

# 5 ESSENTIALS FOR EFFECTIVE MISSION

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## 5 ESSENTIALS FOR EFFECTIVE MISSION

The most common issue I hear, as I work with churches of all shapes and sizes around the world, is: **How do we help equip our people to live in community on mission (with the emphasis on mission)?**

I want to suggest five essentials I usually see lacking in churches in some form that need constant attention and strengthening. These are the essential areas that often lack clarity, intentionality, and focus:

**People, Places, Proclamation, Plan, Prayer**

### PEOPLE

**People:** Who are the specific non-Christian people (approximately ten to fifteen) you believe God has called your group to pursue and give their best time, love, prayer, and tangible service to throughout the week?

Your group needs to discern together prayerfully who God is calling you to pursue together. These could be:

- Immediate neighbors
- Neighbors you met at a block party
- People you met at a local park or beach or coffee shop
- People you met through your kids' school
- People you met through your kids' sports or extracurricular activities
- Coworkers from your company
- People you met through one of your hobbies (running, music, crafting, CrossFit, fishing, other outdoor activities).
- People you've helped because of a tangible need they had (health issues, financial issues, marital issues, babysitting, meals, car problems, house problems).

### PLACES

**Places:** Where are the specific places and relational contexts your group will commit to love and pursue these people regularly?

Your group needs to discern prayerfully the best times, places, and ways to spend time with people.

The key is to determine when and where you can spend time with them consistently and as a group—minimum two to three points of contact each month. Things like:

- Grilling at someone's house every Friday.



- Hosting a Monday night or Sunday afternoon football party for men in the neighborhood.
- Meeting at the same park or beach for play dates on Tuesday mornings.
- Picnics every Friday night (try to do it the same time most weeks).
- Joining a gym class, running, biking, or hiking group that has a consistent schedule.
- Being consistent at the same coffee shops, pubs, or restaurants.
- Volunteering at your kids' school, sports team, or club.
- Becoming part of your neighborhood watch group.

## PROCLAMATION

**Proclamation:** How will your group specifically proclaim the Gospel through word and deed on a regular basis to these people you're deepening friendship with?

Your group needs to discern prayerfully how to demonstrate and talk about the love of Jesus practically, creatively, and genuinely on a regular basis.

For example, to demonstrate the gospel you could:

- Drop off fresh baked cookies, bread, a pie .
- Provide a meal on a night you know they are extra busy.
- Provide multiple meals during a time they are sick, are changing jobs, or have some other stressful circumstance.
- Provide groceries during a busy week or fun groceries full of items that they might not be able to afford normally.
- Give them a gift card or cards to go out for coffee or on a date with their spouses.
- Help with a house project, yard project, garden project.
- Help fix something or clean something.

To proclaim the Gospel into those relationships verbally, you could:

- Invite them to study the Bible together one-on-one or with a few others in the group.
- Have a discussion about practical things such as marriage, parenting, or finances from a Biblical perspective.
- Ask them to tell you a thirty-minute version of their life story.
- Tell them a thirty-minute version of your life story.
- Invite them to experience something like the Story of God.
- Ask them if there's anything you can be praying for.
- Tell them practical stories of how God is changing the lives of people around you and your group.

## PLAN

**Plan:** What is the specific weekly and monthly plan your group has to live life together with the intentionality and focus identified above?



Your group needs to discern prayerfully how to organize your lives and create a plan to live together with this intentionality. Great intentions without a specific plan usually lead to a lack of fruitfulness.

Be specific. Be consistent. Be focused. Your group doesn't need to commit to ten things on a monthly basis. Do a few things regularly with the same people, and do them well. Remember, the goal is to go as deep as possible in relationship with the eight to twelve people God has called your group to love and serve.

In your planning be specific about the day, time, and place where things will happen so the group can plan their monthly schedule accordingly and can invite their friends to things in advance. (When we invite people to things last-minute, we shouldn't be surprised when they say no.)

Determine what weeknights your friends are most available and make plans that are consistent on those nights and are reasonable and life-giving for tired and busy people (especially if they have kids).

Determine what windows of time on the weekends your friends are most available for more extended times at the park, beach, pool, grilling out, playing volleyball, frisbee, yard games, kid games, going for bike rides, going to sporting events, watching sporting events, etc.

## PRAYER

**Prayer;** How will your group pray for these people, places, and details in a focused way? Your group needs to discern prayerfully when, where, how, and for whom you will pray in a focused way. Prayer is the power that helps change hearts and minds leading to transformed lives. It's the fuel for mission.

Create a prayer plan that is specific about each person you're praying for, how you are praying for them, and how often you're committed to praying for them. Determine what times you will pray for these people together as a group, as well as praying for them on your own personally. You can remind each other to pray and what to pray for through regular emails, texts, or Facebook.

You can also keep each other updated on what's going on in different relationships and conversations in these ways, which will encourage even more prayer for these people.



## **EFFECTIVE MISSION IN YOUR GROUP**

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR GROUP REGULARLY TO HELP ASSESS, REMIND, AND ENCOURAGE.

*Use this space to fill out the answers and commitments you can make in the next season, quarter, or semester of the ways of engaging your shared life on mission with specific people. Prayerfully process each question and refer to the previous article for ideas.*

- 1. Who are the specific people God has called us to love, pursue, and pray for?**

*Who are the ten to fifteen people your community will focus on?*

- 2. Where are the specific places we are loving and pursuing these people?**

*As you think about the group of people you've identified above, there are already probably many places you've spent time with them. What are those places?*

- 3. How are we proclaiming the Gospel to these people regularly through word and deed?**

*Think of how you can demonstrate and proclaim the gospel in radically generous ways to the ten to fifteen people your group has identified.*

- 4. What's our weekly and monthly plan that is keeping us focused on the people we're sent to?**

*Be specific. Be consistent. Be focused.*

- 5. How are we praying for these people and details in a focused way?**

*Create a prayer plan that is specific about each person you're praying for, how you are praying for them, and how often you're committed to praying for them.*

