



Missional Community Strategic Planning Guide

(2/25/16)

DEFINITIONS

What A Missional Community Is

A small family of believers committed to living out God's mission together in everyday life to particular people and places

What A Missional Community Is Not

A Missional Community is NOT primarily a weekly meeting, a small group, or a bible study.

Why they're called Missional Communities

They are called "missional communities" because we believe that both concepts of "mission" and "community" are essential for maximum impact. Community without mission becomes selfish, codependent, and complacent. Mission without community forfeits one of the greatest apologetics for the gospel.

ESSENTIALS: THE 3 THINGS, THE 4 THINGS, AND THE 5 THINGS

The following are the essential core elements of a healthy missional community:

Foundation (*where we start*):

- 1) Shared Priorities (The Kingdom)
- 2) Shared Vision (All of Life)
- 3) Shared Responsibility (Together)

Identity (*who we are*):

- 1) Family
- 2) Missionary
- 3) Servant
- 4) Disciples

Action (*what we do*):

- 1) Build new and existing relationships
- 2) Pray for the people in those relationships
- 3) Expose them to the family of believers
- 4) Preach the gospel to them
- 5) Make them disciples who make disciples

STARTING A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY: 3 STAGES

Starting a missional community happens in three stages:

- 1) Gather A Group Of Believers
- 2) Build Healthy Foundations And Identities
- 3) Develop And Execute The Mission

STAGE 1: Gather a Group of Believers

The goal of this stage is to gather the minimum amount of people to get a missional community off the ground (approximately six people)

A. Find Your Co-Leaders

- These people should have the greatest level of shared responsibility with the leaders
- These are the people you are potentially grooming to take over the missional community or to send out to start another
- These are the people who would lead a gathering if you weren't there

B. Gather Around One Or More Of The Following:

- A particular mission
- Existing common relationships with certain unbelieving and/or unchurched people
- A specific place
- Locational proximity to one another
- A common activity or activities
- Jesus and his mission (this reason is the lowest common denominator and therefore requires a higher degree of intentionality to pull off)

C. Who Can Be A Part Of A Missional Community

Anyone can share in the life of a missional community, and we especially encourage anyone who is interested in a missional community to meet and gather with one or more of them at some point to get a glimpse of what they are like, *but in order to join a missional community you must be a member or working towards membership.*

D. Size

The ideal size of a missional community depends on multiple factors and will differ depending on the variance of these factors. A rough guideline for the size a missional community would be 6-12 adults. Size is important because if the missional community is too small, it will lack momentum and the proper ability to be a family on mission. If it's too big, it will lack depth and connectedness, rendering it impotent.

E. Locational Proximity

It's important to consider how far people live from each other when forming a missional community. Locational proximity makes a big difference practically when trying to connect regularly in a healthy way. As a general rule, living more than fifteen minutes away from each other becomes more and more impractical the farther you are.

F. One Year Commitment

When gathering people to start, a minimum one year commitment is ideal, although there is room for appropriate exceptions

STAGE 2: Build Healthy Foundations And Identities

The goal of this stage is to build the foundational elements and identities necessary to do missional community in a healthy, effective way.

A. Foundations (The 3 Things)

Each member of a missional community is expected to reorient their life around the following 3 foundations:

- 1) Shared Priorities (The Kingdom)
- 2) Shared Vision (All Of Life)
- 3) Shared Responsibility (Together)

Simply put: seeking first the kingdom in all of life together.

In order to realistically reorient our lives we need to ask 2 questions:

- 1) What will I stop doing?
- 2) What will I start doing?

B. Identities (The 4 Things)

Our mission flows out of our gospel identity. If we forget this we are in danger of finding both positive and negative identity in what we do, falling into a religious performance trap. Christ's work has given us identity that we work FROM, not FOR. We're not saved BY good works; we're saved FOR good works. Our doing flows out of our being.

In Christ:

We are sons of God, which makes us family.

We are sent by God, which makes us missionaries.

We belong to God, which makes us servants.

We are sourced by God, which makes us his disciples.

All the members of a missional community should work together to live out our four core identities:

- 1) Family
- 2) Missionary
- 3) Servant
- 4) Disciples

Ways To Live Out Our Identity As FAMILY

- Meet weekly/regularly as a missional Community
- Eat meals together with your entire missional community regularly
- Eat another meal with specific members of your missional community weekly
- Get to know each other and become familiar with each other's stories/testimonies
- Collect a list of the birthdays and anniversaries of the missional community members
- Party and celebrate together (b-days, anniversaries, baby showers, wedding receptions, holidays, etc.)
- Be good, reliable communicators (calls, texts, voxes, emails, etc.) who communicate often and respond to each other in an appropriately timely manner
- Be voluntarily open with each other, whether we're asked or not
- Help each other
- Share your stuff with each other
- Pray and prophesy over each other and target a specific person, family, or couple weekly/regularly
- Intentionally and tangibly bless a Missional Community member weekly
- Take communion together
- Share hobbies or recreational interests together (cooking, disc golf, soccer, swing dancing, pipe smoking, bbqing, etc.)
- Have fun and relax together
- Take a vacation together or do a focused retreat together

Ways To Live Out Our Identity As DISCIPLES

- Study and be prepared to teach others the gospel: be fluent in the gospel
- Practice preaching the gospel to each other
- Speak the truth in love to each other
- Determine discipleship needs of the community and teach on them (sometimes it may be best to ask an elder to teach)
- Grow in knowledge of and purposes for hospitality
- Confess sins that you are being saved from and share how the power of the gospel is saving you from the power of sin
- Grow in understanding what gifts you have been given by God and work toward sharing them effectively to build others up
- Discover personal callings and passions and how to practically live them out
- Learn the real needs in your missional community and find ways to bless out of who you are
- Teach and lead others to understand blessing and live out being a blessing
- Train your missional community to be alert and in prayer listening for God's voice
- Study and obey the bible
- Teach on and pray for the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit

- Pray for deliverance and destruction of demonic strongholds in the lives of specific people in your missional community
- Focus on the 5 C's:
 - 1) Christ
 - Security In The Gospel, Motivated By The Gospel (1 John 4:19), Love What He Loves, Abiding (John 15:5), Living by his life
 - 2) Community
 - Context For Christianity, Apologetic For The Gospel (John 13:35), Test Of Our Love For God (1 John 4:20)
 - 3) Character
 - Personal Holiness, Fruit of the Spirit, Marriage, Parenting, Sexuality, Relationships, Time Management, Financial Management
 - 4) Calling
 - Gifts, Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20), So I Send You (John 20:21-22), Seek And Save The Lost (Luke 19:10), Jesus To The Jews (Matt 21:24), Paul & Barnabas To The Gentiles - Peter, James, & John To The Jews (Gal 2:7-9)
 - 5) Competence
 - Training, Experience, Fathering/Mothering/Mentoring, Responsibility

Ways To Live Out Our Identity As SERVANTS

- Help each other when in need or so that people don't have to do things alone
- Do home repair projects together on each other's homes
- Do yard work together in each other's yards
- Baby sit each other's kids
- Make meals for each other
- Pay for meals for each other
- Pray for each other
- Help each other move
- Help each other budget
- Listen to each other
- Show hospitality to each other without grumbling
- Open your homes for gatherings, meals, parties, meetings
- Borrow your stuff to each other (vehicles, tools, clothes, etc.)

Ways To Live Out Our Identity As MISSIONARIES

- Lay the ground work for Stage 3: focusing on mission, but not as intensely and corporately as we will be in Stage 3
- Do the 5 things:
 - 1) Build new and existing relationships
 - 2) Pray for the people in those relationships
 - 3) Expose them to the family of believers
 - 4) Preach the gospel to them
 - 5) Make them disciples who make disciples

C. Regular Gatherings

- Decide when, where, and how often to gather
- Weekly meeting vs No weekly meeting, pros and cons:
 - Having a weekly meeting with the entire missional community is great for establishing consistent regular connection with the other members. It becomes a negative when it becomes the sum total of what the missional community is and people aren't connecting in all of life.
 - No weekly meeting is great for flexibility and connecting in all of life, but it requires way more intentionality or people end up not connecting at all or very little.

D. Timeframe

This stage shouldn't be rushed, but it shouldn't be any longer than necessary either. For some missional communities this stage will take weeks, for most it will take months, but it should not take any longer than a year.

STAGE 3: Develop and Execute the Mission

The initial focus and direction should come first from the missional community leaders who will then get input from the rest of the missional community.

A. Determine What People and/or Places To Target

1. Existing People & Places

- Take inventory by answering these three questions
 - 1) **Who** (unbelievers, unchurched, non-member Sunday morning attenders) are we already in contact, locational proximity, or relationship with? (Especially men and women of peace)
 - 2) **What** are we already doing?
 - 3) **Where** are we already spending our time?
- Look for the who, what, and where intersections within the missional community

2. New People & Places

- Determine any new people and/or places that God is calling this missional community to
- Take inventory of the specific passions and burdens of the missional community members
- Determine any intersections of passions and burdens

3. Examples of Specific People & Places

- friends and family
- neighbors/neighborhood
- co-workers/workplace
- regularly going to the same restaurant, store, grocery store, coffee shop, barber, mechanic, park, etc.
- sports team
- adopt a public school
- community garden
- international refugee community
- special needs community
- child welfare community
- nursing home

B. Develop Specific Strategies For Mission

- Determine how to steward the who, what, and where intersections with more gospel intentionality
- Explore ways to the new people & places this group of believers is called to
- Use the following three questions to help form strategies:
 - 1) Is it natural?
 - 2) Is it normal?
 - 3) Is it neutral?
- Choose specific ways you will eat with those you are on mission to, specific events you will put on or participate in, and specific ways you will serve/bless those you are on mission to. Here are some examples:
 - 1) **Eat**
 - BBQ/parties/meals
 - first of the month Sunday meal
 - Sunday after church weekly meals with new people
 - giving meals away
 - weekly open meal night
 - coffee & dessert nights
 - dip contest

2) Events

- sports: playing, coaching, & watching
- block parties
- bonfires
- game nights: poker, board games, etc.
- swing dancing
- movie nights
- holiday celebrations
- cigar/pipe nights

3) Serve/Bless

- neighborhood cleanup
- financial assistance
- house/yard work project
- Overlap/Partnership with other missional communities:

Many times what a missional community is doing for mission will involve other people from other missional communities or entire missional communities all together. This is good, and in many cases best. Especially when a missional community is small, it may make sense to partner with another missional community for missional and serving purposes while still retaining its smallness for discipleship and family purposes. Overlap and partnership with other missional communities should never detract from or hinder the missional community you are a part of. If this ever happens, then you know that the overlap/partnership is unhealthy and should not continue.

Ways To Live Out Our Identity As MISSIONARIES

- Identify the men and women of peace
- Begin to identify the “watering holes” of the people God is sending you to and frequent them often
 - Determine where you and the people you’re sent to hang out often to eat, drink, shop, etc.
 - Regularly eat/drink/shop there and pay attention (listen to others, ask questions, learn)
 - Become known as people who live out good news (tip well, bring more business, etc.)
 - If a good gathering spot does not exist, prayerfully consider starting one
- Get to know the kinds of work the people God is sending you to are doing and what connection points you might have with them
- Discover the weekly/monthly/yearly rhythms of work, rest, and play of the people God is sending you to and begin to align with them (sports seasons, weather seasons, holiday seasons, etc.)
- Pick up some recreational hobbies that would connect with the mission
- Make an inventory of what your community has been given by God for sharing purposes
- Extend blessing to someone not yet in the family weekly
- Identify celebrations the culture is engaged in that you can participate with and still display the gospel
- Identify the celebrations that exist that need redemption and look for ways to enter in and redeem them
- Identify the celebrations that do not exist, ask God if they should and if so, how you should go about developing culturally appropriate forms for celebrating
- Begin to engage in present celebrations and prayerfully plan out culturally appropriate ones for the community

Ways To Live Out Our Identity As SERVANTS

- Ask God together to show you where and how to serve as a missional community
- Pay attention to the stories of your missional community and where the needs in the community intersect with the passions, gifts, talents and experiences of the missional community
- Identify the regular celebrations in your community and serve at them
- Connect meeting needs to celebration (i.e. A park clean-up day with a BBQ at the end) and volunteer to plan and lead the celebrations
- Identify at least one way/area to tangibly express the gospel on a regular basis through serving and stick with it long enough to move beyond tasks to relationships

- As you become aware of the community needs and the missional community resources identify a specific area or issue that you will lead the missional community to regularly serve in
- As you serve in one area look for bridges into the other areas
- Look for places or situations where restorative work needs to be done and creatively bring that about (i.e. community garden, neighborhood meetings, etc.)
- Determine what is broken or missing in your community
 - Find out what exists to deal with those things and determine how you could serve
 - If it doesn't exist, discern with God and in community whether you are supposed to start something and who you should work with to see it started
- Eat a meal with someone who doesn't believe the gospel on a regular basis (once a month or week)
- Pay for the meal and tip well to demonstrate the gospel to the servers as well

C. Make Sure The Mission Is Clearly Defined And Understood By All

D. Reorient Lives Around The Mission

- Consider geographical relocation to be in closer proximity to each other and the place you are targeting
- Be conscience of missional community commitments when making scheduling decisions
- In order to realistically reorient our lives we need to ask 2 questions:
 - 1) What will I stop doing?
 - 2) What will I start doing?

E. Maximize Missional Effectiveness

- Pray and fast for the mission both corporately and individually
- Regularly report on victories and struggles
- Determine the people who will eventually lead new missional communities and train them
- Determine how you will continue to cultivate family and nurture healthy discipleship while on mission

F. Execute The Mission (The 5 Things)

1. Build new and existing relationships
2. Pray for the people in those relationships
3. Expose them to the family of believers
4. Preach the gospel to them
5. Make them disciples who make disciples

G. Reevaluate The Mission And Strategy Regularly And After A Year (3 Things, 4 Things, 5 Things)

H. Multiply: Start New Missional Communities