

Partnership and Missional Communities

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 July 2026

Preacher: Josh Christophersen

[0:00] Alright, today we're going to talk about partnership in missional communities. Community disclaimer.

We are not passionate about missional communities. What? Why are we talking about this? We're not passionate about missional communities. We're passionate about the kingdom of God and all of life together.

Okay? So missional communities are just the way that we've chosen to flesh that out in our church. If missional communities ever get in the way of that, then we just stop doing them and organize our people in some other way.

So that's important. Okay? That's key. Hebrews 13, 17. It says, Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who have to give an account.

Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Okay?

Every church's leadership has to decide how they will live out the one another verses and obey the commands of the Bible.

[1:21] Alright? You might be familiar with the Bible has quite a few one another verses, commands that God has given us to do one to another. I'm actually going to read through a bunch of those just to give us kind of a feeling of the weight of this.

But missional communities are the way that we are shepherding our people to obey the one another verses. And again, every church has to decide how are we going to do that? How are we going to best facilitate that in the context of our church?

So let me just give you some examples of these. John 13, 34. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. Romans 12, 10.

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Romans 12, 16.

Live in harmony with one another. Romans 15, 7.

Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you. 2 Corinthians 13, 11. Comfort one another.

Agree with one another. Live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. 2

Corinthians 13, 11.

[2:18] Agree with one another. 13, 12. Greet one another with a holy kiss. Galatians 5, 13. Serve one another. Galatians 6, 2. Bear one another's burdens. Ephesians 4, 2.

Bearing with one another in love. 4, 32. Be kind to one another. Tenderhearted. Forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 5, 21. Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Philippians 2, 3. Count others more significant than yourselves. Colossians 3, 16. Teaching and admonishing one another. 1 Thessalonians 5, 11. Build one another up.

5, 15. Always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Hebrews 3, 13. Exhort one another every day. 10, 24. Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.

10, 25. Encourage one another. James 5, 16. Confess your sins to one another. James 5, 16. Pray for one another. 1 Peter 4, 9.

[3:18] Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. 1 Peter 4, 10. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another. And 1 Peter 5, 5. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility towards one another.

So, that's a lot, right? That's a lot of the one another verses. But, basically, we've chosen to facilitate the exercise and the obedience to those commands in the context of missional communities.

Okay? So, what is a missional community? What is a missional community? Missional community is a small family of believers committed to living out God's mission together in everyday life to a

particular people and places.

Okay? So, missional communities are committed to Jesus. Missional communities are committed to each other. And missional communities are committed to the lost. All right? Our missional communities are where most of the life of our church happens.

This is where we do counseling, prayer, deliverance, discipleship. This is where we do mission together. These are the people who would help us move, who would be working on our houses with us, who we would look to and maybe babysit our kids.

[4:24] These are the people we party with, cry with, eat with, do Bible study with, all of the above. All right? This is the people we do life together with. And a missional community is people-centric.

Okay? A missional community is people-centric. It's a people. So, that's what a missional community is. Sometimes one of the best ways to understand what something is is to also describe what it's not.

Especially because all of us come from different church backgrounds. We've had different church experiences. You know, many of us have done different types of small groups or different ways of the church structuring itself together.

And so I think it's important to talk as well about what a missional community is not. All right? So, you have eight different things that a missional community is not. Number one, a missional community is not meeting-centric.

It's not primarily a weekly meeting. You can't go to it. It's not a night of the week. But it does meet regularly. So, how does that work? You're saying you can't go to it, but it does meet regularly.

[5:25] Yes. Because it's like saying, hey, I'm going to go to family. You can't go to family. You are a family. Right? Does a family meet regularly? I would hope so, if it's a healthy family. But you don't go to family.

Just like you don't go to your missional community. Your missional community is the people that you're committed to. Okay? So, it's not meeting-centric. Now, that's why a partnership in the context of missional communities is important.

Because if the only time we're seeing each other is on a Wednesday night and a Sunday morning, we're not going to be able to fulfill those one-another commandments. We're not going to be able to do what the Bible is calling us to do together.

We're not going to be able to do effective mission or be an effective family to one another. If we're just majoring on a gathering once a week and then seeing each other on a Sunday morning.

Okay? So, it's not meeting-centric, although we do meet. You follow me on that? So, it's not centric on the meeting. But, of course, you have to meet in order to facilitate that life together.

[6:21] And, ideally, you're going to have at least one meeting a week where everybody's together. But you might have other meetings together where they're more informal or more intentional around a specific thing. Okay? And if our missional community is only based on a meeting, it's going to be pretty lame, honestly.

I mean, there's really not a whole lot exciting about just seeing people once a week out of obligation. But, hopefully, the meeting is just a thing that facilitates the rest of life together through the rest of the week.

Number two, a missional community is not study-centric. It's not primarily a book or Bible study. It's discipleship in all of life, which includes study. Okay? So, again, a lot of these things, it's not the thing, but it includes the thing.

So, it's not primarily a Bible study, but most definitely it's going to involve studying the Bible together. It's going to involve discipleship. But many people, when they hear the word discipleship, think of a lot of different things.

And when we're talking about discipleship, we're talking about discipleship in all of life. Much like when you see in the Bible in Deuteronomy when it talks about parenting your kids. It says talk to them while you're on the way and when you're going to bed and when you're, basically, when you're doing all the stuff that life consists of.

[7:32] You're doing discipleship. And, ideally, we are doing discipleship in the context of everyday life. Now, if that never involves any kind of intentional scheduled time, it's probably not going to be very effective discipleship.

But if it only includes just a specific, deliberate, special time of discipleship and doesn't include the everyday stuff of life, where we'll be able to see each other and talk to one another, then we're

going to miss out.

And that's one of the biggest drawbacks or missing components to any kind of professional therapy or professional counseling, is that a therapist or a counselor can only counsel what you give them. You give them the information, they give you feedback. And if they're a good counselor or therapist, they're hopefully going to give you good stuff. But they can't speak to your blind spots because they're not in your life. They can't speak to the things that they don't see.

That's the benefit of discipleship in the everyday stuff of life, is that we'll do counseling with one another, we'll do discipleship with one another. We're not just speaking to the things that someone comes to us needing counsel for.

[8:33] We're also going to speak to the things that they're not asking counsel for. We're also going to speak into the things that they don't see. And we all have to realize in humility towards one another that we all have blind spots.

And that we all need to have people speak into our blind spots. And that's the kind of discipleship we should all want and need. And that's the kind of discipleship that's really going to be effective. That's why you can't also only have discipleship be in a formal atmosphere.

A lot of times churches can become just these teaching centers or these conference centers where discipleship happens from behind a pulpit like this, primarily.

But discipleship should happen behind a pulpit like this. But it should never happen only behind a pulpit like this. We're looking for a holistic expression of that. So it's not study-centric, although it will include some. It's discipleship in all life.

Number three, a missional community is not inward-centric. So it's not primarily a small group. It exists both for those inside the group and for those outside. This is important. Some people, you know, they call their missional community a small group.

[9:32] Or they call it group, whatever. You know, and you say, what's the big deal? It's all semantics. Well, it's not semantics. There's actually intentionality behind what we're doing. One of the best ways to cause any kind of small group to become a bad group is when it becomes inward-focused.

Okay? When it doesn't have a purpose bigger than itself or outside of itself. And this is one of the reasons we don't call them communities. We call them missional communities.

Because we don't want people to get inward focus. That is a great way to turn people on one another. That's a great way to have a version of community, but a pretty lame version of community.

Okay? We were never meant to live for something so small and impish as ourselves. We have to have a purpose bigger than ourselves. And I've been a part of groups that had a lot of familial kind of experience.

But because they had no outward experience, eventually they lost steam. They lost momentum. And eventually they got ingrown and weird. Okay? So we're not primarily a small group.

[10:31] Although we will meet with smaller groups of people. Right? But it exists for both the people in that small group of people, the missional community, but also for people outside of it.

Number four. A missional community is not friend-centric. Okay? So it's not primarily a friendship group. It values the necessity of all the parts of the body, regardless of friendship.

And seeks to keep people from falling through the cracks who aren't yet friends. All right? That's the beauty of the church. Is that when we come together based on similar interests.

And if the interests that we're coming together on are not our interest in Jesus and his primacy and his supremacy, what ends up happening is certain people who don't share our same interests are excluded.

And certain people fall through the cracks. The only same interest group we're interested in is the supremacy of Christ. Is that we love Jesus more than anything. And that we're relating in the fellowship of the Spirit.

[11:27] So that we're all connecting with one another. If people only got together in missional communities, this has been for years as I've been doing this. This gets asked all the time. But can't we just do it with our really close friends?

Can't we just do it with so-and-so? We already have this great relationship. And it's going to be effective for this. And it's like, you can do it with our really close friends. But you can't do it with only really close friends. Because someone somewhere is someone who doesn't have really close

friends.

And you were that person at some point in time. And the only reason that you're close friends with the people you're close friends with now is they brought you into things when they weren't close friends with you. So you've got to say, I want to become relationship poor that others might become relationship rich.

Jesus became poor so that we could become rich. And his people should do the same thing. That means sometimes we're going to have to give up time with our friends, the ones that are closer to us, and spend more deliberate time building friendships with people that we're not as close with in the church so that the church can be a body.

And the way you do that and you value that is you recognize that every part is necessary and we need every part. And that those people who haven't experienced the same kind of friendship and love and family that you experience in the church, the only reason you experience it is someone started with you when you weren't in.

[12 : 39] So you start with people when they're not in and bring them in. Bring them in. Help them feel together and feel like a part of the family. Okay, so it's not primarily a friendship group. Number five, missional community is not home-centric.

It's not a house church. Okay, so it goes where the people it's on mission to are. It shares the load with everyone, not just one homeowner. It meets in multiple homes, not just one. Okay, so over the years we've had this where if you end up meeting just in one home, what ends up happening is anyone who's facilitating, whoever's home that is, gets burnt out over time.

Or what it does is it's just not, it fosters laziness and a lack of ownership in the other people in the missional community when that missional community only meets in one person's home. Share the load.

You might say, well, but that person's house is the best house for it. I get it. Sometimes there is a house that is the best house for it. It's more conducive. It's bigger.

It's got yard. I mean, whatever it might have. But let's look at the bigger purpose here. We want to have ownership with everyone. We want to have this connection and this partnership with everyone.

[13 : 45] And that means we want to give people the dignity of opening up their homes and serving. And we can make do. And we can make the best of it. People all over the world meet in homes that have one room. I'm not talking about one bedroom.

I'm talking about one room. Okay? So sometimes we just need to get a little reality check and just realize, oh, I can't meet in my house because my bathroom isn't nice. I can't meet in my house because it's small.

And then we have people. I just saw a picture of a church meeting without a roof. It was pouring rain. And they're just worshipping the Lord and meeting. And, you know, we feel a little uncomfortable because it's 111 degrees today.

And maybe the AC is three degrees hotter than it was normally because it's a little hotter outside. We can't keep up. And these guys are meeting outside in the rain. Sometimes they're just a little soft and we just need to realize, hey, we can do these things.

We can make these sacrifices so there's a sense of ownership. Let's mention, it's not a house church. It's not primarily located in one person's house. We want to be flexible. We also don't want it to just be about Christians in a home.

[14 : 45] It's a missional community. So it's not home-centric. We go where the people are. The thing about church oftentimes is it becomes attractional. There's nothing wrong with an attractional church in and of itself.

But I'm telling you, one of the drawbacks and the things that has to be worked into a church that is attractional, meaning that their main form of mission is just inviting people to a Sunday morning service, is that there's a lot of people who will never show up in a Sunday morning service.

There's a lot of unbelievers who would never show up in a Sunday morning service. We have to go to them. And Jesus sent us out to go to them. And so it can't be house-centric because we need to go out where they are.

That means we're going to have to go out into places maybe we're not as comfortable with, go out into places, and we put the uncomfortability on us and keep the comfortability on the unbelievers so we can reach them. Instead of inviting them in on our territory on a Sunday morning when they're just like, this is a foreign land to me.

No, we'll go where they are. A missional community should be seeking certain specific places and people that they're going to reach out to. And that should be a regular engagement. Okay? Number six, a missional community is not attractional.

[15:47] It's not an invitation-based evangelistic crusade. What do I mean by that? It doesn't seek to get unbelievers in front of one gifted person, but rather in front of many Christians. It avoids the laziness of trading personal evangelism for a meeting invite and goes to where the people it's on mission are.

Okay? So sometimes you might say, okay, I'm not going to invite them on Sunday morning, but I'll invite them to our missional community gathering. And it's just like, well, it depends. What is the purpose of that particular missional community gathering?

Maybe we're doing a missional community gathering that is evangelistic in its purpose. We're doing some kind of event, some kind of gathering, some kind of get-together for the purpose of reaching lost people. But if it's a bunch of us Christians getting together, and we know that the leader is really good at sharing the gospel, you don't get to be lazy and just send it to them and just say, well, I'm not going to evangelize people.

I'm just going to invite people to come to our missional community gathering so that the guru can speak to them about the gospel. No, it's not some evangelistic crusade where you're just trying to get your unbelieving friends in front of someone else who can speak the gospel in the context of a living room rather than on a Sunday morning service.

No, it is not attractional. It's missions-based. We are going out to where the people are. Okay? Number seven. One more thing about number six. That's why we shouldn't just randomly invite people to our gatherings.

[17:07] We should ask the question, is this the right gathering for someone to come to? And sometimes it's just like, oh, I'm going to invite them to so-and-so. And then someone's like, no, tonight's probably not the best gathering from that. And then someone gets offended like, what, we can't invite unbelievers to these missional communities?

And it's like, you can't invite anyone to a missional community. It's not a meeting. It's people. There are specific meetings that might be more conducive. There are things that make more sense.

And so how about we just get together with that person? How about we go grab a drink with that person? How about we invite them into our living room? How about we do one of those things rather than just invite them to a Christian meeting when they're not a Christian?

Let's do that first. Number seven, a missional community is not leader-centric. It's not exclusively leader-led. It's not a spectator sport. All partners in a missional community should share leadership responsibilities under the primary leadership of what we call a lead partner.

The lead partner is the first among equals. So yes, there is a lead partner. Without leadership, it's just not going to work. We need leadership. So there's someone who's primarily leading the missional community. But partnership says, hey, I'm not going to let everything fall on them.

[18:14] I'm not, if they're making, if we get together and we have a meal and they're making the meal every time, ipso facto no. We're not doing that. That's not sharing the load. That's not partnership.

We're saying, no, you're leading the meeting, but we're going to share that leadership burden. We're going to share responsibility. We're going to make sure we're going to open up our home. We're going to make the meal.

We're going to not just have you be the only one who thinks of any kind of missional opportunities, but we're going to come up with missional ideas. We're going to execute those. We're going to spearhead some of those. We're going to do this together.

And we're going to do it in partnership. This is how a missional community works. When a missional community is not in partnership, where we're not sharing ownership and sharing the load, it gets lame really fast. It gets lame really fast.

So it has to be that shared responsibility. It's not a spectator sport. It's not like you have a long day, so you just say, well, I'm just going to show up to the meeting and I have no really responsibility here, as if the person who's leading it didn't have a long day as well.

[19:10] I mean, come on, that's selfish. We need to come together and do this together. Number eight, missional community is not one-person centric. So it's not primarily one-on-one discipleship. It seeks to do discipleship through multiple gifts from multiple people who are in multiple different stages of life.

So does that mean you can't ever have more one-on-one kind of discipleship? No, you can. But missional communities are meant to mix up the people. It's not just men. It's men and women. It's not just young people. It's young people and old people. It's making sure that it's not just one particular set of giftings or one people that I feel more comfortable with or closer friendships with. It's everybody together, realizing that if every single person is a part of the body, then every single person has a part to play in the discipleship of the body. And I want to make sure that I'm valuing all those different parts, both in valuing the sense that if I don't show up, I can't just say, well, it doesn't really matter.

No, it does matter because we need you. And we can't just say, oh, we just need this gender, or we just need this age group, or we just need... No, for discipleship, we need all those together. Or this different gift mix.

[20:19] We only need this person gifted this way. No, we need everybody to participate in the process of discipleship. It's not just you get one person who's quote-unquote discipling you, but we're doing discipleship together in the context of everyday life.

Okay? So that's what a missional community is not. Like, wow, you just spent way more time on what it's not than what it is. Yes. Yes. Because there's a lot of confusion about this, and almost every single time you have someone new coming, and they bring in some form of church experience, which makes sense.

Of course you're going to. And so I want to describe what things are not so we can understand what things are. Okay, why are they called missional communities? They're called missional communities because we believe that both concepts of mission and community are essential for maximum impact.

Right? Both concepts. So community without mission becomes selfish, codependent, and complacent. Right? And we used to be a part of the house church movement for a long time. And there's a lot of great things that happen in the context of that. A lot of real close familiar relationships. But over time, because there was no missional focus, what ended up happening is it just became selfish, codependent, and there's a certain level of complacency that comes there because you can only just keep doing the same thing over and over again for so long.

[21:39] There's no just novelty of mission where you're reaching new people in new ways, doing new things, and that's a healthy kind of novelty. There's a craving for novelty that is unhealthy, and that doesn't rejoice with the Lord in the main and plain.

But I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about the excitement and novelty of being led by the Spirit into places and where people are that are lost and reaching them and preaching the gospel to them.

And so it's got to be mission and community. Mission without community forfeits one of the greatest apologetics for the gospel. To literally say, hey, God is a father who wants to adopt you into his family and to give you the right to be called the children of God, and then to become a child of God and have no family, that doesn't make any sense.

So if you're highly missional and then we're adopting people into just a spiritual orphanage where there's one leader behind a pulpit and everybody just attends meetings and there's not a true familial relationship, where they have the language of family without the experience of family, which is one of the most disillusioning things, that's not going to work.

So we need not just the words of the gospel, but also the experience of the gospel, and that is a church that acts as a family, that when God adopts us into his family and gives us the right to be called children of God, we function like brothers and sisters.

[22:58] We believe that God is our father. Older people are regarded as fathers and mothers, and we relate to another as families do, just like the Bible tells us to do. Okay? So let's look at the essentials of a missional community.

I can give you kind of over what it is, what it's not. Let's look at, you know, what are the essential parts of a missional community. And there's three essentials that I want to talk about. First one, these are the core elements of a missional community.

Essential number one, the three pillars of partnership, which we've talked about in the last three messages, so I'm not going to go into it just by way of review, the three pillars of partnership. So partnership is the foundation of a missional community, because there's no community without responsibility and accountability.

Let me say that again. I've said this a bunch of times before, but I'm going to keep saying this because it's so important. There is no community without responsibility and accountability. People are like, hey, I'm looking for community.

I want community. Well, are you also looking for responsibility and accountability? Because if you're not looking for responsibility and accountability, you will never find true community. It doesn't exist. You have to have those things.

[24:04] Each part or partner, as we say, or part owner, these are the ones that we count on to do the work of a missional community, to do the work of the church, to do the work of what Christians do together as a church.

And the definition of the word partner is a person who takes part in any activity with another, one who shares, one who shares a task with one another, one who shares ownership with one another, a part owner. And we get this word partnership from the Bible.

The Bible talks about our partnership with one another. So, partner, someone we can count on to share in the following three pillars. Shared priorities. Shared priority of the kingdom of God. Shared vision. The kingdom of God in all of life. And then shared responsibility. Kingdom of God in all of life together. Shared priorities, shared vision, and shared responsibility.

If the kingdom of God is not our first priority, and we don't share a vision of the kingdom in all of life, and we don't share the responsibility together, then there's no partnership. There's no real, deep, meaningful community.

[25:05] And there's definitely not going to be any effective mission. Essential number two is the four core identities. Our mission flows out of our gospel identity.

If we forget this truth, then we're in danger of finding both positive and negative identity in what we do, and then we'll fall into a religious performance trap. Okay? So, Christ's work has given us identity that we work from and not for.

We're not saved by good works. We're saved for good works. Our doing flows out of our being. Follow me on that? Our doing flows out of our being.

Ephesians 2, 8-10. 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. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

So we work from, not for. So our mission of community should have four identities that we seek to live out together, so as they say, we can be firing on all four cylinders. So the first one is family.

[26:13] In Christ we are children of God, which makes us family. So the identity is that we're children. The implication is that we are family. John 1-12 says, He gave us the right to be called the children of God.

The fact that we are children means that we must function as family. If we only care about our identities, but we don't care about the outflow of that identity in the context of church, we're always going to be falling short of the glory of God.

We're always going to be falling short of the glory of God. God gives identity, and those identities have implications. So we should function as a family together. When a church does not function as family together, when we're in missional communities, and we're not functioning as a family together, it's not designed to work that way.

The church was not designed to work not as a family. It was always meant to be that way. It was created that way. God meant the church to function like a family. And the reason so often church doesn't work, and people get so disillusioned, is because we're aborting the things that God says the church is supposed to be.

This is one of the primary elements. Second, servants. In Christ we belong to God, which makes us servants. So, God has purchased us. 1 Corinthians 6, 19-20 says you're not your own.

[27:25] You're about the price. And so because God owns us now, because we are now servants of God by ownership of the king, his ownership makes us servants.

It has implications. And the way this fleshes out in the missional community, if we're saying, God, you can have most of my life, but not all of my life, it's not going to work. When the man found the treasure in the field in the pearl of great price, it doesn't say he sold most of his stuff to get it. It doesn't say, I sold all the stuff that I didn't really want, but I kept what I liked. And then I got Jesus in everything I want, too. It's the perfect religion. Jesus plus me over Jesus equals awesome.

That's how people kind of translate it. But Jesus will not share his glory with another, and Jesus will not let us function that way. He is king. He is Lord. And we have to get him all.

The man who found the treasure, he sold all. The man who saw the pearl of great price, he sold all to get it. And what ends up happening, if we're trying to do missional communities, where some of us are all in and some of us are not, this is what we talked about, partnership by him, some of us say, you can have all of my life, but man, I don't want to hear about this topic.

[28:40] I don't want you to talk about this. This is kind of off limits. And we have to ask ourselves, because all of us probably have at least one thing that either is off limits, or it's like, we kind of want it to be off limits.

I don't like it when you touch this. I get easily annoyed. I get kind of defensive. I'm frustrated that you're going there. And that's not true partnership. When we just say, yes, Lord, whatever you say, I am submitted to you.

I'm not my own. I'm about with the price. Whatever you say, God, I will do. Even if I don't like it, even if it's uncomfortable for me, I give it to you. That is key.

That's key to have partnership with the context of missional community. That's how we're servants. Number three, we're disciples. In Christ we abide in his word and bear much fruit, which makes us his disciples. John 8:31 says, If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.

And John 15:8 says, If you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. Okay? So we're disciples. That identity of discipleship means that we live according to his word.

[29:45] Where we have a relationship with his word that says, Your word is law, King Jesus. In a kingdom, the king's word is law. And so we don't get to pick and choose which things we'll believe or say, This one's for me, but not for you, or for me, or for you and not for me, or, you know, I'll obey this, but not that.

I'll go this far, but not all the way. No. And if we're doing that, we're going to have a lot of disunity in the context of missional community, not true partnership. Where we have true partnership is where we say, Hey, I'm a disciple of Jesus.

A disciple of Jesus lives according to your word and bears much fruit. It abides in your word and says, Hey, if your word says it, I'm going to do it. Even if it's not convenient, even if I don't like to do it, even if it's not socially acceptable to do it, even if my pediatrician says not to do it, whatever it may be, I'm going to say, I'm going to do what the Bible says to do because the Bible says to do it. And that's the challenge for us to be able to be in unity on that and be disciples. And then we'll bear much fruit and that bearing of fruit will prove that we're disciples. Fourthly, missionaries.

In Christ, we are sent by God, which makes us missionaries or people on mission. I'm not talking about missionaries in the context of we're all apostles, but we're all a sent people. So, John 20:21 says, As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.

[31:05] Then Matthew 28:19, the Great Commission, Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. missions. We have to be a people who are on mission. A people on mission. We're sent out.

We're not looking to be comfortable with the group of people that our kids get along with really well and that we can experience great relationship with. That's all awesome, but ultimately, at the end of the day, there are people who are not going to spend eternity with us.

There are people who are going to spend eternity in the place where the fire does not go out, the Bible says. And we seek those people to preach the gospel to them because they cannot believe unless they hear it says.

How will they believe unless they hear? And how will they hear unless someone is sent? Who's going to be the people who are sent? The missional communities. We want to be a sent people. We're not just in this for ourselves.

And does that involve uncomfortability? Yes. Does that involve sacrifice? Yes. Does that involve getting out of our comfort zones? Yes. Does that involve people laughing at us and hating us? Absolutely. It does.

[32:07] But we do it because we love Jesus. We do it because we love Jesus. And we do it because we're the church. A church that's on a mission is a church that's dying.

A church that's on a mission is a church of hypocrites. A church that's on a mission is a church that betrays the very gospel that we were saved by. We must. We must.

And so we're family, we're servants, we're disciples, and we're missionaries. And a missional community will always be trying to do those four things. And just like a bike, you're not always pushing both pedals.

You push the pedal that's up. There are seasons in a missional community where you're pushing discipleship. It's like, well, we need to just do some real intense kind of focus on a particular few areas because we're having a hard time here.

Maybe you have a few people in your MC just struggling financially. Let's get in a word and see what the Bible says about finances. Okay, we have a few people in your MC struggling with marriage. Let's get in the Bible and look what it says about marriage.

[33:03] Maybe it's parenting. Let's get to look at what the Bible says about parenting. You know, whatever it may be. You know, a bunch of people are confused on this topic. Let's look in the Bible on that. Okay? Then there's other times and you know when it's 111 degrees out, maybe not the best time for mission.

But in the fall, when it's nice out and people are out and neighbors are out, it's like, it's a great time for mission. Let's push that pedal. Let's hit it hard. It's the holidays. Let's have holiday parties. Let's invite people in. Let's go where lost people are at.

Okay? There's different seasons where we're going to focus on different things. But the last one about mission is really important because let's make sure that the missional community never goes stale and that we never forget that people need to hear the gospel.

And Charles Spurgeon said, every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter. I agree with that. You're never going to drift into these four identities. You have to be radically intentional. So it takes all of us to say, hey, how's our missional community doing in these four identities?

And then pressing into them together. Essential number three, the five core actions of mission. So if we're prioritizing those three things, the kingdom of God, all of life together, and then we're functioning together in our four core identities of being family, servant, disciples, on mission together, then while we're on mission, we're doing five things and we're just rinsing and repeating over and over again.

[34:22] Okay? Five things. Number one, we're relating. We're building new and existing relationships anywhere and everywhere. Okay? New relationships and existing relationships. We've got specific people that we're on mission to.

Okay? So we're relating to them. We're trying to build a relationship. Two, we're preaching. We're preaching the gospel to strangers and those who we're building relationships with. So new people, old people, either one.

Three, we're praying. We're praying for the gospel to be proclaimed and to believe. Okay? So we're, hey, let's make sure we're actually preaching the gospel, but then once the gospel is being preached, let's pray that they believe it.

Let's pray that we believe it. Okay? Interesting enough, Jesus wasn't praying for the lost. He was praying for more workers. Isn't that interesting? He didn't tell us to pray for the lost. He said pray for more workers.

It's an interesting thing. Number four, introduce. Introduce the people we're on mission to to the family of believers. Okay? You got people we're on mission to? Good, that's being a Christian.

That's not being the church, that's just being a Christian.

[35:18] Being the church is being on mission together. So we're reaching out to some unbelievers. Let's get some other believers involved with it. Let's expose them to the family of believers. Let's invite them over. Let's get some other people involved with them.

I've seen over the years so many times when someone who has an unbeliever that they're on mission to alone just in the context of everyday life, maybe it's a co-worker, a neighbor, someone brings in another Christian to reach out to that person and then the other Christian that gets involved ends up being better friends with the person than you were who was the initial connection. That's awesome. I mean, when I moved here to Kansas City and then moved into Westport area to plant a church, I was working from home for a company in Connecticut.

So I'm not reaching out to any of my co-workers. Okay? So I relied heavily on planting the church on the group of people that I was with. I just said, hey, introduce us to your friends.

I want to meet your friends. I want to meet all your unbelieving friends. We can do it at my house. We can do your house. We can do whatever you want. I'll go anywhere, anytime. Let's do it. I want to meet your friends. Why? Because I want to meet lost people.

[36:22] And if I don't have a lot of lost people in my life, besides my neighbors, I was dependent on the people in my life who had lost people in their life and say, hey, bring me in. And anytime new people are coming into your life, new believers, new people are coming into your missional community, one of the things you should say is, hey, introduce me to all your lost friends.

Not in some weird way like, hey, invite them to a missional community gathering where they're the only person who doesn't know anybody and we're going to talk about things that they're really uncomfortable talking about. And say, wasn't that awesome? No, we're not going to do that. We're actually going to go where they are and take that uncomfortability on ourselves and go to reach them. And so we do it in ways that are creative. We do it in ways that are natural, normal, and neutral, not weird, unnecessarily weird.

Okay? And we do that and that's exciting. It's like, man, when I meet someone and they have unbelieving, I love saying, hey, they start talking about, you know, Sam was talking to me once about a guy who was working with and just started sharing about this guy and he's been talking to him about the gospel.

I'm like, hey, let me in on this. How can I get to know him? Well, he's going to come to the poker there and I'm there. And I'm going to sit at his table. I'm going to get to know him. And then after that, then we both go out with him. And then I get to have fun sharing the gospel with him as well.

[37:31] It's like, this is exciting. I want in on this. I want to share the gospel with lost people. And I don't want you to do this alone. Let's tag team this together. Let's do this together. And that's a great experience. Jesus sent them out one by one?

No. How many did he send them out in? Two by two. Okay. So we're introducing people to family believers and then we're discipling people. We're making disciples, making people to disciples who make disciples.

Doing those five things. Building relationships, preaching to them, praying for them, introducing them to family believers, and then making disciples. And we just keep doing that over and over and over again. Those core things, those three things, those three essentials, have to be in the context of missional community.

A few details to go with that. Locational proximity. Is that a big deal? It's important to consider how far away you live from people. Okay. When forming a missional community. Proximity makes a difference.

It does. Now, people have different kind of tolerance for how far that could be. But I think when you're aiming for regular, healthy connection with people, generally living more than 20 minutes away from each other just becomes more impractical the farther away you get.

[38:42] I'm not saying it's not possible. You just got to realize that. And when you live close to people, it just, it makes life on life more conducive. It makes it easier to drop in on people. It makes it easier to just do things when you're just like, ah, I'm already got about five excuses in my mind of not to get together.

And then you can throw on like a 25 minute drive on top of that or a 30 minute drive. It's like, yep. That's the last excuse I need. We're not doing it. You know, you just throw it out. But when you don't have that excuse, it just becomes less likely that you're going to abort mission.

Right? So locational proximity makes a difference. And I can think of multiple times in my life when I've lived close to people and it's been hugely productive and fruitful. and I think that's an important value just to aim for.

So what about size? The ideal size of a missional community depends on multiple factors and it's going to, it's going to, it'll depend on, on the variance of these factors, but usually it's around 12 adults.

Work for Jesus. Okay? So 12 adults seems like a good focus. The ideal minimum size would be six adults. Maximum size may be around 15 adults, maybe up to 20 adults, but the 16 to 19 size is not ideal, but it'll work.

[39:54] And once you get past 20, it's like you, you end up lacking momentum and the proper ability to be a family on mission. You lose a lot of flexibility. It's hard to manage that.

If it's too big, it'll lack depth and connectedness and, and it just kind of renders it impotent. So if it's too small, you can't really get any traction. If it's too big, you lose momentum.

And so trying to find more of that sweet spot as much as possible I think is great. So we should think about that when we're thinking about joining a missional community. And then when we get

with people, it's really important to just develop the mission in each missional community. All right? So making sure basically in each missional community we know, all right, who are the people and places that we're on mission to? Who's the who and the where? And you're asking three questions.

Who am I already in contact with? Already in locational proximity? Already in relational, relationship with? Especially men and women peace. Who am I already doing this with?

[40:52] All right? Let's be on mission to them. Where are we already spending our time? If we're all spending our time in the same place, you've got a bunch of people in a missional community, all their kids are in the same soccer thing, why wouldn't you be on mission together?

You're already there anyways. Just be intentional. Use more gospel intentionally with what you're already doing. And then thirdly, what are the new people and our places that God's specifically calling you to? Where does God calling us to?

And then how are we going to aim for that? And we have to make sure the mission is clearly defined and understood by all. Every partner in an MC should be able to answer the question, who and where are you on mission to?

That should be, everyone should just be able to say that. And there might be a season where we're just like, hey, we're figuring that out. Or hey, we were on mission to these people or this place, this, and it's changed now.

But at some point in time, everybody in the missional community, there should be a cohesive to say, hey, we're on mission to these people and or these places. That's key. That's super important.

[41:48] Because guess what? If you don't do that, is it just going to happen? Are people just going to magically drift into mission and get on mission to specific people and places by accident? Rarely, if not ever.

There has to be intentionality. But when there is, it gives a sense of purpose, it gives a sense of direction, it gives us kind of a framework to work around and say, hey, how are we going to spend our time? How are we going to allocate our interests, our heart, our prayers, our planning, our get-togethers?

Super important. And then once you know the who and where, we've got to say, okay, what about the how and when? How and when will we engage the people we're on mission to with no less than two people at a time?

Some things might make sense for your whole MC. Some things it most certainly doesn't make sense to your whole MC. But always a minimum of two. You're saying, how can these two people engage in mission?

We do things like eating together, like maybe having events together, serving a blessing, being a regular at a particular restaurant or a store, grocery store, coffee shop, a barber, a hairdresser, a mechanic, a chiropractor, whatever it be, a park, a library.

[42:54] And we're saying, hey, we're just going to be a regular here and hopefully we're going to meet people, we're going to do it together. Or it's cold call evangelism. We're basically just going to a place and we're just going to do evangelism. We're just going to go there and meet strangers and preach the gospel to them.

That's the purpose. Hopefully make some connections, hopefully see some lost people. One, but you have to also say, what is the how and when? How are we going to do it? We're going to say, hey, I got a mission, but we're not actively engaging that mission.

I know who we're on mission to, I know what places we're on mission to and or, right? But if we don't have any specific ways that we're going to accomplish that, then we're just going to constantly feeling guilty like we're not doing anything.

Well, yeah, because we haven't planned anything. Let's do it. Let's get some action with this. And when you do those things, then execute. Do it. Try. Fail.

Missional communities will do things that don't work. So what? I'd rather have us doing things that don't work because we're actually trying to engage on mission than us just being so afraid of making a mistake that all we do is have our little bless me club that doesn't involve unbelievers.

[43:53] Like, that's not okay. We have to make mistakes. And why are we so afraid of mistakes? So what? That's how you learn. That's how we get better.

Most of the things that I've learned to do better in a missionary community is because we did something that was worse. Right? Or you're just like, wow, that didn't work. Or that was a total fail.

And it's like, I'm not going to do that again. Or next time, we're going to do this. And that's such useful information. That's information a lot of times you can't get without making a mistake. And here's the benefit, too. When you make mistakes, you get to give the other people the privilege of not learning from their own mistakes. They can learn from yours. So share with other people. So we don't have to have all the missional communities doing the same mistakes.

We get to do different mistakes and then we all get to learn from those mistakes and not have to repeat the mistakes of other people. We all grow in that. But really, you should be just looking to maximize that missional effectiveness.

[44:50] So we should be praying and fasting for the mission. This is what we do. We're going to do a quarterly fast again here and we're going to do a three-day fast here in August. Okay? That's a great time to be praying specifically for missional communities and for lost people.

And that's both corporate and we want to just have individual time. We're just really praying for the missional community. How many of us are praying for the missional community we're in? Praying for the specific lost people. Praying for the people that we're in those missional communities with. And then regularly reporting on victories and struggles. considering that some times are more conducive to different seasons of mission. And then determining how we'll continue to cultivate family and nurture healthy discipleship while we're on mission.

How we can continue to serve one another. Then we report back. We pray and we plan next steps. Okay? We're constantly evolving and figuring it out. And at the end of the day, hopefully we're growing.

Hopefully we're reaching lost people. Hopefully we're seeing people get saved. And we've got to be patient. God's timing is not our timing. And the gate is wide that leads to destruction.

[45:55] It's narrow that leads to life. In closing, a partner demonstrates the fruit of owning the identity, mission, and expression of a missional community. Do you own these things?

Are you partnering with your missional community? Not just attending. Not just coming around. Not just participating and saying, no. This isn't the group of people I am with.

These are the people I'm partnered with. You see the difference? I'm not just going to participate. I want to own this. I'm not just going to spectate. I want to jump in and get in the arena.

I want to be in there figuring things out and making mistakes and experiencing the victories and doing this together. And that's what we're looking for. We don't just want a committed leader or a committed couple people and then a bunch of people who just kind of do things on their own terms. No, we're saying, what it would look like when you have a group of people that are doing their life together on God's terms and submitting the things they don't like to the Lord and saying, Lord, your will be done, not my will.

[46:54] And they do it together in partnership in the context of church and what our church does and that is missional communities. Amen? Amen. Let's stand. Thank you.