
 - d) Listening to life stories and responding appropriately
 - e) Looking at the life of Jesus
 - f) Examining an area of scripture
- 9) Identify a weekly meeting to **explore truth** in scripture. This needs to start as soon as possible. Some examples might include...

- a) This is a formal context
- b) Takes place in context that is familiar to people
- c) Calls people to respond to Jesus' call on their life

Hours: 6 hours a week. Roughly 2 hours in each of the 3 main areas.

Team Leader Requirements:

- 1) Christ follower
- 2) Consistent meetings with life coach
- 3) Caring for other team members
- 4) Communicating with HCBCUT on a weekly basis by turning in weekly missional contact sheets on Friday @ 12pm

Missional Community Application

Name _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

Age__

Hometown _____

Major/Degree _____

Graduation Date _____

- 1) Tell us about your relationship with Jesus?
- 2) Do you have anyone in your life functioning as a life coach?
- 3) Are you functioning as anyone's life coach?
- 4) Why are you interested in establishing a missional community?
- 5) Which people group(s) are you considering to target?
- 6) Who are you considering asking to partner with you in a missional core team?

- 7) If you were to stand before God and He asked you “why should I let you into My heaven?” what would you say?

- 8) Describe something you are currently learning?

Living On Mission

Missional Community Article

Instead of worrying about how we DO church, we need to start BEING the church. I’m convinced that as we start giving ourselves to community and embracing the mission God gave us, our churches will take notice. They will begin to get exciting about what God is doing, and they’ll want to get in on it. The church won’t change through criticizing or complaining, and certainly not through complacency. It will change by us living in missional community.

The inevitable question is: “how?” I am tempted to list a bunch of things you should do, but activity is not necessarily a valid measure of spirituality. So instead, I want to suggest some of the “rhythms” of a mission-driven community. How should living on mission feel?

LIVING OUT

Sometimes I wonder if our attempts at “outreach” come off like a sales pitch. I mean, it seems like we are always asking our friends and neighbors to come to our meetings and read our books and watch our movies. We may genuinely love them, but I can see how they might feel as though we just want them to sign the dotted line.

Missional community affords us the opportunity to make our outreach more personal – more reflective of our love for people – because people get to see the gospel lived out in the context of our actual life. That means leaving behind our safe Christian activities and stepping out into the real world, where people actually are. Instead of asking people to come to us, we live life among them. We throw off the shackles of the Christian subculture and remind ourselves what it’s like to be human.

Humans go to concerts, parks, coffeehouses, neighborhood parties, and even (gasp!) bars. They spend time talking with friends. They live life. Christians, for the most part, have traded normal living for the subculture version: Christian concerts, Christian coffeehouses, Christian parties, Christian chat rooms, and so on. It’s time to reject this isolationism. We need to plug back into the reality of the human community around us, living in friendship with believers and unbelievers and talking about Jesus in ways that show His relevance to real life in the real

world, in this way outreach becomes a natural function of relationship. You can't be friends with someone and not tell them about the faith that defines you.

It might sound like I'm attacking "outreach events." I'm not. I'm a cheerleader for just about any thing that brings attention to the gospel of Jesus. Nor am I against initiating spiritual conversations with people. There is almost always some degree of intentionality in meaningful dialogue. I'm only pointing out the power of relational outreach that missional community creates.

So missional community gets us thinking less about, "How can we get people to come to us?" and more about, "How can we live out our faith and love for one another among people?" We become an outward-facing community, constantly thinking of natural ways to engage the culture around us, together. At some point, we stop having to refer to "natural ways to engage the culture" because it actually becomes natural.

INVITING IN

In a community driven by mission, every gift is essential, because *living out* quickly leads to *inviting in*. The natural thing to do when you have friends is to introduce them to your other friends. That's how friendship works. As we engage people and culture by living out, we will form friendships with people of all walks of faith and life. Inviting them in is simply introducing these friends who are outside the kingdom of God to other sets of friends who are inside the kingdom. This sort of "cross-pollination" happens in living rooms and backyards and concert venues, not only in church buildings. This is what makes the kingdom of God a city shining on a hill as opposed to a really great fort hidden in the woods somewhere.

MAKING DISCIPLES

As we begin to *live out* and *invite in*, we'll see people begin to understand who Jesus really is and perhaps fall in love with Him. And we'll want to help them become the kind of people who are at home in the kingdom of God. After all, we're interested in making disciples, not just converts.

A disciple is the kind of person who is committed to God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven; the kind of person whose character is being fully renovated by the Holy Spirit; the kind of person who is learning to live for God's kingdom and glory. At the risk of belaboring the point, this kind of transformation doesn't happen solely through a cloistered life of contemplation. It happens in community. God uses our interactions with others to shape us into the people He longs for us to become.

Making disciples isn't something we drift into. It requires some sort of approach or path or process. At the very least, this may look like a more mature follower of Jesus helping a less mature one along. Beyond that, it might be a Bible study or discipleship material or a course in theology. But these tools-- or any tools--must

not become indicators. Discipleship is relational in nature. Classes don't make disciples; communities do.

This is exactly where many churches have erred. They have allowed structures to give the orders instead of taking them. As a result, we are left with monuments to what church once was rather than a robust movement of people on mission. What started out as a training ground for street orphans (Sunday school) is now a classroom where Christians absorb more information so they can obey less. What started out as tools for shaping converts into disciples (church membership courses) now ensure that the families who transferred from the church down the street can repeat our mission statement.

A good strategy for disciple-making is like a good blues or guitar solo. Blues music is about creativity. As long as the bass riff and drum line remain constant, a blues guitarist can improvise however he pleases. What matters is that a solo is played, at the right time, and in a way that serves the mission of the song. But once you script the solo and make it an end in itself, you no longer have the blues: you have manufactured pop music. And once you make your discipleship strategy an end in itself, you no longer have missional community: you have a constipated church.