

Ask God to guide you in reaching out beyond your current friendship network to one or two others who do not have access to the gospel, or who are in some need.

Day Five: Our role in the mission

Make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching Matt 28:19-20

If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven John 20:23

You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

With only a little force, these three commissions can be differentiated as discipleship, evangelism, and cross-cultural missions. To them may be added a fourth avenue of ministry, social concerns, mercy and justice.

Given typical time constraints, it is unlikely that any of us can make a significant contribution in each of these areas simultaneously. Ask God to guide you, both through his Word and your passions, into a particular avenue of ministry, and make an effort to identify a particular effort that you will join in nurture of new believers, in evangelism, in missions, or in social concerns. Various CBCGB coordinators can help you identify suitable projects.

Day Six: Our role in the mission Mark 10:45

“Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

If anyone has a right to be served, it is Jesus, Son of God incarnate. Yet he serves. In this, he offers himself as a model for us: we are to be missional, outward focused, engaged in service, not consumeristic, narcissistic, seeking whatever we can gain.

Identify one specific area of life where you have been frustrated that church, small group, or friends have not been serving you. Give that over to God. And as you come to the end of this week, identify one area, and one specific ongoing project, where you will serve others in a significant way, if you are not doing so currently.

Core Value #5 **Missional, not Consumeristic**

In a consumeristic culture, the primary question is: ‘What goods or services does this company provide to deserve my business?’ It is the question that we instinctively ask of the restaurants where we eat, the stores where we shop, and the schools where we enroll. The customer is king, and corporate providers of goods and services compete for business.

Consumerism spreads insidiously from our economic lives into our religious lives. We expect benefits from God, and grow disillusioned if they do not come often and fast enough. We market the benefits of the gospel as incentives for people to come to faith. And we measure churches by the services they provide.

Bob Hyatt, a former mega-church pastor critiques his previous approach to ministry: “We [became] more a provider of religious goods and services and less, much, much less than a covenant community. We [made] pastors into managers and [program directors] and party planners ... and in so doing, kept them from being shepherds.”

He adds, “The standard model of doing church in American today ... says this: ‘If we get our media right, our preaching right, our seating and our parking right ... if we offer great children’s programs and a rocking worship band, people will come. If things are excellent, and we offer something for every member of the family ... and we market it right also, people will come and we will be successful.’”

Is this the measure of a church, he asks: professional musicians, laser shows, Starbucks and Krispy Kreme, special music and elaborate kids’ programs? “I’m your pastor,” he replies, “not your cruise director. My job is to open God’s Word, and tell you what I think God seems to be saying through this book to our community.... You decide whether that means homeless teens, the mentally ill, AIDS hospice, etc.”

Now, he writes, “we conceive of ourselves not as a provider of

religious goods and services, but as a missional, covenant community. By missional, we mean that we are trying to foster an orientation ... [that is] not inward, but outward. Not to ourselves, but to others.” The church, he concludes, exists not for its members, but to unite its members in service to the community: “Jesus did not die to make you into a sanctified consumer. He died to bring you alive to God and to a desperately needy world.”

Arguably, the church is the one organization in the world which exists primarily not for its members, but for outsiders. The church, in short, is to be a place for motivating and training missionaries, not for catering to the needs and desires of its clientele. We are to be missional, not consumeristic.

Day One: The Mission of God Matt 4:17,23

Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people."

The essence of Jesus' message was not how our sins might be forgiven (though that was a key element of his message). The essence of his message was that God is taking back control of his world, bring justice against the wicked, and blessing for those who worship him. God will reign on earth, as in heaven. So the mission of God encompasses all that accomplishes these ends: evangelism, discipleship, missions, healing sickness, freeing the oppressed, restoring the disenfranchised.

As always, before we turn to consider what we must do, we begin by giving thanks to God for what he has done. Consider some of the benefits you receive from the commencement of God's reign over this world, and thank him for them.

Day Two: Jesus' role in the mission Luke 4:18-19

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

In his personal mission statement, Jesus extends the parameters of legitimate ministry: not only preaching the gospel, but also caring for the poor, freeing prisoners, healing the sick, and rescuing the exploited. While Isaiah intends this in reference to freeing the Jews, defeated in war, captive in exile, under judgment of God, Luke clearly extends it to the literally poor, imprisoned, sick, and exploited.

Again, before turning to our own obligations under such a model, we spend today honoring Christ for: (a) caring not just for our spiritual lives, but also our physical lives; and, (b) caring not just for the powerful, but also for the powerless.

Day Three: Paul's role in the mission Acts 9:15-16

But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

Here we find God's sense of irony: the opponent of Jewish heretics will spread the gospel to gentiles; the persecutor of the church will become persecuted. More to the point, we learn two more truths about the mission of God: (a) it seeks out all peoples, in all places, not just Jews; (b) it may require that its promoters suffer.

Ask God today whether he may be calling you to reach people unlike – rather than like – you in some way. Offer him your obedience, whatever discomfort or hardship it entails.

Day Four: Our role in the mission

Make disciples of all nations. Matt 28:19

As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. John 20:21
You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

Jesus calls us not just to come (to him), not just to gather together (in holy huddle), but to go to those who do not know him. Jesus sends you to your family, your school or job, your network of friends. At the same time, he sends you to reach out further.