



MISSIONAL CHURCH

*“As the Father sent me, so I am sending you”
(John 20:21b)*

Nelson Avenue Community Church

Fall 2018 Small Group Curriculum

MISSIONAL CHURCH / MISSIONAL PEOPLE: A STUDY OF JOHN 20:19-23

Welcome

Thank you for your participation in this small group curriculum. One of the main goals of this curriculum is to (re)introduce the ideas of “missional church” and “missional living” to our church community.

Introduction

As you begin this 5-session journey together as a small group here are a few notes and things to bring to your attention:

1. This curriculum is designed to work in conjunction with our fall 2018 sermon series entitled “Mission (Im)Possible?!?!” based on some passages from the book of Acts.
2. This study comprises 5 sessions. Small groups are encouraged to meet weekly or every other week. We ask each group try to complete the 5 sessions before the Advent / Christmas season (beginning of December).
3. A suggested format for each week includes the following:
 - a. Gathering (welcome, sharing, prayer, song, etc.)
 - b. Reading, study and questions
 - c. Missional Church / Living Discussion
 - d. Missional Project: suggestions, planning and implementation
 - e. Blessing / Conclusion
4. We want to recognize with thanks those who have worked on this curriculum, especially Dale Lund (writer) and Angela Elliot (editor).
5. Goals for this study:
 - a. Immerse ourselves in **John 20:19-23** [*by the end of this study some might have the passage memorized!*]
 - b. Connect people together as a church / “missional” community.
 - c. Explore the understanding of “missional church” and “missional living” (through various resources and discussion).

We hope this study will help you understand:

- (1) God the Father as the “sending God,”
- (2) Jesus, the Son, sent by the Father and
- (3) we, the church,
empowered by the Spirit,
sent into the world by the Sent One.

Video Introduction to the gospel of John (Bible Project)

If interested, the following videos from The Bible Project are great introductions to the Gospel of John:

Gospel of John (chapters 1-12)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-2e9mMf7E8>

Gospel of John (chapters 13-21)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUfh_wOsauk

SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION / MISSIONAL CHURCH [PART 1]

1. Gathering (Welcome, Prayer, Song, Sharing)

Leader welcomes each person and leads in an opening prayer.

If you do not know each other very well, spend a few moments introducing yourselves (i.e. name, how long at Nelson Ave, favourite food, etc.)

Quickly go over introductory remarks (see above, page 2) and see if there are any comments or questions.

You are welcome to watch the video introductions to the Gospel of John, but it is not necessary for this study.

Confirm Meetings: upcoming dates / time / location

Song: sing 1-3 songs together (with or without instruments) (optional)

Sharing: What are your expectations of this study / small group?

After sharing, spend a few moments bringing these expectations to God in prayer and asking for God's blessing as you meet together.

2. Reading And Study

a. Reading: John 20:19-23

Invite each person to close their eyes and ask someone to read this passage 3 times:

- 1st time: read passage slowly then pause for a few moments
- 2nd time: before reading 2nd time ask each person to listen for a word or phrase God is impressing on their minds; read passage slowly; after reading invite each person to share what word / phrase God impressed on them
- 3rd time: read passage slowly; invite final reflections on the passage

b. Verses 19-20

Read these verses again.

- i. What is the mood / tone of Jesus' disciples? Can you think of some reasons as to why they are feeling this way?
- ii. Why are Jesus' words "Peace be with you" so powerful at this precise moment?
- iii. Thinking about the first 2 verses, read and discuss the following quote from Ross Hastings (professor at Regent College):

*Christ [comes] in sheer magnanimous grace. In this case, Jesus had to burst in on them through closed doors, not open doors! To say mission was not yet possible for this church at this point is an understatement. **Their door wasn't open for Jesus, let alone anybody else!** Before a community of disciples will ever break out of rooms with closed doors, or at least open the doors for others to come in, **it must first have an open door for Jesus.** Once he came and spoke, they were church. **And then they could begin to hear his Greatest Commission:** "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."*

In sheer grace, again, when the risen Christ comes to them he does not do so with condemnation. He comes instead with outstretched arms and words of shalom upon his lips. How precious was the real presence of Jesus for those disciples-the same yet different Jesus.¹

- What do you think of Hastings' analysis of the opening part of the passage?
- Are there ways the "door isn't open for Jesus" at Nelson Ave or in our lives?
- What are ways we can "open the door" to Jesus?

1. Thinking about the whole passage, read and discuss the following quote from Ross Hastings:

*The picture John paints here of that little shell-shocked gathering, with the risen Jesus standing in the center, imparting his shalom and then inspiring them with **the greatest of all the commissions-mission** as participation in God's mission-is evocative of what the church can be in every era of its existence as it once again makes the risen Christ the center.²*

- What are some of the commissions God or Jesus give in the Bible?

¹ Ross Hastings. *Missional God, Missional Church: Hope for Re-evangelizing the West* (Kindle Locations 1292-1297). Kindle Edition.

² Ross Hastings. *Missional God, Missional Church: Hope for Re-evangelizing the West* (Kindle Locations 197-199). Kindle Edition.

- Do you think the commission given by Jesus in verse 21 is the “greatest of all the commissions”? Why or why not?

3. Missional Church [as you have time]

Watch the following videos that describe the missional church:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arxfLK_sd68

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHWBO-Tbrvk>

- What are your responses to these videos?
- What is the essence of a “missional church”?
- Can you summarize the video’s teachings in one or two sentences?

4. Missional Project / Event

Each small group is encouraged to plan some kind of “missional project / event.”

“Missional Project”: a tangible and specific communal project that will bring the blessing and peace of Jesus to an individual person, couple, family, group of people or neighbourhood.

Spend some time thinking about a possible missional project your group can organize. Don’t plan the project right now. Simply brainstorm ideas (have someone write down the ideas for future meetings). Remember: at this point, no idea is a bad idea! (don’t critique anyone’s idea)

5. Prayer For Community / Neighbourhood

Spend time praying for the community / neighbourhood in which you are meeting.

What kind of community is this?

What are the needs of this community?

What things can you give thanks to God for in this community?

6. Words Of Blessing / Dismissal

Ask someone to read / pray this blessing to the members of the group:

Jesus says to us: "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you."

As you go:

"May the Lord bless you

and keep you;

may the Lord make his face shine on you

and be gracious to you;

may the Lord turn his face toward you

and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)

SESSION 2: “AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME” / MISSIONAL CHURCH [PART 2]

1. Gathering (Welcome, Sharing, Prayer, Song)

Words of welcome.

Invite group members to share something that has happened to them since your last meeting.

Join together in prayer for each other and for your study

Song: sing 1-3 songs (with or without instruments) (optional)

2. Reading & Study

a. Read John 20:19-23.

For this study, we will be focussing on Jesus’ statement “As the Father has sent me” (v 21b). To be able to understand in what way Jesus sends us (his disciples), we need to look closely at how he was sent by the Father.

b. Read John 3:34-35; 5:19-30.

- i. What do these passages say about the authority and power with which Jesus was sent?
- ii. What does it say about the relationship of Jesus with the Father?

Many people say different things about who Jesus is and what his mission was. Some say he came as a teacher of morality and ethics, some say he came to be an example for us to follow, some even say he came to lead a rebellion and failed. Let us look at what the Bible says about his purpose and mission for coming into the world.

c. Read John 3:16-21; John 4:34; John 18:36-37; Luke 5:31-32; Mark 10:45; 1 John 3:8;

(Optional Scriptures: John 6:38-40; John 10:10; John 12:46-47; Luke 4:18-21; Luke 19:10; Matthew 5:17; 1 John 4:10; Gal. 4:4-5; Heb 2:9; Luke 12:51)

- i. Why was Jesus sent into the world?
- ii. What was Jesus’ mission?

d. Read John 17:4-5; 17:26; 19:28-30

- i. Did Jesus accomplish his mission?
- ii. How did he do so?

Jesus was sent by the Father into the world. John calls him the 'Logos' - the Word which became flesh (Jn 1:14) and dwelt among us. He is also known as 'Emmanuel' which means 'God with us', which was the name given by the prophet Isaiah (Is 7:14) and affirmed by Matthew's gospel (Mat. 1:23) to refer to Jesus. He could have chosen any manner in which to come to earth, but he chose to come as we all do - as a helpless baby.

e. Read Phil. 2:5-11 (Optional Scriptures skim the birth narratives in Mat. 1-2 and Luke 1-2; Mat. 8:20; Gal 4:4-5)

- i. In what manner and circumstances was Jesus sent?
- ii. Why do you think the Father choose to send Jesus this way?

As we have seen, Jesus was clearly sent with a purpose, with authority, and with power to accomplish his mission. His mission involves all of creation over which he has the highest authority. Though he is in nature God, he came as a humble servant for the redemption of all who will put their faith in him.

3. Missional Church / Missional People

Here is a definition of a "missional church":

"The Missional Church is a community gathered by the Spirit from all walks of life, socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities and ages, intentionally serving as a sign of the Kingdom by breaking down dividing walls.

The Missional Church gathered in worship immerses itself in the values and rhythms of the Kingdom, celebrating life in the presence of Jesus Christ its King, Redeemer, Saviour and Lord, offering itself as a foretaste of this Kingdom.

The Missional Church is a community sent out by the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit to live in the world as Jesus did.

The Missional Church is a listening community, together discerning where God's redemptive reign is at work in the world and entering into this activity in order to serve as an instrument of the Kingdom of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit"
(Donald Goertz).

- i. What do you think of the above definition? Does any part of this definition "grab" or intrigue you?
- ii. What are some of the "values and rhythms of the Kingdom" that a missional church would / should embody?
- iii. According to this definition (and also last week's videos) is Nelson Ave a "missional church"? If so, in what ways are we? If not, how could we become more "missional"?

4. Missional Project

"Missional Project": a tangible and specific communal project that will bring the blessing and peace of Jesus to an individual person, couple, family, group of people or neighbourhood.

Take the suggested ideas from the first session and narrow these ideas down to one idea that the whole group can support.

5. Prayer For Your Neighbourhood / Community

Spend time praying for the community / neighbourhood in which you are meeting.

What kind of community is this?

What are the needs of this community?

What things can you give thanks to God for in this community?

6. **For Next Meeting:** ask if someone is willing to read the following blog post and give a short (5 minute overview / teaching of it).

<https://www.westernseminary.edu/transformedblog/2016/05/31/what-do-we-mean-by-missional-living/>

7. Blessing / Conclusion

Have someone read / pray the following words from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) as you prepare to leave:

Jesus says to us: "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you."

And so:

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.*

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.*

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you
Matthew 5:3-12)*

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Read John 17:18 and John 20:21:

“As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (John 17:18)

Context: Jesus prayed this in his priestly prayer just before he was arrested.

“As the Father sent Me, I am sending you” (John 20:21).

Context: Jesus said this when he appeared to his fearful disciples after his resurrection.

- i. Compare the context of each of the above verses.
- ii. How does the context help us understand the weight and intent of these words?

Bible tidbit: John uses the Greek verb ‘pemphein’ to refer to “the Father who sent me” at least 24 times, focussing on the Father who authorizes and empowers the Son for his mission, and the verb ‘apostellein’ 17 times, to focus on Jesus as the one who is sent.

SESSION 3: "I AM SENDING YOU" / MISSIONAL LIVING

1. Gathering (Welcome, Prayer, Song, Sharing)

Words of welcome.

Invite group members to share something that has happened to them since your last meeting.

Join together in prayer for each other and for your study.

Song: sing 1-3 songs together (with or without instruments). (optional)

2. Quick Review

- What have you discussed in the previous two sessions?
- How is the study going so far?
- Are you growing in your understanding of "missional church"?

3. Reading And Study

a. Read: John 20:19-23

Questions to think about as we go through this session:

- What does it mean to be sent by Jesus?
- Can we follow Jesus without being sent by him?
- Or do we follow Jesus *to be* sent by him?
- Is following Jesus synonymous with being sent by him?
- Or how long do we wait after being saved before we are sent?
- Who does Jesus send?

b. Read Matthew 4:18-22; Matt. 10:37-39; Mark 10:28-31; John 12:23-26; (Optional

Scriptures: Luke 5:1-11; John 1:35-50; Luke 9:57-62; John 12:23-26; John 8:12; Luke 8:38-39)

- i. How does Jesus' invitation to follow him help our understanding of what it means to be sent by him?

- ii. What evidence is there from the scriptures that to follow Jesus also means to be sent by him?
- iii. What are the challenges of following him? What are the promises?

c. Read 2 Corinthians 5:15-21;

- i. In what ways do those whom Jesus sends represent him?
- ii. How is this possible?

d. Read 1 Thess. 2:4; 2 Tim 2:2;

- i. In being sent by Jesus what are we entrusted with?

e. Read Matt. 28:18-20; John 17:20-23

- i. Who does Jesus send?
- ii. What is the mission of those whom Jesus sends?
- iii. How does God enable them to carry out the mission?

Our mission is not to redeem the world. Jesus did that once for all on the cross. However, we do have the responsibility to share the good news of his redemption throughout the world. When we believe, we are commissioned and sent by Jesus for this task.

“As the Father sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21)

In the same way that Jesus was sent by the Father we are sent by Jesus. Jesus was under submission to the Father to carry out his will and we are under submission to Christ to carry out his will (which is the Father’s will). Just like Jesus, we bring the message of another, and are responsible to do so accurately and clearly. Although we must find ways to clearly communicate Jesus’ message in our own culture, we do not have the freedom to change the message to make it more acceptable. It is his message, not ours.

Just as Jesus prayed that this succession of message bearers would continue from his disciples onward, it has come to us and we are to pass this responsibility on to others. We are part of a holy relay team, if you will, that will continue till Christ returns.

4. Missional Church/Missional Living

a. Read below: “Missional Church—Missional Living”

The idea of “missional church” is closely connected with the idea of “missional living.” Read through the following paragraph on “missional living.”

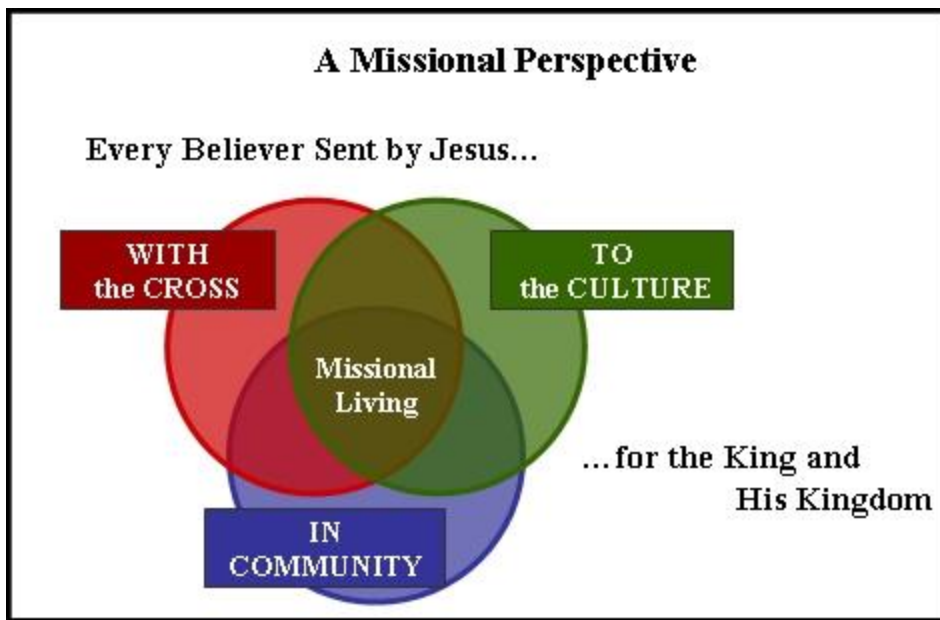
³*Missional living* is the embodiment of the mission of Jesus in the world by incarnating the gospel. "It is imperative that Christians be like Jesus, by living freely within the culture as missionaries who are as faithful to the Father and his gospel as Jesus was in his own time and place."

Missional living is a term that is used in contrast with historical institutional churches. Church leaders as well as Christians in general have often regarded the Church as an institution to which outsiders must come in order to receive a certain product, namely, the gospel and all its associated benefits. Institutional churches are sometimes perceived to exist for the members and depend on pastors and staff to evangelize the lost. The "missional church", on the other hand, attempts to take Christ to "the lost" and its members are personally engaged in reaching their communities with the message of Jesus Christ.

These five biblical distinctives form the foundation of a missional perspective:

1. The Church is sent by Jesus Christ (John 17:18; 20:21, Luke 9:2; Matt 28: 19–20; Acts 1:8)
2. The Church is sent with the Cross (1 Cor 1:18, Eph 2:16, Col 2:14, 1 Pet2:24, 2 Cor 5:17–24)
3. The Church is sent in Community (Acts 2:42–47; 5:42; John 13:34–35; 1 John 3:16–17)
4. The Church is sent to every Culture (John 1:14; Matt 20:28; Acts 17:22–34; Luke 5:29)
5. The Church is sent for the King and His Kingdom (Matt 10:7; 25:34; Luke 4:43; Rev 11:15–17; Jer 10:7; John 18:36)

³ The following **bolded** paragraphs and diagram come from Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missional_living



b. Blog Post Review: What Do We Mean By 'Missional Living'?

Ask the person who read the blog post "What Do We Mean By 'Missional Living'" to give a short overview / review on what they read and learned

<https://www.westernseminary.edu/transformedblog/2016/05/31/what-do-we-mean-by-missional-living/>

c. Discussion

- i. Compare what you just read with what you have studied and discussed so far in previous weeks. How are "missional church" and "missional living" connected?
- ii. Practically speaking, what would "missional living" look like in our lives?
- iii. Does "missional living" sound doable?
- iv. What would it take for us as a church community and as individuals to embody "missional living"?

5. Missional Project

“Missional Project”: a tangible and specific communal project that will bring the blessing and peace of Jesus to an individual person, couple, family, group of people or neighbourhood.

Review the “missional project” you plan to complete. Start to make plans for this project:

- i. *What is the “missional project”?*
- ii. *When and where will it happen?*
- iii. *What do members of the group need to do or prepare?*

6. Prayer For Community / Neighbourhood

Continue your prayers for members of the group but also prayers for your community / neighbourhood.

What kind of community is this?

What are the needs of this community?

What things can you give thanks to God for in this community?

7. Words Of Blessing / Dismissal

Ask someone to read / pray this blessing to the members of the group:

Jesus says to us: “As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.”

As Jesus sends us, hear these words of blessing:

God go before you to lead you,

God go behind you to protect you,

God go beneath you to support you,

God go beside you to befriend you.

Do not be afraid.

May the blessing of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be upon you.

Do not be afraid.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Read John 13:12-17; 1 Peter 2:21-24; Matthew 20:25-28; Eph 4:32-5:2; Eph. 5:25-27; Col. 3:13

- In what ways is Jesus our example as we are sent by him?
- How is this encouraging?

SESSION 4: THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT & FORGIVENESS

1. Gathering (Welcome, Prayer, Song, Sharing)

Words of welcome.

Invite group members to share something that has happened to them since your last meeting.

Join together in prayer for each other and for your study.

Song: sing 1-3 songs together (with or without instruments). (optional)

2. Quick Review Sharing:

- What have you discussed in the previous three sessions?
- How is the study going for each person?
- What is the “mission church” and what is “missional living”?
- What things would have to change at Nelson Ave or in our lives for us to be a “missional church” and engage in “missional living”?

3. Reading And Study

a. Read: John 20:19-23 (slowly)

- Does anyone have this passage memorized yet?
- Do you notice anything new about this passage this week?

b. Verses 22-23

Read these verses again.

NOTE: John 20:19-23 is a Trinitarian passage—it includes the Father, Son and Spirit

- i. Do you sense there is any significance to Jesus saying “Peace be with you” twice in this passage (verse 19 & 21)?
- ii. Who is the Holy Spirit? What is the Spirit’s ministry in our lives? (See Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; John 16:7-15)
- iii. What could the breathing of Jesus remind us of? Where else in the Story of the Bible do we have “breathing” and “breath”? Hint: some suggest that this

breathing is similar to God “breathing” life into Adam (see Genesis 2). Or this breathing seems to be like the “wind” of the Spirit (see Acts 2:1-4)

- iv. Why is Jesus breathing on His disciples? What does this suggest about who Jesus is?
- v. What does it mean to “receive” the Holy Spirit? Have you received the Spirit?
- vi. Why is the theme of forgiveness (verse 23) connected with the reception of the Spirit (verse 22)? Where else in the Bible is the Spirit and forgiveness connected? (see Acts 2:38: Psalm 51:7-12)

4. Missional: Video And Discussion

Watch the following 14-minute video on “missional community”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lc4tsw3kCok&t=163s>

- i. What is your initial reaction to this video? Does this video inspire you? If so, in what ways?
- ii. Does this video add anything to your understanding of the “missional church” and “missional living”?
- iii. What questions / comments does this video raise in your heart?
- iv. What can our church community learn from this Soma community? Is there something Nelson Ave could teach this community?

5. Missional Project

“Missional Project”: a tangible and specific communal project that will bring the blessing and peace of Jesus to an individual person, couple, family, group of people or neighbourhood.

Make final preparations for your group’s “missional project”: who, when, where, what, final reminders

6. Prayer For Community / Neighbourhood

Continue your prayers for members of the group but also prayers for your community / neighbourhood.

- i. What kind of community is this?

- ii. What are the needs of this community?
- iii. What things can you give thanks to God for in this community?

7. Notes For Next Meeting:

- i. You are encouraged to gather around food (a meal) the next time you meet. Invite each person to contribute some food item.
- ii. Invite each person to choose a Bible passage that connects with the idea of “missional church” and be ready to share this at your next gathering. [If you have difficulty thinking of a passage ask a group member for suggestions.]

8. Words Of Blessing / Dismissal

Ask someone to read / pray this blessing to the members of the group as you prepare to depart:

Jesus says to us: “As the Father sent me, so I am sending you”

Hear and receive these words of blessing:

*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all (2 Corinthians 13:14)*

SESSION 5: FINAL SESSION

Food / Meal: you can eat together before you do this study or you can eat while doing the study.

1. Gathering (Welcome, Prayer, Song, Sharing)

Words of welcome.

Invite group members to share something that has happened to them since your last meeting.

Join together in prayer for each other and for your study.

Song: sing 1-3 songs together (with or without instruments). (optional)

Leader welcomes each person and leads in an opening prayer.

2. Review

For one last time (at least for now!) read **John 20:19-23**

Review the previous 4 sessions of this study and John 20:19-23:

Trinity: Father, Son and Spirit

The blessing of peace (twice)

The breathing of Jesus on his disciples

The forgiveness of sins

“Missional church”

“Missional living”

“Missional community”

Etc.

- i. What, if anything, in the previous sessions has impacted you the most?

3. Missional Project

“Missional Project”: a tangible and specific communal project that will bring the blessing and peace of Jesus to an individual person, couple, family, group of people or neighbourhood.

- Any final preparations needed for your missional project?
- If the project has already happened: what can you celebrate about what happened?

4. Video

Watch the following video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8b2yxKwiD8>

- i. What is your responses to this video? Was this video helpful?
- ii. Does this video help you think more about “missional church” and “missional living”?

5. Sharing Of Passages

Invite each person to read a Bible passage that connects with the idea of “missional church.” Invite each person to explain why they chose their particular passage.

6. Blessing / Conclusion

Ask someone to read / pray the following words for your group as you go:

Jesus says to us: “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”

Go with these words of blessing:

May Jesus go before you to lead you,

May the Father go behind you to protect you,

May the Spirit go beneath you to support you and go beside you to befriend you.

Do not be afraid.

May the blessing of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be upon you.

Do not be afraid.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.