



# PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY | PRACTICAL GUIDE

REVISION 2.0  
April 2023

# GOSPEL- CENTERED COMMUNITY



## CONTENTS

00

### INTRODUCTION

- WHY THIS HANDBOOK
- WHO THIS IS FOR
- HOW TO USE

PAGE 04

01

### ELEMENT'S VISION & PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

- ELEMENT'S VISION
- ELEMENT'S PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY
- ELEMENT LIFE
- THE NEED FOR GOSPEL COMMUNITY

PAGE 06

02

### WHAT IS A GOSPEL COMMUNITY?

- SEMANTICS
- COMMUNITY VS. GOSPEL COMMUNITY
- LIVING ON MISSION
- BUILDING BLOCKS—STRUCTURE & COMMUNICATION
- EXAMPLES OF GC LIFE

PAGE 11





## 03

### GOSPEL COMMUNITY LOGISTICS

- PLANNING
- SHARING STORIES
- HOSTING
- MEALS
- CHILDREN AND CHILDCARE
- ASSESSING GC HEALTH
- MULTIPLYING AND PLANTING

PAGE 21

## 04

### GOSPEL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE
- EXPECTATIONS OF LEADERS
- IMPORTANCE OF SHARED LEADERSHIP
- PATHWAY TO LEADERSHIP

PAGE 26

## 05

### LAUNCHING A GOSPEL COMMUNITY

PAGE 31

## 06

### TROUBLESHOOTING

- FACILITATING DISCUSSION
- HANDLING PRAYER REQUESTS
- RESPONDING TO GC MEMBER STRUGGLES & NEEDS
- NAVIGATING CONFLICT
- PRACTICING CHURCH DISCIPLINE
- FIGHTING THE CLIQUE MENTALITY

PAGE 32

### APPENDIX

- DEVELOPING A GC ONE-SHEET
- BLESS RHYTHMS
- LOVING ONE ANOTHER
- MISSIONAL FOCUS IDEAS
- GC MONTHLY PLAN
- ANNUAL EXERCISE | HOPES AND DREAMS
- CHRISTMAS SEASON PLANNING IDEAS
- LEVELS OF AUTHORITY
- FOR FURTHER READING

PAGE 37



# INTRODUCTION

---

If you are reading this, you are likely at least intrigued by the notion of Gospel Community (GC). For that, we thank you for learning more. We are excited about what God is doing in our personal lives, our church community, and in our world! At Element, we believe Gospel Communities are an effective way to grow in unity and mission for the sake of the Gospel.

While we have big dreams and expectations of what God can do, we know that the Church, including Gospel Communities, is comprised of fallen, imperfect people. We therefore rely on the Holy Spirit's leading to equip us to go forth into the world with the good news of who Jesus is and what He has done and is continuing to do. We know God is perfectly capable of building His church with or without us, and yet, He amazingly invites us to join Him in this work.

## WHY THIS HANDBOOK?

Throughout the many years of Element's Gospel Communities, many questions have arisen regarding vision/structure, purpose of GCs, expectations, and logistical concerns. We realized that a handbook like this could serve as a valuable resource to answer those many questions in one place, to hopefully bring clarity and consistency.

While there are certainly questions and issues that may arise that are **not** addressed in this handbook, we hope this is a great starting point to offer you a better idea of what we intend for Gospel Communities to be at Element. This handbook is just one of the resources we are offering to GCs and Element at large. We hope and pray that along with the handbook, GC coaches, training opportunities, and prayer support, our GC leaders and members will feel valued and supported.

## WHO IS THIS HANDBOOK FOR? JUST FOR LEADERS?

While we absolutely hope our leaders will spend time reading this handbook, we consider this material open to anyone interested in Gospel Community life at Element—including GC members, members of the church, or anyone just wanting to know more about us. We believe that the more we can all be on the same page, the better!



## HOW SHOULD I USE IT?

What you will see in this handbook is that we value flexibility when it comes to GCs. While there are general principles in Scripture to follow, each GC will be unique. Each GC will have its own personality and will likely do things a little differently than other GCs. We love and encourage that variety! Our desire is not to create a cookie cutter approach to establishing new Gospel Communities, but to give general principles and allow great amounts of freedom. We want to help our GC leaders explore creativity while dreaming what God might have for the communities they lead. We will support you and equip you in your GC endeavor in many ways, giving you the freedom and permission to fly on your own within the principles and guardrails established by Scripture.

This is a guide rather than a manual or a “how-to” book. It is not a set of rules to follow. Rather, think of this as a reference guide to assist you in your GC journey. It is meant to generate ideas, be a resource, and serve as a source of encouragement to you.



# CHAPTER 1

## ELEMENT'S VISION & PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

---



Element is a Gospel-centered community that finds our identity in Jesus.

Our mission is to glorify God by teaching and living out the Scriptures, transforming community into Gospel community, and planting churches.

If you spend any amount of time around Element on a Sunday morning, you're bound to hear one or both of the phrases above. Element is a church all about Jesus, and the reality of what Jesus has ushered in through His life, death, and resurrection transforms *everything*—including the way we understand community. The second statement above is our understanding of Jesus' Great Commission in Scripture:

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and **make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.** And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Matthew 28:18-20 ESV

Therefore, everything Element strives to do is for the purpose of people coming to know, trust, and surrender to Jesus. Our church structure, then, is designed to reflect this.

### PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

When we speak of the Church, we are referring to the universal, multicultural body of believers in Jesus—across time and space. Sometimes, however, we refer to the local church (Element), as that is our expression in this given community.

Element has a campus with physical buildings, but those are not the church. Those buildings are just resources we steward in the hopes of reaching more people with the Gospel.

Simply put, YOU are the Church and we believe **all ministry is relational**. This is reflected in God's own trinitarian existence (Father, Son, & Holy Spirit). We were created to be known, cared for, and matured through community.

At Element, we seek to **draw** people in, **equip** them as fellow missionaries of Jesus, and **send** them out into the world to reach more people.



## ELEMENT LIFE

As a local church of believers, we have various churchwide gatherings and spaces in place to orient us to a life centered around Jesus together—all in the hope of drawing, equipping, and sending people:

---

### SUNDAY MORNING GATHERINGS (DRAWING/EQUIPPING/SENDING)

Our Sunday gatherings provide a space and time to worship God corporately through time together, hearing/learning Scripture, music, communion, prayer, and financial giving. We see it as a sort of anchor for the week, encouraging and edifying us for the mission ahead; we can be refreshed with the truth of God's word and then apply those truths in our daily lives.

---

### HOLIDAY SERVICES (DRAWING)

These include services like Christmas Eve, Good Friday, and Easter. These typically follow a similar format to Sunday gatherings, yet have unique aspects that pertain to that holiday. While Christmas Eve and Easter services typically draw many people that do not normally attend services, Good Friday is usually designed with followers of Jesus in mind. These are designed to celebrate and reflect the major highlights of Christ's life and work on our behalf.

---



---

## EFAMILY EVENTS (DRAWING/EQUIPPING)

eFamilies exists to support parents to help students to KNOW Jesus through the teaching of the Scriptures, to GROW in their relationship with Jesus through the application of the Scriptures, and to SHOW Jesus to the people and communities around them through the sharing and modeling of the Gospel. From Sunday Morning children's programs to all-family events such as Change Their View (CTV), we aim to partner with parents/guardians to help teach and demonstrate the Gospel in formal, informal, and fun ways.

---

## BAPTISMS (DRAWING/SENDING)

Baptisms are a celebration of one's public confession of faith in Jesus Christ. These generally occur twice a year and include a churchwide meal and celebration.

---

## MEETUPS (DRAWING)

Meetups are events/activities open to whoever may be interested. They typically take place off the Element campus and in the city. These may be events initiated by people within Element or public events that we can attend together. Examples could include hiking, park playdates, trivia nights, etc. These are great opportunities for people to get involved in Element life that may not yet be committed to a Gospel Community. You can find our list of meet-ups in the Meet-Ups group in Church Center.

---

## CORPORATE EVENTS (DRAWING/SENDING)

Throughout the year, Element has various churchwide events that often serve as great bridges to the local community, such as: Pumpkin Killing, Change Their View, Ornament Exchanges, Agape feasts, movie screenings, blood drives, and service opportunities (e.g., with Delta High School). These are large scale ways that the local church can be a blessing to our city and build relationships.

---

## BIBLE STUDY/ELEMENT UNIVERSITY (EQUIPPING)

These provide specific opportunities to study God's word and apply it to our lives, whether through expository study of a book of the Bible or a topical series.

---

## REDEMPTION GROUPS (EQUIPPING)

These short-term guided groups combine a study of God's story of redemption in Exodus with Biblical counseling. Through Redemption Groups, participants will hopefully walk away with experiential understanding of how God's redemption frees us from bondage, hurt, trauma, grief, pain, and other suffering.

---

## SO...WHY GOSPEL COMMUNITIES?

**1) Gospel Communities help people to truly know others and be known.** We aim to create a welcoming environment for everyone in each of the spaces above. However, due to the nature of these larger events/gatherings where we meet with others and/or are corporately equipped, it is all too easy to get "lost in the crowd." In these environments, it is possible for us to be unknown or inauthentic about who we are and our struggles. We can know many people, yet remain essentially unknown at an intimate level.

As we said earlier, all ministry is relational... and there are varying degrees of depth in relationships. Relationships limited to interactions on a Sunday morning will not grow to the same degree as relationships developed in the context of shared life. GCs emphasize the nature of relationships transformed by the Gospel, resulting in intimacy, taking risks with one another, and speaking Gospel truth to one another across the various circumstances of life.

**2) Gospel Communities help empower believers to do the daily work of ministry.** We live in a consumeristic society and, unfortunately, many of those consumeristic values have leaked into church culture, where people expect to show up, be entertained, and then leave. Looking to Scripture, however, believers are called to live as the hands and feet of Jesus, using our gifts in service to the Kingdom. GCs emphasize the need for church members to come together and practice the daily work of ministry, rather than relying on a church "organization" to do that work instead.

**3) Gospel Communities allow for the connection of Scripture to real life.** Our Sunday gatherings provide valuable teaching of Scripture that we hope will inspire a deep love of God's word. However, our ultimate hope is that sermons will extend out beyond a Sunday morning—to be deeply absorbed by listeners' hearts and applied to real life. GCs provide an environment and community in which members can wrestle with God's word in the daily application, grow in Scriptural understanding, and learn to become more Gospel fluent in how we speak to one another (viewing all of life through the lens of God's story).

#### 4) Gospel Communities help allow for more people to be reached with the good news of Jesus.

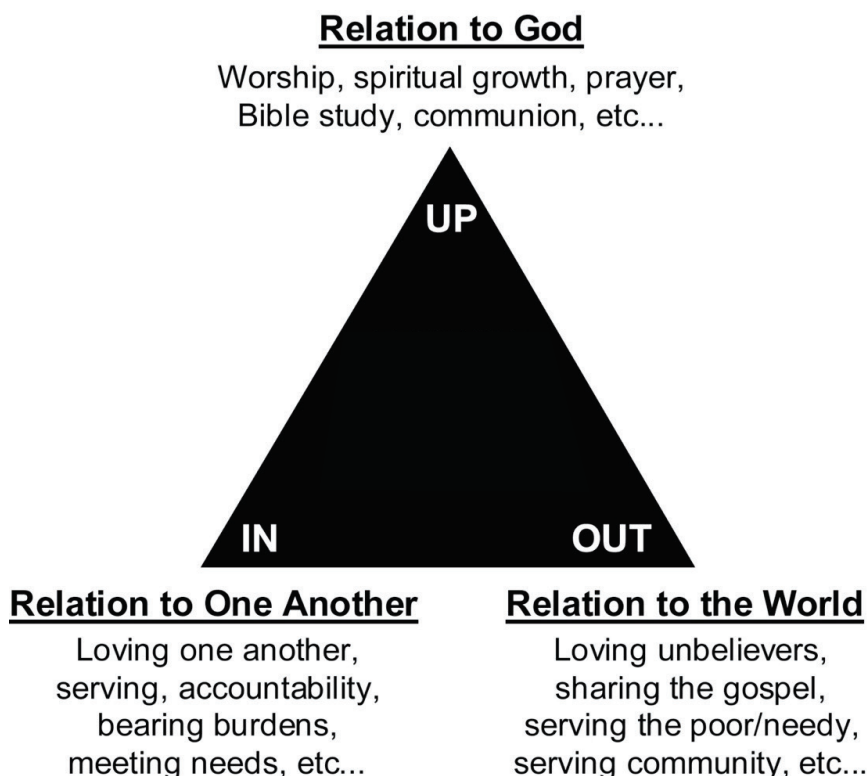
We believe that no matter how welcoming we are, **we cannot just wait for people to show up**. After all, going back to Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19, His disciples were sent out to all the nations from where they were. The bulk of our opportunities to reach people will be off the church campus and in the midst of daily life—where we live, work, and play.

### SPIRITUAL GROWTH | UP, IN, AND OUT

In Matthew 22:36-40 (ESV), we are told of the most important commandments: *"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."*

Following these commandments, we strive to become and develop followers of Jesus with this three-pronged focus: loving God (UP), loving each other (IN), and loving the world (OUT).

We believe Gospel Communities are an effective model to cultivate growth and maturity in each of these areas.





# CHAPTER 2

## WHAT IS A GOSPEL COMMUNITY?

---

At Element, we believe that in following Jesus' instruction, we are called to make disciples here on the Central Coast.

In our cultural context, we believe we will be most effective in reaching the people in our lives by building authentic communities which we refer to as Gospel Communities. That is, communities of people focused on the Gospel in every aspect of their individual and group life. This means we help the people in our lives who do not know Jesus (the "lost") understand the Gospel. And we help those who do know Jesus mature by understanding how the results of the Gospel transform every aspect of our lives (sanctification).



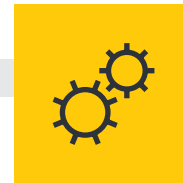
### DEFINITION: GOSPEL COMMUNITY

A **Gospel Community (GC)** is a group of people committed to Jesus, to each other, and to the city in which they live. In sharing a Gospel-transformed life together, this community blesses their city through sharing the good news of Jesus and inviting others to join in the work of the Kingdom.



### DEFINITION: GOSPEL

The **Gospel** is the good news that Jesus has defeated sin, death, and evil through His own life, death, and resurrection, and is making all things new, even us<sup>1</sup>.



### RESULTS OF THE GOSPEL

The **results of the Gospel** carry into every area of life, as God makes new and transforms those who trust Him through His Word, the Holy Spirit, and His people (the Church)<sup>2</sup>.

In this way, Element (as a local church) is a Gospel-centered community comprised of smaller Gospel community groups intentionally sharing life together. This provides multiple benefits: 1) Intimate relationships can exist and be maintained in a church community of growing size, 2) Multiple, diverse GCs will be more effective at reaching people within the Central Coast, and 3) Multiple GCs allows for potential church plants as more leaders develop.

<sup>1</sup> Called Together, by Dodson and Watson

<sup>2</sup> John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ESV (see also John 5:24) Romans 5:8-10 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. ESV

## A QUICK NOTE ABOUT SEMANTICS

---

As mentioned earlier, Element is just one local expression of the universal Church. With that being said, we understand we have our own terms and definitions for aspects of ministry that may resemble that of other churches. Most churches today will have some form of smaller groups, whether they are called small groups, life groups, homegroups, missional communities, etc. In addition to the variety of names, these types of groups can often have vastly different structures and focuses.

As opposed to other groups that may be closed, short-term, study-focused, or event-centric (e.g., a group that only meets for a 1.5 hour Bible study on Wednesday nights), we want to emphasize that Element's Gospel Communities share *life* together and are not defined by a singular event. And while study of God's word is important to the Christian life, it is not the singular focus of GCs. Our prayer is that GCs will, by the process of sharing life together under the Holy Spirit's guidance, grow in their walk with God, their relationships with one another, and in their heart for mission.

## COMMUNITY VS. GOSPEL COMMUNITY

---

Community is certainly not a word exclusive to the Church. This means the word "community" is often thrown around with various connotations. Sometimes "community" may even refer to a given vicinity (e.g., the community of Santa Maria). However, in this context, we are referring to the people we interact or share life with.

It's important to note that Gospel Community does not just happen. It is marked by a radical transformation resulting from the events of the Gospel. Because Jesus died for our sins and victoriously rose from the grave, we can have Gospel-centered Community. What does this transformation look like?

SHAMEFUL



FREE

We no longer have to hide in shame, because our sins are no more. We, redeemed people, are found in Christ and can be known more fully because we are no longer defined by our failures.

SUPERFICIAL



INTIMATE

In this freedom, we can become more fully known because rather than hiding, we live in God's grace and want others to experience it as well. We can plunge into the depths of our stories because we know Christ is always with us. We can be confident in who we are because we are cloaked in the righteousness of Jesus.

SELF-SERVING



SERVANTS

Because our deepest needs are fulfilled in Jesus, we do not need to look to community to give us favor, purpose, or identity. We can commit to one another and offer ourselves and our gifts out of love, looking to Jesus as the ultimate example of sacrificial love.

DIVIDED



UNITED

Despite the rife divisions in our world, whether among political parties, social classes, racial groups, etc., we believe Jesus can unite enemies, transform hearts, and bring humble repentance. With Gospel Community, we do not set limits on who can coexist with Jesus at the center.

PURPOSELESS

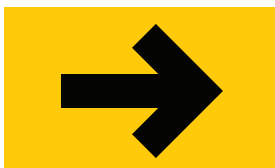


CO-LABORERS IN  
CHRIST'S ONGOING  
MISSION

Without a mission, community can easily go through the motions aimlessly, without propelling us forward or deeper in a significant way. As a result of the Gospel, our relationships and "mundane" moments now carry eternal significance. What was previously unremarkable is now sacred because of Jesus. Our purpose is to join God's ongoing work in our city and world as a community of humble ambassadors, to be used by Him to bring His transformation. We grow together, "in the trenches," of this mission as we rely on the Holy Spirit to do His work in and through us.



WORSHIPS \_\_\_\_\_



WORSHIPS JESUS

It is important to note that in any context, communities worship *something*—whether it is the same thing or each member worships its own idol. As believers, we are worshippers going out into a world of worshippers—the difference is that *we* worship Jesus. As such, GC is oriented around lifting Jesus high above all else and rejecting anything else as a god. GC members, with Jesus as the object of their worship, should aim to encourage one another’s growth as disciples of Jesus.

And lastly, while community without Jesus could take any number of forms, we believe Gospel Community should be marked by the fruit of the Spirit:

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

Galatians 5:22-23 ESV

## LIVING ON MISSION

At Element, we believe each of us is a missionary, meaning we are to live as God’s sent people, by and for the Gospel. We believe Gospel Communities are an excellent vehicle for mission, and consider this a key aspect of how GCs are defined. This infographic captures three aspects of mission: witness, discipleship, and service. While one of these aspects may be dominant in a given season, it is expected that GCs will strive to grow in all three dimensions.





## BUILDING BLOCKS: TYPES OF GATHERINGS

Because GCs are groups of people that share life together, how and when that time is shared (scheduled or organically) is largely going to depend on the group itself! Therefore, it is up to each GC leader and GC to define what the structure of the GC will look like. One helpful way to understand your GC structure is to envision building blocks. You can pick and choose which building blocks make up the structure of your Gospel Community, and can even change one block out for another or add/remove blocks depending on the season.

**SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES** are a great way to spend time with others in your GC. Ideas to consider:

- ✓ Sitting together during service
- ✓ Serving together in eKids or another area (greeting, set up, clean up, etc.)
- ✓ Practice being hospitable: hang out and meet new people before/after service. Get to know someone you don't know together. Welcome them to Element and invite them into a group activity
- ✓ Share a meal immediately following service (at a restaurant, picnic, or someone's home) PLUS, this is a great space to invite new people into!

### WEEKLY GATHERING

We recommend having a regular weekly gathering for your GC, in addition to other activities you may share in throughout the week. Here are a few examples of what this could look like:

**Notes Night:** The primary focus of this evening is to discuss the sermon notes from the previous Sunday's service. This is a great way to grow in understanding of Scripture and theology together. You can choose to incorporate a meal and/or prayer as well. Revisiting the message helps people reconnect with what was taught and helps to extend the content in their minds/hearts throughout the week.

While we provide sermon notes with questions for each Sunday morning message, remember these are a tool and not a mandatory guide. Questions need to be added or adapted to fit your specific audience. We do not expect it to be a top-to-bottom set list.

**Family Dinner:** This is another example we have seen in terms of weekly GC gathering. This model is often well-suited for groups with kids, as they can be better accommodated in a more casual setting. In this model, the group gathers around a shared meal at someone's home, a park, etc. and can converse over the meal (prayer requests, highs/lows of the week, sermon notes, etc.)—this



## BUILDING BLOCKS: TYPES OF GATHERINGS (CONT.)

also provides a natural space for newcomers to participate. Check out the Family Meal guide in the 'Resources' section for groups in Church Center App for ideas & suggestions!

**Men's/Women's Nights:** We have also seen groups add rotations of women-only/men-only nights to foster deeper relationships among the women and men in the group. Breaking into a smaller group may encourage quieter or shyer members to engage more.

**Note:** One complaint we often receive at Element is our lack of Men's or Women's Ministry. While we value criticism and can understand and appreciate the heart of the desire, we believe we do have a ministry for men and women within each Gospel Community. The men and women of a committed GC should, in some ways, act as a men's/women's ministry to one another—developing relationships, caring for one another, and growing together as disciples.

**Hybrid Model of the Above:** Some groups may find aspects of each of these gatherings work well for them and rotate among them...again, do what works for your group!

### GROUPS OF 2-4

It may benefit the group to have smaller groups of 2-4 men/women only meet on a set schedule (weekly, biweekly, etc.) at someone's home, a coffee shop, on a walk/hike, etc. These groups allow for additional time to know one another, pray together, and study Scripture.

### RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

What do you do to rest and have fun? We live in a beautiful area with so much to explore and enjoy. How can you and your GC enjoy time together out in the city/surrounding area, including nonbelievers/newcomers? Think about what you naturally participate in...parties, pool days, beach days, backyard BBQs, concerts or community events, farmer's markets, movies, sports events, hikes, etc.

### FAMILY LIFE

Something else to consider are activities that naturally occur during the week that aren't necessarily recreation. For instance, when/where do you do your grocery shopping, your laundry, etc.? These are often overlooked areas where we can include other people. While they may not be as fun as a concert or winetasting, these simple aspects of family life/household management do comprise a significant part of our time. Can you go grocery shopping or meal prep with a member in your GC? Can you run an errand for someone in the group that is short on time or sick? What about a video chat or phone call while you fold laundry? Is there a High School student connected with your GC that could benefit from you showing them how to change oil in a car the next time you do yours? Think through your





## BUILDING BLOCKS: TYPES OF GATHERINGS (CONT.)

upcoming week(s) and find ways to include others in the mundane things of life.

### HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

As a functioning family, Gospel Communities should regularly celebrate holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, and other important milestones in the lives of its members. In addition, this also includes caring for members in times of need, such as when sick or welcoming a new child. Plan ahead and consider ways to celebrate, grieve, or serve each other during these times.

### SERVICE PROJECTS

Service projects are a great way to enjoy an activity together while blessing others. If you decide to pursue this, we would encourage you to pick service projects that are people-focused, meaning they have the potential to build relationships with individuals (as opposed to a highway trash pickup, for example). Find ways to follow up in the following weeks and months for any further help needed and to continue developing the relationship(s).



## BUILDING BLOCKS: TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Sharing life together requires communication. In structuring your GC, you will also want to consider the best way to communicate with those in your group. Again, feel free to pick and choose which method(s) will work for you and your group.

**GROUP ROSTERS** are a shared document with members' names, phone numbers, emails, addresses and maybe even birthdays and anniversaries. This is a helpful tool members can refer to for the purpose of connecting, celebrating, sending cards, etc.

**GROUP EMAILS** are one great way to stay connected. We recommend starting a group email address so that members only have to email one email address that blasts to all current active members. (Reach out to your coach if you need help with this!) This helps ensure that no one is left off important emails that were meant to include everybody. This also gives the administrator the ability to remove email addresses of members that no longer want to receive emails.

**GROUP TEXTS** are another great way people can stay connected as a whole group or subgroups (e.g., all the women in the group). There can potentially be issues around people being left off with group texts, however.

**MARCO POLO** is a free video messaging app that allows for individual and group messaging. What is convenient is that videos are recorded so that members can watch whenever they are available.

**SOCIAL MEDIA** Sites are another way to stay connected. The disadvantage here, however, is that not everyone may be using that social media site.

**SHARED CALENDAR** is a great tool for GCs. You can include gathering times and locations for the group's various meetings, as well as everybody's birthdays, anniversaries, etc.

**PLANNING CENTER** is the back-end tool that interacts with the Church Center app our attendees use. The "Groups" tab functions as a virtual GC roster where people can see basic information about different GCs: meeting times, descriptions, etc. Once admitted into the GC's group, the leaders can access the messaging function, calendar, resources (guides, recipes, photos, lists, etc.), and more. It is essentially combining the group texts and shared calendar features above into one app.

**Example:** To give you an idea of what the different building blocks might look like compiled together, here is an example of the “Real People Gospel Community:”

*In considering structure, it's important to think creatively! You have the freedom to craft a GC structure that will be life-giving and naturally tie-in to your lifestyle. In considering the options for your structure, think about what will be a sustainable model and accommodate the various schedules of those in your group. While every member may not be able to attend every single event (some gatherings may not be for every member – as long as there are not exclusive cliques happening), hopefully, there will be enough variety for those in your group, as well as the outside people you are intending to reach. Here are a couple examples in addition to the one above:*



#### ***The Good Neighbors GC...***

- Regularly attends Element's Sunday gathering & goes out for lunch after
- Has a Notes Night on Thursday nights and time of prayer
- Gets together biweekly in groups of 2-4 men/women only for coffee/walks
- Attends a monthly neighborhood get-together hosted by one of the couples
- Invites neighbors they meet at the above get-together on fun outings
- Serves the local pregnancy center and builds relationships there
- Has invited a single mom and newborn to participate in a women's walk and join Sunday lunches. The next goal is inviting her to Element's Sunday gathering!

#### ***The Real People GC...***

- Regularly attends Element's Sunday gathering
- Meets for a weekend family dinner in the late afternoon/early evening where they read the children Bible stories
- Discusses notes and shares prayer requests in small groups of 2-4 men/women only
- Hosts men-only/women-only nights monthly & invite nonbelieving friends
- Meets up for park playdates on Saturday mornings, inviting nonbelieving friends to join
- Sets up a babysitting rotation among GC families and nonbelieving friends
- Intentionally connects with parents at their kids' daycares and schools, inviting them to weekend dinners

**With this in mind, we would encourage you to sketch  
your own ideas of building block structures on this page:**



# CHAPTER 3

## GOSPEL COMMUNITY LOGISTICS

---

### PLANNING

Understanding the rhythms of life is important. The community you are cultivating cannot function at 100% activity all of the time. There are seasons of rest, seasons of training, seasons of being active, seasons to focus on the family, and seasons to focus on mission. As believers, we trust in the Holy Spirit to guide us through various life circumstances and changing seasons. In addition, because this ministry is relational and involves people, it is good to be somewhat flexible and willing to accommodate spontaneity! In navigating the various seasons, it is best to maintain open communication with your group to assess how everyone is doing and what changes, if any, need to be made.

We expect leaders and co-leaders to regularly set aside time to discuss the status of the group, pray together, and plan for the future. Regular communication among leaders is vital to the overall health of your group. You may want to create a standing meeting that everyone can commit to (e.g., the first Thursday of every month, etc.). It may be best to plan out at least one month at a time, so you know the direction of where the group is going, who will be doing what, and when. Implementing this type of planning will allow for gatherings to go more smoothly, ensure leaders have a pulse of how the group is doing, and avoid feelings of being behind the curve or pressured to plan things last-minute.

Leaders may even want to consider creating an overall plan for the year. Setting goals for a one-year period helps to promote progress in those areas. In this way, leaders can also incorporate the various rhythms of life, as mentioned above. For instance, if your GC has a lot of younger kids, you know that during summer, Thanksgiving, and winter breaks, you will either need to plan more kids' activities or prepare for many families to be gone...this can be discussed with the group ahead of time to determine whether the group will scale back or not. This can also help leaders plan for shared leadership roles in which members take on more responsibility within the group or mission.

If your GC's missional focus is Delta High School, for instance, you know that summer is a time to plan and prepare for the new school year. Time spent serving students won't start back up until mid-August. In this example then, during the summer months, the GC might focus more inward on discipleship of the group.

With Element's sermon series planned far in advance, GC leaders can also learn more about what is coming ahead from their coach. You may want to ask your coach about the upcoming sermon series and duration to account for that in your planning.



Note: Planning is good and helpful, but we must also be flexible so as not to become locked into our plans and miss what adjustments/new opportunities God is calling us toward.

See Appendix for:

- Monthly Planning pg. 47
- Annual Planning Exercise pg. 48

## SHARING STORIES

One of the greatest ways to bond a community together is by sharing our personal stories. This is a practice that should be repeated when a significant amount of the community is new and hasn't heard the stories of the leaders or fellow GC members. There might be times when the whole group is invited to share stories, or times when the leaders share with just a new individual/couple over a meal as part of getting to know each other.

Because people's stories vary drastically, it's great to usually offer a few guidelines to give them some structure. For instance, people telling their life story chronologically may get lost in the details. One great practice, for example, is to pattern the storytelling after God's overarching story: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration. Not only is this a great time to teach those in the group about the Biblical narrative and God's mission, but it emphasizes the unity of our need for Jesus amidst the various life circumstances.

In addition to quickly building intimacy within the group, storytelling is a great exercise for GC members learning how to speak of the Gospel in a tangible way. Not only does storytelling help GC members learn to be bold in speaking transparently, but it helps them connect the Gospel to real life.

## HOSTING

Hosting is an important aspect of GC life and provides a great opportunity to practice hospitality. In considering hosting needs, your group may want to consider the following:

- Are we meeting in a public space (e.g., a park) or at someone's home?
- Is parking available, or would ridesharing make more sense?
- Is the space accessible to everyone in our group?
- Can the size accommodate everyone comfortably?

- Are restrooms available?
- If we are partaking in discussion, a meal, etc., where will people be located?
- If children will be included, is there a safe place for them to play?

You may find that your group regularly meets at the same place for a weekly gathering or other event, or rotates among various locations. This should be a regular discussion among your group, as location can impact members' ability to attend. In addition, members that have offered their homes as a meeting place in the past may need a break for a certain season.

## MEALS

Meals are a natural part of life and relationships, and it is expected that GCs will regularly share meals together in some capacity. For groups that have meals often (weekly, for example), it is usually best to have a dedicated meal coordinator that is responsible for planning the theme or menu. In considering how meals will be incorporated into your GC's life, you may also want to consider the following:

- How can responsibility for the meal be shared? Is the group chipping in on takeout, for example, or is the meal being provided potluck-style?
- Will we help our host with dishes or use paper goods?
- Are there allergies/dietary restrictions to be mindful of, so everyone can be included?
- How can we plan meals in such a way that the GC can commit to them?

Members of the group should also be encouraged to share regular meals with other members of the group throughout the week in smaller settings. Mealtime is a great way to open our homes and lives to someone else—this is a great practice to help relationships grow deeper.

## CHILDREN AND CHILDCARE

We believe children are a blessing and are to be involved in the life of Gospel Communities, as they are also part of the family! However, what that looks like can differ from group to group.

Here are some questions to consider:

- *When and how do we care for the children in our GC? What do they need at this stage of life?*
- *Do we want to utilize childcare to help foster appropriate conversations among adults only?*
- *How can children be included in our GC structure?*
- *Are there older kids who can help watch the younger ones?*

- *Are paid babysitters required?*
- *Who will pay for their time? [Note: speak to your coach about possible financial reimbursement provided by Element for GC childcare needs]*
- *Is there someone that can coordinate childcare or activities for both children and adults?*
- *How will we communicate childcare needs to the whole group and newcomers?*
- *How do those without children feel included?*
- *How can we equip and train our children as disciples of Jesus?*
- *How can children help us serve on mission?*

These questions need to be worked through as you put together spaces and gatherings for the Gospel Community.

For those Gospel Communities that have children, we encourage an atmosphere where children can participate in various ways (though, perhaps, not in every way.) While the current cultural trend is to separate parents and children in church and daily activities, we have a unique opportunity to nurture families inside the context of a spiritual environment, modeling to children what it means to live in a Gospel-centered community.

When we have children in our community, they will experience the church as God intended. How each GC handles children is completely up to them. We also understand some groups may not even have any children. Be sure to check out the Resources section for Planning Center Groups for kids' curriculum, coloring pages, etc.

## ASSESSING GC HEALTH

In addition to the regular communication that occurs for the sake of planning, it is wise practice for leaders to assess the health of their GC. This is something that can be done in collaboration with the GC coach. However, aspects of health the leaders may want to consider include:

- **Depth/Gospel relevance of discussion**—are GC members' words reflective of a deepening understanding of the Gospel? Do they reflect a heart that has been transformed by God's grace?
- **Member care**—does the GC care for each other well? Is there a family-like environment cultivated in which members can be encouraged and supported?
- **Discipleship**—Are the fruits of the Spirit evident in your members' lives? Do they desire to grow in spiritual maturity and Biblical understanding?
- **Witness**—Is your GC passionate about reaching those who don't know Jesus? Are they excited by God's mission to redeem and restore this world, including their very neighbors? Do they understand the difference between service and witness?
- **Inclusion of non-believers**—does the life of your GC include non-believers in any of its multiple

spaces? Are the majority of the members of your GC working to build relationships with those they do not know? Are non-believers slowly being encouraged into deeper relationships with individuals, the GC, and, ultimately, Jesus?

- **Welcoming atmosphere**—does your GC welcome and invite others from Element and/or from their daily lives to participate with the GC? Is there a sense of being oriented toward openness and growth?
- **Attendance**—while not the most important metric, patterns of attendance are a good indicator of commitment level and/or life stressors. Is there at least a core group of attendees to any given gathering?
- **Size**—is the size of your group conducive to your gatherings and goals? Do you need to diversify your membership by adding more people? Have you grown so large that you should consider planting a new GC?

## MULTIPLYING AND PLANTING

When Jesus commanded His disciples to advance His kingdom, make disciples, and spread the Gospel, He was clear about the expectation for the Church to flourish and grow. The early Church in the book of Acts expanded and recognized that the Kingdom was not about their comfort, but about God's mission to save the lost.

It is important to maintain this perspective as we plan for and live through our own Gospel Communities. While key relationships will be built in a Gospel Community that will likely last for years, GCs are not about establishing self-focused groups that stay together forever. Because these groups exist for the sake of the Gospel they will need to grow and adapt as the Spirit leads. The Church is intended to grow, expand, and reproduce itself.

Growth does not always mean numerical growth. A GC can experience an immense amount of transformational growth in the hearts and lives of the people, without any numerical growth (at least for a time). Growth exists in many different forms. Spiritual growth, however, will eventually have an outward dimension of reaching others. It is important to consistently remind ourselves that the goal is not comfort, safety, or self-preservation; rather, the goal is risk, faith, passion, and a commitment to share the good news of Jesus' rescue and transformation. As Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35) While we don't establish numerical goals for growth, the natural indication of health and an "others" focus will eventually be expansion and reproduction.

We want to invite unbelievers and new people to our GC and pray that, over time, we will reach a point of planting another GC (to then reach more unbelievers!). Therefore, the topic of size is relevant to assessing GC health, as the planting of new GCs (as expressions of the Church) is always a goal.

# CHAPTER 4

## GOSPEL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

---

### LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

Because of Element's model of ministry and emphasis on Gospel Communities, we want to do everything we can to help GCs succeed. This entails a structured leadership model to offer oversight, support, pastoral care, and guidance:

#### ELDERS

Elders are called by God to shepherd the church, pray for the church, guard the teaching/doctrine, and give overall accountability. There will be some shepherding issues that may get channeled from the GC leaders to the coach and ultimately to the elders. The elders will minister where needed. The elders are also committed to praying for the impact of Gospel Communities. The elders are involved, fully support, and will undergird and serve Gospel Communities in every way possible.

#### MINISTER OF ELEMENT LIFE

The Minister of Element Life is a staff member who works with the elders and oversees our Gospel Community ministry. They work to help problem-solve and improve the overall GC structure and ministry direction. They also assist with developing new GC leaders and assisting the launch process of new GCs.

#### MINISTER OF COMMUNITY & CARE

The Minister of Community & Care focuses on communication, relational/pastoral care, coaching, development, and coordination of all of our Gospel Community coaches/leaders and offers support wherever possible, helping to realize the goals of Element's vision and ministry through Gospel Communities.

#### GC LEADERS

GC leaders are servant leaders that shepherd their Gospel Community. We will delve further into expectations of GC leaders in the next section.



## QUALIFICATIONS & EXPECTATIONS OF LEADERS

Element's Gospel Community leaders are laypeople called to servant leadership through shepherding a group of people through the GC model described in this handbook. While we do not expect leaders to be perfect, there are important considerations given the significance of this leadership role to Element's ongoing ministry.

### QUALIFICATIONS OF GC LEADERS

- Must be committed followers of Jesus and profess Him to be Lord and Savior
- Must be formal members of Element Christian Church
- Must have clear understanding of the Gospel and close-handed issues (orthodoxy)
- Must have clear understanding of Element's philosophy of ministry and the purpose of GCs
- Must have gone through a leadership development cohort offered by Element
- Must have a heart for pastoral care of GC members, committing to walking alongside them, cultivating unity, and encouraging them in growing more like Christ
- Must have a heart for mission, seeking to reach unbelievers, welcome them into community, and share the good news of the Gospel
- Must have interpersonal skills—able to engage others, navigate conflict, offer rebuke in a loving way, and offer encouragement

### EXPECTATIONS OF GC LEADERS

- Commit to prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit for guidance and endurance
- Commit to a shared life with their GC, based on the rhythms & structure established
- Commit to regularly engaging GC members and praying for them/their families
- Commit to ongoing training/support and receive feedback from leadership as needed
- Reinforce/communicate vision for Element's ministry model and GCs as vehicles for mission
- Facilitate discussion among GC that is in line with Element's theology/beliefs
- Offer theological correction/rebuke, as needed, in a loving, gentle way
- Develop and communicate a plan for ongoing GC life/rhythms
- Regularly assess GC for growth, meeting of goals, and any needed changes
- Regularly communicate with coach and/or leadership team
- Identify new potential leaders within the group
- Delegate shared leadership that is sustainable long-term (see below)

## IMPORTANCE OF SHARED LEADERSHIP

While the primary leaders of a Gospel Community are ultimately responsible for their group, we do **not** expect leaders to be solely responsible for all of the responsibilities that a GC's life entails, such as:

- Providing spiritual/pastoral care
- Facilitating discussions and providing theological correction
- Facilitating conflict management/enforcing discipline
- Pursuing leadership development and maintaining communication with coach/leadership
- Praying for GC members
- Setting & executing missional focus of the group
- Communicating important information, such as logistics, Element-related announcements, etc. to members
- Responding to members' crises
- Hosting gatherings
- Coordinating childcare, if needed
- Coordinating meals & social outings
- Recording/sharing members' prayer requests

We recognize this is a substantial list, and while Gospel Communities exist in the midst of daily life, we realize there are other important aspects of leaders' lives, such as maintaining family relationships, fulfilling parenting needs, work, and other pursuits. Therefore, leaders can quickly burn out, become frustrated, and fail to flourish in a Gospel Community without shared leadership in place.

Delegating leadership responsibilities, roles, and tasks is not only the most sustainable practice for ongoing GC life, but it allows GC members to use and develop their gifts/skills, prepare for greater leadership responsibilities, and understand/practice the Element model of ministry in which each of us is considered a uniquely gifted servant of Jesus. **Note: See Levels of Authority in Appendix.**

Because we strongly recommend a shared leadership model, it is expected that GC leaders will identify members within the group that can take responsibility for the tasks above that are outside the scope of leaders' responsibilities.

For instance, given the list above, a GC may want to have the following in place:

- A hosting rotation among members that can accommodate the group, including a person to coordinate the hosting schedule
- A dedicated meal coordinator that will account for allergies/dietary needs, set a menu/theme, and communicate with the group
- A childcare coordinator to help the group determine how children will be involved in GC life and cared for

- Someone to take down/record prayer requests and distribute to the group
- Someone to share Element's announcements with the group at each weekly gathering

Our hope is that in addition to more formal delegation of roles/responsibilities, each GC will come together and act as a family, taking shared ownership of the wellbeing of the group and pitching in where needed—regardless of “title.” Again, each GC has the freedom to develop a structure that makes sense, given the unique nature of the group and its members. We encourage GC leaders to identify their needs and delegate as they see fit. This can also be an ongoing topic of discussion with your GC coach/leadership team.

## PATHWAY TO LEADERSHIP

As mentioned in the previous section, a benefit of shared leadership is that it allows for GC members to grow in responsibility, hone leadership skills, and prepare for future opportunities to which God may call them. Through sharing life together and practicing the daily work of ministry, leaders will come to learn more about their members' unique gifting/calling. With this understanding and the goal of Gospel Community expansion/planting, we ideally want GC leaders to be identified and developed internally within existing GCs.

***The following process is what Element envisions as a pathway to leadership for future GC leaders:***

- GC members practice shared responsibility of the group, growing in discipleship and leadership skills, with some members tasked with specific roles/responsibilities
- Over time, GC leaders identify an apprentice who is equipped to lead and/or feels called to launch a new GC
- GC leaders collaborate with coach/leadership team on development plan for the identified apprentice, which may include having them facilitate supervised discussions, and/or engage in specific training in identified area(s)
- Apprentice participates in and completes leadership development cohort
- Apprentice meets with leadership team and GC leader(s) (if applicable) for interview and review of qualifications for GC leadership (e.g., Element membership, clear understanding of philosophy of ministry, etc.); a leadership development plan may also be specified.
- If leadership qualifications are met and leadership team approves apprentice moving forward in leadership role, the new leader collaborates with Minister of Community & Care on launch plan
- Element announces the launch of the new Gospel Community and offers invitation to join for those interested

It is through this cycle we replicate the model of drawing, equipping, and sending, which is how the Church has grown throughout the ages! Our hope is to transform our neighborhoods, city, and beyond into true, Gospel-centered community.



# CHAPTER 5

## LAUNCHING A GOSPEL COMMUNITY

---

Preparation is an important phase when launching a Gospel Community. Here are some steps to ensure that you will be ready to lead a Gospel Community when you are approved to launch. However, keep in mind that you will not be alone on this journey, as you will have gone through Element's required steps on the pathway to leadership and collaborate with your leadership team. We want to help you succeed on this journey.

**1. Pray.** Leading a Gospel Community is a Spirit-led endeavor. Since your goal is to disciple others through mission, prayer is crucial. Pray for your coleaders, your future members, and the people you hope to reach by living on mission. Pray for excitement, creative ideas, a pastoral heart, confidence, and guidance.

**2. Read through this Gospel Community handbook and familiarize yourself with Element's vision and philosophy of ministry.** This handbook serves as a guide to familiarize you with the important elements of leading a Gospel Community. It offers insight into a host of topics including the rationale for GCs, how they are defined, and the expectations Element has of its GC leaders. Become familiar with its content so you can clearly understand what GC leadership entails. In addition, be sure to discuss any questions you have about GCs, Element, etc. with your coach and/or leadership team so that any points of confusion are clarified.

**3. Solidify the structure/rhythms of your GC.** Who will join you in shared leadership, how will responsibilities be delegated, and what do you envision for your shared life together? While a lot of your shared life will depend on who joins and participates in your group, you will want some details solidified upfront so that potential members can know what to expect in terms of weekly gathering, area of missional focus, etc. What will be your structure for leadership and gatherings? Collaborate on this with your coach and/or leadership team and review the previous sections on the "why" and "what" of a GC. Once you have a clear idea, develop a one-sheet that your group and potential members can refer to (see in Appendix).

**4. Coordinate with your leadership team on a launch date/event.** The launch of a new GC is something to be celebrated, and we want to help you get the word out! Once a plan is in place for your GC's structure, work with your coach/leadership team to develop a communication/launch plan. Please note this will likely entail a live-in coach for some period of time. Leadership may have an ideal launch period in mind, given Element's events, GC needs, etc. In addition, you'll want to plan a launch event—whether a celebration, Q&A, etc. that potential members can attend to gather more information.

**5. Plan the first few months of your Gospel Community.** As mentioned earlier in this handbook, we highly recommend that leaders take time to plan ahead for GC gatherings. This is especially important with an upcoming launch! A well-developed plan will help leaders and new members stay on the same page and focus as they move forward.



# CHAPTER 6

## TROUBLESHOOTING

---

Because Gospel Community is relational ministry, we know that necessitates walking through life with imperfect, fallen people. ***The very reason we have Gospel Communities in the first place is because we are all in need of a Savior!***

As a result, problems, pain points, and conflicts will arise. This section addresses a few that have arisen during our time with Gospel Communities. We know this is not a complete list and will seek to address other issues in additional future resources. However, we hope it can help guide your response in navigating the issue.

### FACILITATING DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier, discussions (whether through Notes Night, family dinner, etc.) are an important part of Gospel Community life. Conversation is how we enter into each other's stories, explore God's word, and encourage one another. Our words are also reflective of our hearts (Luke 6:45).

However, discussions can also present an opportunity for people to hurt/offend or BE hurt/offended. They can also be an extremely uncomfortable place for those that fear vulnerability. Group dynamics are complicated because of the interaction of multiple personalities, life histories, and even the circumstances of that day! That being said, here are some guidelines for facilitating discussion:

#### ENGAGE, BUT DON'T FORCE

In a group setting, it's important to help everyone feel included. As a leader, eye contact, body language, and tone of voice can go a long way in creating a welcoming environment. This can be especially meaningful to more shy members, who may not want as much direct interaction.

In the midst of discussion, you may want to *gently* attempt to draw quieter/shyer people out. Is there someone with a story/experience that can speak to a specific point/question? Try asking them if they want to contribute, but don't force them if they are uncomfortable. When these people do open up and contribute, thank them for doing so.

#### VALIDATE AFTER TOUGH SHARES

Shame is a pervasive consequence of the Fall, and while we know Jesus has defeated and overcome evil, it's astounding how quickly shame can creep in. With the nature of GCs sharing life together

and pursuing relational intimacy, it is natural that people will take risks, be vulnerable, and share intimate details at times—whether about suffering, moments of sin, insecurities, etc. It is crucial that the leader models to the rest of the group how to address these moments empathetically. We should not shy away out of our own discomfort, but rather move *toward* that person in love, validating their experience and reinforcing an environment of safety.

## GAUGE AND SET THE TONE

There are infinite ways discussion can go...with points of levity and points that may have more intensity or depth. A balance is key and usually most successful at engaging people. That being said, how does the tone of the discussion feel to you? Are people staying surface-level or just engaging in small talk? You can challenge that in a way to communicate your intentionality in exploring something deeper. Do things seem too serious? Try to bring some levity (if appropriate!). There is somewhat of an art to facilitating discussion in a way that can dance between the two. If you have issues with this, invite your coach to join a notes night discussion and give you some feedback.

## REDIRECT AS NEEDED

Is someone being overbearing, cutting people off, going off-topic, or taking too much time to speak? As the leader, you have the responsibility of redirecting as needed. Again, it's important to do so with love and gentleness. For example, you may want to say something like, "Hey \_\_\_\_\_, I appreciate what you've shared, but in the interest of time, I'd like to hear from some other people at this point." In these types of situations, it may be good to privately check in with the person you had to redirect later, to smooth things over and let them know your intent.

## CORRECT WITH GENTLENESS

As mentioned as part of leader expectations, we do expect GC leaders to shepherd their groups in truth and love. This requires a mature Biblical understanding through which to filter truth vs. lies. Because GCs seek to grow in understanding and application of God's word, it is the leader's responsibility to correct lies and falsehood. This is especially important in a group environment in which less mature believers may be present. For instance, if during the course of a notes night discussion, someone says something of questionable doctrine, one approach may be to say, "Hmm... I'm not sure if I agree with that. What does the rest of the group think about what \_\_\_\_\_ said?". From there, the group can explore how Scripture addresses that specific point/belief and go from there. While we do want to hold fast to truth and encourage the practice of thinking critically as believers, we must remember the grace shown to us in our weakness and limited understanding—showing that same grace to others.

## EMBRACE QUESTIONS

In conjunction with the point above, it is important to create an environment in which questions can be freely asked. Because GCs will likely have members at different points of maturity, it should

not be assumed that everyone shares the same knowledge or beliefs. Questions allow for valuable teaching moments and cultivating a feeling of safety among the group. It is important for leaders to communicate appreciation for questions and also maintain an attitude of humility that is willing to say, “I don’t know” when appropriate!

## BE FLEXIBLE

In facilitating discussion, it is important to allow for flexibility and spontaneity. This is especially relevant in the midst of Gospel Community, since we believe Jesus is the ultimate leader of our GCs! While it is helpful to have somewhat of a plan for discussion, be mindful of the Spirit’s leading, what you observe in your group, and how discussion may go in a new direction.

## HANDLING PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayer is a vital aspect of Gospel Community life together and encouraging people in their prayer life is a beautiful thing to witness! Through sharing our needs and praises, we can not only experience unity in prayer to God, but also learn more about how to care for and celebrate with one another.

There can be a tendency, however, for people to use times of gathering prayer requests to dominate the space and not respect others’ time. This can be a sensitive issue for leaders and GC members to navigate, especially if the person is sharing about a particular struggle. How can we redirect them without making them feel as if we don’t care?

There are a several solutions, here are a few...

- 1) One is to encourage the group to just start praying together, rather than asking for requests beforehand. In this way, people are encouraged to go to God first with what is on their heart, and then other members can join in if led.
- 2) Another option is to collect prayer requests in a different format (e.g., through an email chain or text thread). This way, the group can refer to all the prayer requests in one place, and no time is taken away from other aspects of group gatherings.
- 3) Another option is to reserve times for sharing prayer requests for smaller settings—such as women-only/men-only nights or in groups of 2-3.

## RESPONDING TO GC MEMBER STRUGGLES & NEEDS

As a result of The Fall, we live in a world rife with suffering, brokenness, and pain. As believers, we are called to care for others, whether that is within the church body or outside it. Based on Element's philosophy of ministry and Gospel Community model, we envision Gospel Communities as the "first responders" and primary mode of pastoral care. Not only does this reinforce the understanding of GCs as an extension of the church itself, but on a practical level, it minimizes the risk of overwhelming Element staff and/or people falling through the cracks. Therefore, when members are struggling or express tangible needs, we encourage leaders to first consider how they/their GC can respond to the person/family in need.

This being said, we understand there are times when crises occur that seem beyond a GC leader's scope. In such scenarios, please reach out to your coach/GC leadership team to ensure the issue is escalated and the proper team of people can be involved (elders, professionals, law enforcement, etc.).

## NAVIGATING CONFLICT

Conflict is inevitable in relationships, and yet, followers of Jesus are called to radical love, forgiveness, and humility (see "Loving One Another" in the Appendix). This applies to the way we handle conflict among each other as well. In the midst of conflicts, GC leaders have an opportunity to model a Biblical approach to conflict resolution that is not defined by pride or keeping score, but by the example set before us in Jesus.

As a general principle, members in conflict should be encouraged to speak directly to the person(s) involved and refrain from involving others. However, if members in conflict need support in working through an issue, the GC leader(s) should make themselves available to mediate—encouraging open, transparent communication, maintaining a tone of respect and love, and seeking to find common ground and bring unity. Even in the midst of the most difficult conflict, prayer is always a good idea.

## PRACTICING CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Assuming a resolution has been reached, a healthy practice, although one not necessarily easy to do, is to have those that were previously in conflict share their experience with the group. This can be a powerful

experience for those that have never engaged in or witnessed healthy conflict management. In addition, this underscores the familial nature of Gospel Community—people that love and are committed to each other, willing to work through the difficulties of sharing life together.

In line with the above, there are times conflict may involve more than a simple misunderstanding. In situations where sinful behavior is identified, the person should be disciplined (read: DISCIPLED) in a loving way. The person in sin should be made aware (Ephesians 5:11, John 3:20) and encouraged in repentance—to turn away from sin and toward the abundant grace found in Jesus. This can be a gradual process, at times, and even in the wake of repentance, there may be grief and consequences that have to be navigated. Here, the GC and GC leaders should remember the goal is *always* to turn people toward Jesus. In cases where a person in sin does not seem convicted or repentant even after GC leader involvement, the situation should be escalated to the leadership team for further direction.

## FIGHTING THE CLIQUE MENTALITY

While we believe a Gospel-informed vision should transform the habits and practices of GCs, we recognize the recurring tendency to develop a clique mindset. We believe that, in part, this may be informed by previous experiences with small group-like ministries where mission was not the focus. After all, it is hard to become myopic if we are focused on looking out to reach more people.

However, we recognize that even in the formation of Godly relationships, our own needs can supersede the mission of the group at times. We can so easily forget that GCs do not exist solely to meet our needs (although, we DO hope to see members cared for in an impactful way!), but for the sake of the Gospel—including the stranger, loving our neighbor, and welcoming people into the family of God. It is important for leaders to communicate the missional vision of GCs often to help combat this kind of mindset, and to regularly assess for this type of attitude or culture within the group.

It is only natural that some relationships in the GC will be stronger than others. God created us with unique personalities, interests, giftings, and tendencies. However, we believe that even the closest of friends within a GC should always have a heart for including others, look to care for the entire GC, and serve the purpose of the GC.

We also want to recognize that Element, as a whole, is a family. Regardless of GC membership, every believer has been welcomed into the family of God. We see our numerous opportunities for corporate gatherings as opportunities to celebrate that reality in addition to gatherings among GCs only.





# APPENDIX

---





# DEVELOPING A GC “ONE-SHEET”

---

Part of Gospel Community leaders’ expected preparation is to create a document with the group’s purpose, envisioned structure, and other relevant details. Not only is this a helpful exercise for leaders in brainstorming the life and rhythms of the GC, but these one-sheets will be what potential members initially refer to as they consider joining a GC.

Your GC liaison, coach, and leadership team will help you craft and develop this document. However, we wanted to share some questions and points of consideration to get you thinking along these lines.

**What is the name of our GC?** What is the personality, feel, and core message of your GC? If you had to “brand” your group, what would you want to communicate?

**What is your vision?** If your GC succeeds, what will be the end result? What is the dream God has planted in your heart for both your community and the people you intend to reach?

**What is your mission?** Note: In this context, we are not just referring to our calling to make disciples, although that should always be our goal. In order to make the above vision a reality, what specifically will your GC do? What will you practice, individually and as a group, to reach your goals?

**Where will the life of your GC take place?** Because GCs are not limited to a weekly event, the life of the GC will exist across multiple spaces. What are those spaces?

**What/when is your kickoff event?** How will you mark and celebrate your launch as a GC? What do you envision that event looking like? What will the event include? Are there any upcoming Element events/gatherings you also expect your GC to participate in?

**What is the structure of your group?** Refer to Chapter 2 of the handbook for guidelines on building your GC’s structure. It’s important to remember that you have freedom and creativity in this area. While Element has set a general vision for GCs, we understand the specific design of each GC will be different! In addition, while the ongoing structure may change and adapt as members join and spark new ideas, include what you envision for the structure at this point in your one-sheet.

**What unique aspects are there to your group that you want to note?** What makes your GC your GC?

**What resources do you want to share with your leaders/core team?** Are there books or other resources that inspired your vision for your GC? Has something informed the way you see the GC living? Make a note so that others in the group can refer to it.

**Example:** The following pages provide an example from the Storytellers GC, to give you an idea. Use it as a rough template as you consider your own GC!



# STORYTELLERS GOSPEL COMMUNITY

**VISION:** STORYTELLERS WILL BE A VIBRANT COMMUNITY WHO STRIVE TO KNOW GOD AND OTHERS BY WELCOMING FOLLOWERS OF JESUS AND OTHERS INTO OUR HOMES AND LIVES, INTENT ON MAKING GOD'S STORY, THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL, KNOWN THROUGH THE STORIES OF EVERYDAY PEOPLE.

**MISSION:** TO GLORIFY GOD BY ENGAGING IN A LIFESTYLE OF AUTHENTIC, INCLUSIVE, HOSPITABLE COMMUNITY THAT GROWS IN UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOSPEL, DISCIPLE-MAKING MISSIONAL ACTIVITY (E.G., DELTA HIGH SCHOOL), AND STORY ENGAGEMENT /RE-TELLING.

## LOCATION(S):

- REEDS' HOME
- GEES' HOME
- COMMUNITY VENUES: PARKS, BARS/RESTAURANTS, ATHLETIC FIELDS, ETC.

## LAUNCH DATE/EVENTS:

- ELEMENT AGAPE: SUN, NOVEMBER 18TH
- JAN 6, 2019 (NEW YEARS PARTY) AT THE REEDS'
- CHILDHOOD PHOTO/STORY EXERCISE

## WEEKLY GATHERING::

- AT THE REEDS', THE GEES', A RESTAURANT, OR AN OUTDOOR PICNIC
- OPEN TO NONBELIEVING FRIENDS
- GROUPS OF 2-4: MEN/WOMEN ONLY COMMITTING TO READING/DISCUSSING SCRIPTURE TOGETHER & PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER. 1 HOUR MEETING EVERY OTHER WEEK AT DETERMINED TIME/PLACE

## CITY INVOLVEMENT:

- FELLOW PARENTS OF CHILDREN'S FRIENDS - PARTICIPATE WITH THEM IN WHAT THEY ARE DOING.
- MOVIES IN THE PARK
- DOWNTOWN FRIDAYS
- ATHLETIC EVENTS
- FAMILY PARK DATES

**MOVE AWAY FROM NOTES-ORIENTED WEEKLY GATHERING & INSTEAD TREAT THE GATHERING AS A "LAUNCH" FOR THE WEEK:**

- SUNDAY FAMILY DINNER - SHARED MEAL TO INCLUDE KIDS
- LITURGY/EXERCISES (TAKING COMMUNION, FOR EXAMPLE)
- DISCUSSION QUESTION OR TWO
- SHARE PERSONAL STORIES AFTER EXPLORING GOD'S STORY: CREATION - FALL - REDEMPTION - RESTORATION
- SHARE HIGHS/LOWS OF WEEK
- ESTABLISH/FOLLOW-UP ON MISSIONAL GOALS FOR THE WEEK
- PRACTICAL TRAINING

## CELEBRATIONS!:

- BIRTHDAYS
- ANNIVERSARIES
- HOLIDAYS

**FUND:** MEMBERS REGULARLY CONTRIBUTE TO COLLECTIVE GC FUND TO HELP FINANCE PARTIES, PUBLICATIONS/MATERIALS, & PERSONAL NEEDS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE GROUP.



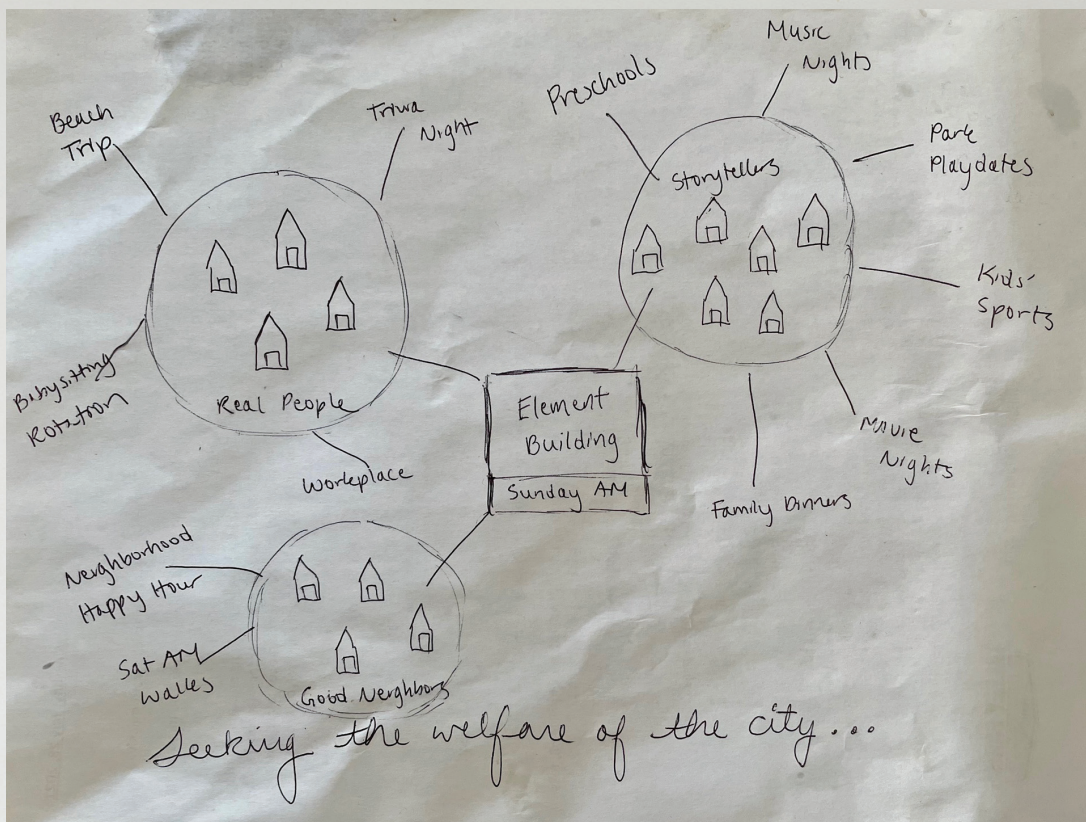
# STORYTELLERS GOSPEL COMMUNITY

## STORYTELLING ASPECTS:

- CORE TEAM WILL HAVE PARTICIPATED IN A REDEMPTION GROUP
- EACH MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY WILL SHARE THEIR STORY WITH THE MIXED GROUP (MEN & WOMEN) - CAN GO DEEPER IN DNA GROUPS.
- COMMUNITY STORIES WILL BE COLLECTED IN DOCUMENT OF SOME KIND
- MEMBERS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO CREATE CONTENT THAT REFLECTS THE STORY OF GOD (VISUAL ART, WRITING, MUSIC, VIDEOS, ETC.) THIS CONTENT CAN THEN BE SHARED WITHIN AND OUTSIDE ELEMENT VIA SOCIAL MEDIA
- MEMBERS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO LEARN THE STORIES OF OTHERS OUTSIDE THE GROUP

## READING MATERIALS/RESOURCES FOR LAUNCH:

- THE GOSPEL COMES WITH A HOUSE KEY
- CALLED TOGETHER
- SATURATE
- MAKING SPACES





# BLESS RHYTHMS

As we work to bring the Kingdom of Heaven ever more present in this world, we are constantly looking to align our rhythms of life with others. One helpful tool (and there are many!) is Bless Rhythms (adopted by Tim Chester/Soma). These rhythms seek to encapsulate what it means to live out our identity and values amidst ordinary daily life.

We respond to the grace God has given us by trying to BLESS others through what we do. Use the chart below as a guide to spur ideas for how this can be done in the context of your week:

	God (UP)	Community (IN)	Mission (OUT)
<b>Bless</b> <i>We have been blessed (in Christ) to be a blessing (for Christ). (Genesis 12:1-3, Ephesians 1:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21)</i>	How will I worship God?	Who will I intentionally bless in word, gift, or deed?	Who will I intentionally bless in word, gift, or deed?
<b>Listen</b> <i>God has heard our cries, so we listen to others. (Proverbs 15:8, James 5:16)</i>	How will I listen to God in prayer and His Word?	Who will I love by listening to their story?	Who will I love by listening to their story?
<b>Eat</b> <i>The Story ends with a banquet. We share meals as a foretaste. (John 6:55-59, Matthew 26:26-28)</i>	What is my plan to feast on God's Word this week?	Who will I share a meal or drink with?	Who will I share a meal or drink with?
<b>Speak</b> <i>The gospel word has been spoken to us. We speak it to others. (Romans 10:14-15, Acts 4:19-20)</i>	How will I speak to God in prayer?	Who will I intentionally speak good news to?	Who will I intentionally speak good news to?
<b>Sabbath/ Celebrate</b> <i>We have rest in God, and we celebrate because we have something to celebrate. (Rev 21-22)</i>	How & when will I rest with God?	With whom will I rest and celebrate God's blessings?	With whom will I rest and celebrate God's blessings?

# LOVING ONE ANOTHER

---

In the body of Christ, God calls us to love one another. We are an extended family of spiritual brothers, sisters, moms, dads, sons, and daughters. As we are pursuing devotion to God and the advancement of His kingdom in the world, we are to meet one another's needs along the way. This will take place in the GC through various means.

**One Anothers:** Scripture is filled with language on how we are to love and serve one another. Here is a list of the "one another"s found throughout the New Testament:



- Be devoted to one another (Rom. 12:10)
- Honor one another (Rom. 12:10),
- Harmony with one another (Rom. 12:16)
- Don't judge one another (Rom. 14:13)
- Accept one another (Rom. 15:7)
- Instruct one another (Rom. 15:14)
- Greet one another (Rom. 16:16)
- Agree with one another (I Cor. 1:10)
- Serve one another (Gal. 5:13)
- Bear with one another (Eph. 4:2)
- Be kind/compassionate to one another (Eph. 4:32)
- Forgive one another (Eph. 4:32)
- Speak/Sing Songs to one another (Eph. 5:19)
- Submit to one another (Eph. 5:21)
- Teach one another (Col. 3:16)
- Admonish one another (Col. 3:16)
- Encourage one another (I Thess. 5:11)
- Spur on one another (Heb. 10:24)
- Don't slander one another (Jas. 4:11)
- Be hospitable to one another (I Pet. 4:9)
- Be humble to one another (I Pet. 5:5)
- Fellowship with one another (I Jn 1:7)
- Be at peace with one another (Mk 9:50)
- Wait for one another (I Cor. 11:33)
- Have equal concern for one another (I Cor. 12:25)
- Don't provoke/envy one another (Ga. 5:26)
- Don't lie to one another (Col. 3:9)
- Don't grumble against one another (Jas. 5:9)
- Confess sin to one another (Jas. 5:16)
- Pray for one another (Jas. 5:16)
- Love one another (Jn 13:34)





## ELEMENT GCS: | MISSIONAL FOCUS IDEAS

As mentioned throughout this handbook, we believe each of us is a missionary sent by God to proclaim the good news of who He is and the work He is doing. The work of being a missionary is inherently relational, and therefore, we should prepare to be on mission in our everyday lives, looking to reach the people with which regularly interact with the hope of Jesus Christ.

For GCs with the time and commitment, however, a dedicated missional focus is a great way to expand the group's sphere of influence. For instance, through serving a dedicated group of people, the life and rhythm of a GC is reshaped to now broaden the reach of who they regularly interact with.

The goal isn't the service project itself—something that just makes us “feel good.” Our goal is to see lives changed by receiving the good news of Jesus through action and word. This can only be done through relationship—entering into the stories of those we come to know, serving them where they are, and speaking to their true needs—both tangible and spiritual.

To begin, we want to ask and think through the following questions to bring focus and perspective as you prayerfully consider how to engage in mission:

### **Question 1: Where can we join in God's work of what He is already doing?**

God is already at work in Santa Maria, Lompoc, Nipomo, VAFB, and beyond. Where can we partner with Him to continue bringing the Kingdom of God to a people group living in this place at this time?

### **Question 2: What is wrong?**

What are the things that we, in the name of Christ, need to confront? Where is the world struggling, and what does it look like for us to follow Christ in His mission to heal and restore? What does it mean to be a people of compassion, working for a better world with the energy and grace God gives to us, by confronting evils that threaten human dignity: poverty and neglect, injustice and abuse, racism and classism, hurting neighborhoods and failing schools, illness and addiction, hypocrisy and loneliness?

### **Question 3: What is confused?**

What will it look like for us to follow Christ in His mission to clarify and compel? What does it look like to be a truth-telling people, inviting our neighbors to consider the truth and beauty of God, to see and experience Jesus as the answer to humanity's longing for forgiveness, hope, community, and meaning?

### **Question 4: What is good?**

What will it look like for us to follow Christ in His mission to celebrate and cultivate? As an affirming people, what does it look like to resist cynicism, and instead to applaud, participate in, and enjoy the things that are right and good with the world—things that support and advance the common good for all of our neighbors?



## ELEMENT GCS: | MISSIONAL FOCUS IDEAS (CONT.)

### **Question 5: What is missing?**

What will it look like for us to follow Christ in His mission to share and create? As a life-giving people, what does it look like to live well and love well, so that all of our neighbors, whether they share our beliefs or not, are glad that we are here? Whether at church, in our neighborhoods, at work or at play, what will it look like for us to be advocates more than adversaries, contributors more than consumers, and givers more than receivers?

With these questions in mind, let's look at some people groups that need God's love shown and told to them:

### **DELTA HIGH SCHOOL**

Students, teachers, and staff of Element's neighboring school. These students need to be shown love and care. The majority of them are stuck in life situations that are not healthy and many have never traveled further than 30 miles away. Many are at Delta as a last resort for graduation and/or are in trouble with the law. Many have chosen Delta because they don't learn well in traditional classroom settings. Many have made life changes/choices that make them outcasts at other schools (transgenderism and pregnancy are two frequent ones). Many times, these kids are seen in very poor light and little attention is given to them.

The teachers and staff do an amazing job investing in the kids. They have created a school atmosphere that helps encourage the kids to actually show up. They invest time in not just education, but life skills and instilling hope of a life past graduation. There are clubs on Fridays that try to give hope to students.

God is already working within the school. Element aims to partner with God in what He is doing there.

#### **Challenges:**

- Because of it being a school that operates during standard working hours, it is difficult to be present/show up at the school for those who work or are otherwise engaged during the day.
- The majority of students don't have transportation of their own and live on the north end of town or in surrounding areas. Gathering students for anything outside of school hours will be difficult.
- Dealing with school board/state regulations. There are things we are not allowed to say or do in ways we normally would, so we need to be cautious at all times.
- Access requires background checks and working within the system.

#### **Ideas for GCs to engage and bless students/staff:**

- Celebrate each student's birthday. Even a simple note of encouragement and a small gift (such as a chocolate bar packaged in a nice way) could do much to help students feel cared for. We could deliver a month's worth to the office for distribution.
- Provide meals for staff lunches



## ELEMENT GCS: | MISSIONAL FOCUS IDEAS (CONT.)

- Support clubs they have on campus such as Hope club, robotics/game programming, etc.
- Run the annual Holiday Store where kids can pick out items for free to give as gifts for Christmas
- Tutor students
- Help with changing the narrative surrounding Delta in Santa Maria. One need they bring up often is how there is a bad stigma related to the school.

### SUPPORT FOSTER/ADOPTION

There is an abundant number of children in need of families to love and care for them in the foster/adoption system in Santa Barbara County. There are many ways to support the kids and the adults who are giving their life to help, to varying degrees of commitment levels. Here are some ways to engage:

- Become Foster parents or adopt.
- Support a family that is fostering or adopting.
- Provide Respite Care for Foster parents.
- Help provide physical needs for families fostering.
- Become a CASA volunteer for children who need extra protection & support.
- Partner with an agency such as Pathway Family Services to provide support needed.
- Partner with a non-profit such as Royal Family Kids that offers summer camps and monthly gatherings for foster kids.

### ADOPTING A SPECIFIC NEIGHBORHOOD

For example, one GC adopted an entire apartment complex as their missional focus. They even had a family within the GC move into the complex in order to live among the neighborhood and be good neighbors. Ways they and the GC engaged were:

- Organizing neighborhood events/gatherings
- Building relationships and extending friendship
- Welcoming some into their home for coffee, game night, etc.
- Welcoming new people to the neighborhood
- Celebrating Holidays together with the neighborhood

### COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN CARING

Partnering with this local non-profit is a great way to meet the elderly in our city. CPC will send out needs of their clients (usually physical needs, such as help with landscape, mowing, rebuilding steps to a house, etc.). These are great ways to serve and meet people in need. From there, relationships might be forged and future help and conversations can develop.

### COMMON/SHARED ACTIVITIES

Celebrating common interests is a great way to rally together and get out into the city. We have had GCs focus on a city softball league. An Element softball team was created and played against all other teams.



## ELEMENT GCS: | MISSIONAL FOCUS IDEAS (CONT.)

This is a unique opportunity to meet new people and strike up conversations (pun intended.) Those who don't play can come support the team in the stands and talk to others watching the game. From there, they can get together for BBQ's around the games, etc. Showing good sportsmanship and having fun is a great way to draw others in.

In addition, children's activities that are already a part of GC families' lives are a great way to meet people. How can we support other parents and other kids through that activity?

### MANY MORE

There are thousands of people in our city that need to be loved and supported. Here are some other ideas:

- Families taking care of elderly parents or the elderly without family
- Disabled people who work at VTC or members of other programs/communal housing
- Those who are getting out of jail and need help back on their feet
- Those moving into VAFB who are isolated from families and friends
- Helping those who are out of high school and need direction in life

As people living on mission, it is important to prayerfully explore who we are drawn to, where God has placed us, and how our gifting/stories can enhance our ministry with others.

## WHO IS GOD CALLING YOU TO REACH?

**SANTA MARIA  
NEEDS JESUS.**

Who do you know?

# GC MONTHLY PLAN

## GOSPEL COMMUNITY NAME:

Use this resource to map out the upcoming month(s) to help organize and keep your leadership team on track. Please feel free to modify depending on your building blocks of structure and leadership.

	What is the focus?	What are we doing?	Who is leading?	What else is going on this week we can coordinate/plan for?	Who and how will we bless/serve someone outside of the GC?
<b>Week 1</b> Jan 1 – 7th					
<b>Week 2</b> Jan 8 – 14th					
<b>Week 3</b> Jan 15 – 21st					
<b>Week 4</b> Jan 22 – 29th					
<b>Week 5</b> Jan 30 – Feb 5th					
<b>When will we meet as leaders to plan, pray &amp; debrief?</b>		<b>Date of any GC Leader Trainings or coaching dinners:</b>		<b>Celebrations such as Birthdays, Anniversaries, etc.</b>	

Our prayer for this month is:

This month we have seen Jesus...

# GC ANNUAL EXERCISE | HOPES AND DREAMS

---

Get with your co-leaders to think, pray, and dream about your community for the year. This exercise will give you focus as you lead through the whole year, month by month and week by week.

**Remember:** All GCs exist because of the Gospel. We are growing into a deeper understanding and application of the Gospel. We are taking the Gospel to the neighborhood, city, and world through intentional missional engagement.

1. What would your GC look like if it was thriving?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What would your neighborhood look like if it knew and surrendered to Jesus? How would it be transformed?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What would you like to see happen this year in your GC?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What are goals that would move your community to take a few steps closer toward your GC vision?
  - 
  - 
  -

In light of those hopes, dreams, and goals, use this section to explore what your role is in leading this missional community:

5. What areas do you feel like you need to grow in as you lead this community?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What areas will you be responsible for?



# CHRISTMAS | HOLIDAY SEASON PLANNING IDEAS

---

Christmas often comes and goes with lots of fanfare but little focus. For a Gospel Community, it can seem like a blur – or a time to break, which then results in a lack of feeling connected. What if you took the time to make a plan for growth *before* the season started and considered ways to care for one another, grow in your love for Jesus, and reach out to your neighbors? How can you use the times you are already getting together to make the most of this season?

Consider the following as a springboard to help you think creatively about what this could look like for you.

## **What is one way your GC will love one another during this season? (IN)**

- Share stories of what Christmas was like for you as a child, using this time to practice the communal skill of sharing and listening to stories.
- Give opportunity to share anxiety, worry, and sadness during this season, and pray for each other.
- Take turns babysitting the children in your group so parents can go shopping together.
- Have a Christmas party/dinner where you celebrate intentionally and have a big meal together.
- Do a “gift” exchange.

## **What is one way your GC will love others in your life, outside of the church, together during this season? (OUT)**

- Throw a Christmas party as a GC and invite others to join.
- Look at what is happening in the city and serve together at those events/festivals.
- Invite your friends or coworkers to your church’s Christmas Eve gathering and have dinner together before/afterward.
- Offer to haul away the Christmas trees after Christmas for your neighborhood.
- Host a present “wrapping party” and invite the GC and their family/friends/ neighbors/coworkers to – have activities for kids like gingerbread house making for example.
- Host a kids’ Christmas movie night with goodies and fun activities.
- Start a neighborhood tradition (cookie exchange, open house with appetizers, etc.)
- Ask others to help serve at or donate with you in your missional goals (Delta’s Holiday Store, feeding homeless shelter, etc.)

## **What is one way your GC will intentionally grow in your love for God during this season? (UP)**

- Walk through an advent reading plan during the season.
  - Youversion reading plan: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/the-christmas-story>
  - Paul Tripp’s Come, Let Us Adore Him: A Daily Advent Devotional
- Ask for volunteers to write a Christmas psalm, poem, or prayer. Read them together (maybe after having Christmas dinner together).
- Share stories of how God has blessed you personally this year. Hold a time of prayer focused on thanking God for these blessings without asking for anything more.

# LEVELS OF AUTHORITY

---

## Levels of Authority

As a leader, whenever you delegate a task, you need to make it clear what level of authority you are conferring to others:

**Level 1: Do exactly what I have asked you to do.**

Don't deviate from my instructions. I have already researched the options and determined what I want you to do

**Level 2: Research the topic and report back**

We will discuss it, and then I will make the decision and tell you what I want you to do

**Level 3: Research the topic, outline the options, and make a recommendation**

Give me the pros and cons of each option, but tell me what you think we should do. If I agree with your decision, I will authorize you to move forward

**Level 4: Make a decision and then tell me what you did.**

I trust you to do the research, make the best decision you can, and then keep me in the loop. I don't want to be surprised by someone else

**Level 5: Make whatever decision you think is best**

No need to report back. I trust you completely. I know you will follow through. You have my full support.

**From Michael Hyatt, CEO, Thomas Nelson Publishers**

# FOR FURTHER READING...

---

## For Further Reading...

- a. Book: ***Called Together*** (Workbook)—Jonathan Dodson & Brad Watson
- b. Book: ***Difficult Conversations***—Bruce Patton, Douglas Stone, & Sheila Heen
- c. Book: ***The Gospel Comes With a House Key***—Rosaria Butterfield
- d. Book: ***Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life***—Tish Harrison Warren
- e. Book: ***Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands***—Paul David Tripp





THANK YOU

---





## ELEMENT'S MISSION:

To Glorify God by teaching and living out the Scriptures, transforming community into Gospel Community, and planting churches.

## CONTACTS

---



Michael Reed  
Minister of Element Life  
[michael.reed@ourelement.org](mailto:michael.reed@ourelement.org)



Michelle Gee  
Minister of Community & Care  
[michelle.gee@ourelement.org](mailto:michelle.gee@ourelement.org)

[WWW.ourelement.org/GC](http://WWW.ourelement.org/GC)

