

GOSPEL COMMUNITIES

Acts 2:46-47 “*And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*”

What is a Gospel Community?

Gospel Communities (GC's) are smaller groups of people committed to each other and to the lost – their desire is to see the Gospel transform lives. Thus, GC's open their lives to one another (Acts 2:42-46) and are inviting to those who do not know Jesus. GC's are simply ordinary people doing ordinary things with a Gospel mindset, together.

At Element, we believe that what you see on Sundays is the tip of the iceberg - meaning that church really happens on a smaller, more intimate level where people live out the identity of Jesus found in the Gospel:

Family:

- **We are children of God who live and care for each other as a family.**
- *Through Jesus we believe we are children of God and brothers and sisters with each other. As family we see it as our obligation to personally care for the needs of one another - both physically and spiritually. We disciple, nurture and hold each other accountable to this Covenant life together.*
- Genesis 12:1-3; John 1:12-13; Romans 12:10-16

Servants

- **We are servants of God who serve each other as a way of life.**
- *Jesus took on the posture of a servant. He gave His life, even unto death, so that others could experience salvation, peace and restoration. Jesus said, “I am among you as one who serves...” All those who follow Jesus are called to serve in the same humility. For us this means joyful submission to God, leadership and to each other, as we serve whomever God brings into our lives.*
- MT 20:25-28; 25:31-46; Jn 13:1-17; Ph. 2:5-11; 1 Peter 2:16

Learners

- **We are disciples of Jesus who take responsibility for our own development and the development of others.**
- *Jesus called others to follow His ways, to be His disciples and live in obedience to all that God commands. He then sent these followers out to make new disciples. We believe we are also called to be followers of Jesus who take responsibility for our own development and the development of others.*
- Luke 2:52; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11-13; 2 Timothy 2:2

Missionaries

- **We live actively as missionaries sent to make disciples.**
- *God sent His son, Jesus, to Earth to take on human form and live within the culture. He worked, ate and interacted among the people; living in such a way that those around Him could see and experience what God was truly like.*
- We are sent by God to restore all things to Himself.
- John 1:14; 20:21; Colossians 1:19-20; 2 Cor. 5:17-21

Gospel Communities are central to our vision to redeem the culture by bringing the gospel to the central coast and beyond.

To Clarify...A Gospel Community is not PRIMARILY:

1. A Small Group
2. A Bible Study
3. A Support Group
4. A Social Activist Group
5. A Weekly Meeting

Small Groups	Gospel Communities
Small Groups often tend to be a weekly meeting. People talk about 'small group night' –the evening in which they 'do' small group by attending a meeting.	A Gospel Community is about a shared life, a network of relationships, a genuine community of people.
Small groups are often centered around a Bible Study.	The Bible is central to the life of a Gospel Community, but the Bible is read, discussed and lived throughout the week in the context of a shared life.
Small groups are often insular and focused on the mutual care of the members.	Pastoral care is a feature of Gospel Communities, but they are also groups with a strong sense of mission. They can articulate their vision for mission and identify the specific people they are trying to reach.
Small groups are normally managed centrally by the church leadership.	Gospel Communities are given a mandate to reproduce organically and understand that they ARE the church.

Church is not an event. It's a Community.

Mission is not an event. It's a lifestyle.

We are called to live ordinary life with Gospel Intentionality.

-Tim Chester