

# The Mission of God through His People: The Church

## Goals of the Membership Sessions

- Explore what it means to join and be a member of Restoration Covenant Church
- Emphasize our commitment to God's mission in the world
- Introduce the group of churches we are a part of (denomination)
- Take a deeper look at our congregation
- Increase the sense of belonging, ownership and commitment to Restoration
- Build and deepen friendships

## Objectives for this Session

- Discover how the metaphors of family and body are helpful for a healthy missional church
- Understand the mission of God for each person and for the church
- Show scriptural support for love, unity and mission within the church
- Continue the process of discovering membership at Restoration

## Discussion Starter

Let's reintroduce ourselves. Give your name and then share:

A crazy or unique family memory.

What attracted you initially to Restoration and what has encouraged you to stay?

## *Biblical Images for the Local Church*

What images, metaphors or word pictures come to mind when you think about the local church?

Family	Galatians 3:26, 4:6-7, Romans 8:29, Hebrews 2:10-18
Bride of Christ	Mark 2: 18-20, John 3:29, Romans 7:1-4, 2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:22-33, Revelation 19:7
Temple	2 Corinthians 5:1, 1 Peter 2:4-8
Priesthood	1 Peter 2:4-9
Flock	Luke 12:32, John 10:1-16, John 10:27-28, Acts 20:28,29, 1 Peter 5:2-4
Body	Ephesians 4:4-13, Romans 12:1-31
House	Ephesians 2:19-20

## *The Invitation to God's Mission through Jesus*

God invites us to his mission through Jesus Christ. We are now his body, the Church.

*Matthew 28:18-20* Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

*Acts 1:8* "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

*John 17:4-5, 8, 14-18* I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began...for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me. I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.

### **Discuss**

What actions or attitudes is Jesus inviting his followers into through these images and passages?

God's mission has always been one of relationship. Since humanity's rebellion, it has been one of restoration.

*The Challenge to God's Mission through His People, the Church*

As Jesus called people to follow him, he often challenged them to truly love one another.

**The Family Portrait of Scripture**

<p><b>OUTSIDERS</b> - Matthew 12:46-50</p> <p>What do you notice that is healthy?</p>   <p>What do you notice that's unhealthy?</p>   <p>How could it apply today for us?</p>	<p><b>INSIDERS</b> - Matthew 20:20-22a, 24-28</p> <p>What do you notice that is healthy?</p>   <p>What do you notice that's unhealthy?</p>   <p>How could it apply today for us?</p>
<p><b>FRIENDS</b> - John 15:12-17 and Matthew 22:1-14</p> <p>What do you notice that is healthy?</p>   <p>What do you notice that's unhealthy?</p>   <p>How could it apply today for us?</p>	<p><b>CHILDREN</b> - Galatians 3:26-29</p> <p>What do you notice that is healthy?</p>   <p>What do you notice that's unhealthy?</p>   <p>How could it apply today for us?</p>

## *The Ideal*

**The local church is a group of people who:**

- know and love God by believing in Jesus and living in the power of the Holy Spirit
- invite others to discover and follow Jesus, especially the lost, lonely and hurting
- become more like Jesus by sharing God's grace, truth and power in authentic community
- partner in God's mission to restore hope to the broken places and people of our world

*Ephesians 2:8-10* God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece, He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

*Ephesians 4:11-16* Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

*Romans 12:4-5, 27* For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

## Going Deeper

### Jesus calls everyone to participate in God's Mission

Take some time in the next week praying about how you can participate in ways to:

- know and love God by believing in Jesus and living in the power of the Spirit
- invite others to discover and follow Jesus, especially the lost, lonely and hurting
- become more like Jesus by sharing God's grace, truth and power in authentic community
- partner in God's mission to restore hope to the broken places and people of our world

### Spiritual Gifts Inventory

God wants us to be involved with his work. He is so gracious that by his Holy Spirit he freely distributes spiritual gifts to all who are saved. Take a spiritual gifts inventory to discover your gifts at [www.northpointministries.org/gameplan/my-gifts](http://www.northpointministries.org/gameplan/my-gifts).

### Sacred Pathways

Understanding which Sacred Pathways best help you to connect with God and experience the presence of Christ is very helpful to your spiritual growth and your ministry to others. Take the *You've Got Style* survey at [www.common.northpoint.org/sacredpathway.html](http://www.common.northpoint.org/sacredpathway.html) to find out how you can best spend time with God.

### Leadership Training

If you would like additional information regarding yourself, particularly as a leader, you may also want to complete the short survey at [www.leadershipstool.com/layleader.php?tc=178](http://www.leadershipstool.com/layleader.php?tc=178).

### Family Mapping

The fact that families are so diverse can add to the challenge of merging individuals. A Family Map is often helpful to discover how you interpret family/team/church community. See the next page for a Family Map.

**CLOSENESS:** Closeness refers to how emotionally connected you feel to your partner and family. How do you balance separateness and togetherness? Indicators of closeness are I vs. We, loyalty, and independence vs. dependence. There are five levels of closeness. Balanced levels (three central levels) of closeness are most healthy for couples, families and churches, while the two Unbalanced levels (two extreme ends) are more problematic.

**FLEXIBILITY:** Flexibility refers to how open couples, families and churches are to change. How do you balance stability and change? Indicators of flexibility are leadership, relationship roles, discipline and rules. As with closeness, there are five levels of flexibility. Balanced levels (three central levels) of flexibility are the most happy and healthy, while the two Unbalanced levels (two extreme ends) are more problematic.



# Couple & Family Map

C L O S E N E S S

	DISCONNECTED	SOMEWHAT CONNECTED	CONNECTED	VERY CONNECTED	OVERLY CONNECTED	
OVERLY FLEXIBLE	UNBALANCED OVERLY FLEXIBLE	CHANGE	LEADERSHIP	ROLE SHARING	DISCIPLINE	UNBALANCED OVERLY FLEXIBLE Too much change Lack of leadership Dramatic role shifts Erratic discipline
VERY FLEXIBLE						<u>BALANCED</u> SOMEWHAT FLEXIBLE TO VERY FLEXIBLE
FLEXIBLE						CHANGE Can change when necessary
SOMEWHAT FLEXIBLE						LEADERSHIP Shared leadership
INFLEXIBLE						ROLE SHARING Role Sharing
						DISCIPLINE Democratic discipline
						UNBALANCED INFLEXIBLE
						CHANGE Too little change
						LEADERSHIP Authoritarian leadership
						ROLE SHARING Roles seldom change
						DISCIPLINE Strict discipline



CLOSENESS INDICATORS	UNBALANCED	BALANCED	UNBALANCED
"I" vs. "We"	Disconnected Too Much (I) Separateness	Somewhat Connected to Very Connected Good I-We Balance	Overly Connected Too Much (We) Togetherness
CLOSENESS	Little Closeness	Moderate to High Closeness	Too Much Closeness
LOYALTY	Lack of Loyalty	Moderate to High Loyalty	Loyalty Demanded
INDEPENDENCE	High Independence	Interdependent	High Dependency