

## VISION GROUP CONTACT INFO

NAME	HOME PHONE	EMAIL
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		

# Vision Series

## A Church For The City

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Sep 28 <b>Vision Groups begin</b>	Sep 29	Sep 30 Prayer for the City	Oct 1	Oct 2	Oct 3	Oct 4 HopeFest
Oct 5 Building Project Open House	Oct 6	Oct 7 Prayer for the City	Oct 8	Oct 9	Oct 10	Oct 11
Oct 12 Building Project Open House	Oct 13	Oct 14 Prayer for the City	Oct 15	Oct 16	Oct 17	Oct 18
Oct 19	Oct 20	Oct 21	Oct 22	Oct 23	Oct 24	Oct 25 Family Reunion: 7300 N. I-35
Oct 26	Oct 27	Oct 28	Oct 29	Oct 30	Oct 31	Nov 1
Nov 2 Last week of Vision Groups	Nov 3	Nov 4	Nov 5	Nov 6	Nov 7	Nov 8
Nov 9	Nov 10	Nov 11	Nov 12	Nov 13	Nov 14	Nov 15 Partnership Class (for Vision Group Participants only)

## Foreword

Our God is a missionary God and you are His missionary people for this city. Think about it – we are the church because of the mission of the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit. There is church (us) because our God is on mission to redeem and renew. It's not vice versa – there is not a mission because we are the church. We are the church because God's mission exists. We join with Him, for His purposes and glory, in our city and around the world.

**So get excited** – the purpose of this Vision Series material and activities is to help create and nurture a hunger and passion to be on mission with God – to be a church **for** the city. **Be encouraged** – we have support – there are hundreds of small groups all over the city of Austin who desire to seek out God and be used as He continues to redeem and renew. That is why we call these groups *missional communities* – there are pockets of believers all over this city, on mission for this city.

**Get ready** – the following three objectives provide the foundation for developing Christ-centered small group communities:

1. **God's Word**

Tremendous spiritual power is experienced when a group wrestles with not only the meaning of a passage of Scripture, but also its purpose for their lives. This curriculum is organized into six lessons, each of which revolve around Biblical passages. This interactive and practical study encourages group discussion and practical applications of Scripture.

2. **Community**

No person is intended to live in isolation. The Bible speaks nothing of *Lone Ranger* faith; and more than 50 times in the New Testament, God speaks of a "one another" type faith. One great benefit of group life is that it provides us with a practical laboratory in which to experience New Testament community – the type of community to which God calls us – a community for the city.

3. **Mission**

We will worship Christ, live in community, get trained for this mission, and make disciples... together. We will not only *learn* what it means to be a church for the city, we will *practice* it as a group. So get ready to do something with what you learn.

**Prepare:** To help create and nurture a hunger and passion to be on mission with God, we need to seek Him out. Believe that God has called you to join the mission of this group. He has put your group together – every member in your group is here as a result of His call on them. He desires to use every person in your group for His glory – believe that every person in your group can be used to be on mission for this city, all for His glory.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

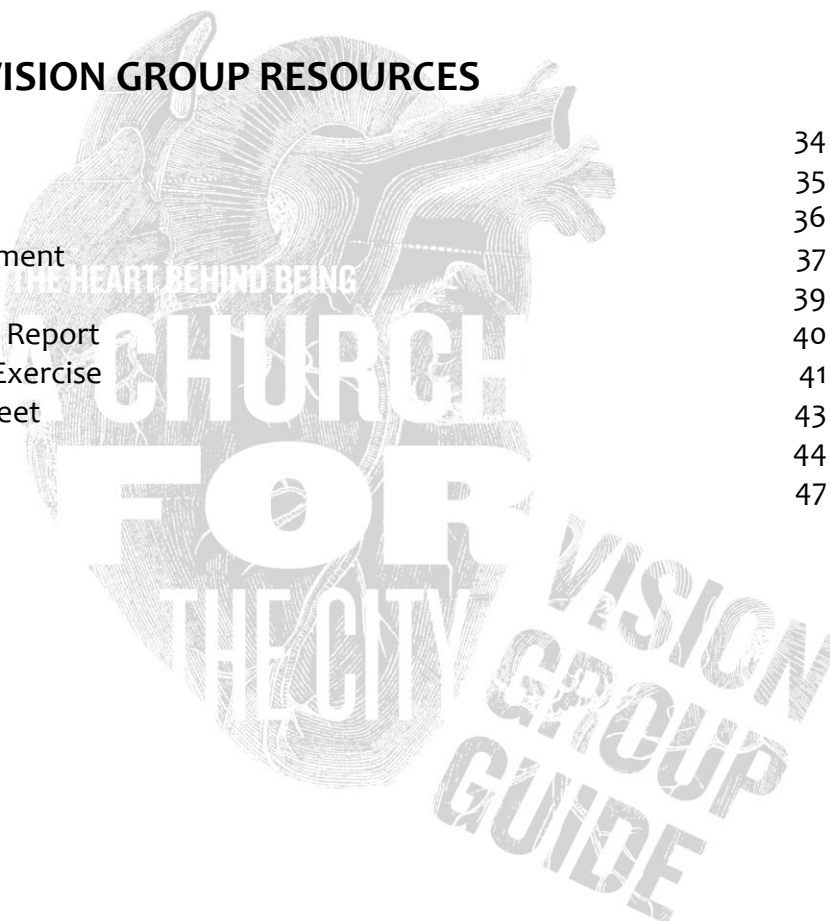
Vision Group Contact Info	ii
Calendar	iii
Foreword	iv
Introduction to the Vision Series	7

## VISION GROUP SESSIONS

Week 1: Our God is Mighty to Save	9
Week 2: Seek the Shalom of the City	13
Week 3: Holistic Renewal of the City	17
Week 4: Repentance and the City	21
Week 5: Praying for the City	25
Week 6: Launching Out for the City	27

## VISION GROUP RESOURCES

Group Agreement	34
Group Calendar	35
Communion Resource	36
Missional Health Assessment	37
Missional Health Plan	39
Group Prayer and Praise Report	40
For The City Worksheet Exercise	41
Your Neighbors Worksheet	43
For The City Worksheet	44
Partnership	47





## INTRO TO THE VISION SERIES

God is about to change our lives. Studying His Word and being on mission with Him will impact us in ways we can't imagine.

We're going to use that phrase a lot in this group experience: "on mission for the city". When we use the word "missional," that is what it means – to be "on mission" with God. To be missional starts with knowing God's mission from the very beginning. The words *missions* and *missional* share a common ancestor: *mission*, which means "to send off." When Jesus gave us the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20), he sent his followers off on a specific mission.

In John 20:19–23, Jesus combined the heart of missions with the heart of God when he said, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." Jesus is telling his followers—you and me included—that he is sending us to others for exactly the same reason and purpose as he was sent. (In Week 6 we'll look specifically at why Jesus was sent and what that means for us as followers of Jesus.)

Focusing on God's mission produces believers who are being sent *wherever they are* and *wherever they go*. This is missional at its core: God has a mission; God sent Jesus to fulfill that mission, and the Holy Spirit to empower that mission. Christ has placed that mantle of mission on every believer who follows him. All of us, individually and collectively, are joining the mission of God in this world – His mission to redeem and renew.

We'll use this material as a reference to help us seek out God's will for us to be on *mission* together for the city. The format of each session follows:

**WELCOME** – The questions in this section are designed to help us learn about each other and grow together.

### DISCUSSION, REFLECTION AND ACTION:

**BELIEVING THE TRUTH** – The foundation for spiritual growth and mission is an understanding of and obedience to the truth. Believing means more than mental assent, it means trusting, living in and obeying the truth of God's Word. In Matthew 28, Jesus says that to be a disciple means that you are learning to obey, and that starts with believing the truth.

**RESPONDING TO THE TRUTH** – Deep understanding of the Bible and living out Scripture will impact greatly our lives. This section includes passages of

Scripture that we can wrestle through, talk about, and apply to our lives. It will help renew the mind and stir the heart so we can serve and be on mission.

**APPLYING THE TRUTH – Delayed obedience is disobedience.** We must move beyond mere information transfer and into the application of God’s mission for this city. In this section, we will apply the truth to our lives in very practical ways. There will be questions, activities and even events that are designed to help your group begin to participate in the mission of God.

**Be sure and complete the exercises in this section.** Each exercise builds off of the last one. Week 1 has exercises that build the foundation for Week 2. Week 3 builds off of Week 2, and so on. At the end of your time together you will then be asked to use these exercises to choose or “adopt” a specific mission for your group. Don’t miss out!

**Before We Leave:** This section will help you wrap up your time together.

**Preparation for Next Week.** This section gives additional resources like articles, websites and blogs to help you prepare for the next week. It is provided to elicit thought, prayer, and study throughout the week. He is calling us out, and we will seek to make much of Him throughout the week.

# Week One: Our God is Mighty to Save

## Welcome..... 10 minutes

At your group's first gathering, go around the circle and introduce yourselves.

Here are some questions for initial discussion:

1. What is your Austin Stone experience? How did you find the church? For how long have you attended? In what way(s) are you currently connected at The Austin Stone?
2. What have you learned so far in the Vision Series? What does it look like for you to participate in being a Church FOR the City?
3. How do you think being a part of a Vision Series Group will help equip you for this?
4. What would you like to see God do in and through your life during the next six weeks in this small group?

## Discussion, Reflection and Action..... 45 minutes

### Believing the Truth

Read Jonah 3 & 4

- Describe the city of Nineveh before Jonah's message was preached.
- How did the people of Nineveh react when they first heard the message from Jonah? Does their reaction surprise you? How do you account for this reaction?
- Knowing the disobedient state of Nineveh before Jonah's proclamation, does God's heart for the city surprise you?
- While most of us may believe that God 'can' change the city, do you believe that God 'will' change the city? What would it look like for you to believe that? Does it seem out of the realm of possibility?

### Responding to the Truth

- How did Jonah respond to God's mercy on Nineveh? Was Jonah surprised that God would save the city? Why was Jonah angry about God's call on his life to preach to Nineveh?

Read Genesis 18:23-33

- What is Abraham's response to the wickedness of Sodom?
- How is his interaction with God different from Jonah's? Why do you think it is different?

*God is calling us by His power to build a great city, renewed and redeemed by a gospel movement,  
by being a church for the city of Austin that labors to advance the gospel  
throughout the nations.*

## Applying the Truth

- Is your heart for Austin more similar to Jonah's or Abraham's? When you think about your neighbors, your co-workers and the lost you interact with on a regular basis, are you broken?
- Do you spend more time praying for God to have mercy on this city or do you spend more time frustrated at the sin of those around you? Why do you think this is?

Break up into groups of 3-4.

- A neighbor is "anyone you cannot avoid." Who are the people that you cannot avoid? Is your heart broken for these people?

## For The City Worksheet Exercise: (20 min.)

- Turn to p. 41 in the Resources section and follow the instructions for Week 1. When you've completed the Week 1 assignment, come back to this part of the curriculum and continue with the following questions:

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

- What characteristics are associated with those apart from Christ?
- Do you get irritated when non-believers act like non-believers? What does this reveal about your spiritual pride?
- What would look different in your life (workplace, neighborhood, in traffic...) if you had Abraham's heart for the city?

Prayer Time..... 10 minutes

- Spend some time confessing and asking God for forgiveness for spiritual pride and apathy
- Ask God to reveal to you the way that your heart is frustrated rather than broken for the city.
- Ask for God to break your heart for the city.

## BEFORE WE LEAVE

1. Missional Communities share responsibilities and group ownership. Fill out the *Vision Group Calendar* on **p. 35** together, noting where you will meet each week, who will facilitate, and who will provide a meal or snack. Note special events, activities, or days off as well. The Group Host/Leader will be very appreciative and everyone will have a lot more fun together. This would be a great role for someone to coordinate for the group.
2. Ensure that every person is on the Contact Info Sheet on **p. ii**, or refer to your online GroupToolbox.
3. Read through and sign the Group Agreement on **page 34**.

## PREPARATION FOR NEXT TIME

1. During the Vision Series, you might begin sensing a calling and desire to partner with The Austin Stone. There will be a Partnership Class on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> for anyone who participates in a Vision Group. (Faithful attendance and participation in a Vision Group is a pre-requisite for this particular Partnership Class). To find out more about partnership, see the Partnership blurb on **page 47**.
2. Read and pray over the Scripture references in this document. Also, Prayer for the City is every Tuesday at 7pm at Grace Covenant Church.
3. Most people want to live a healthy, balanced life. A regular medical check-up is a good way to measure health and spot potential problems. In the same way, a spiritual check-up is vital to your spiritual well-being. The *Missional Health Assessment* on **page 37** was designed to give you a quick snapshot or pulse of your spiritual health. Take 3-4 minutes alone to complete the *Missional Health Assessment*. After answering each question, tally your results. Next week, you'll pair up with a person in the group and briefly share one element that is going well and one that needs a little work.

*God is calling us by His power to build a great city, renewed and redeemed by a gospel movement,  
by being a church for the city of Austin that labors to advance the gospel  
throughout the nations.*

## Week Two: Seek the Shalom of the City

### Welcome..... 10 minutes

Pair up with another person in the group and briefly review your results from the *Missional Health Assessment*. Share what was most enlightening about going through the Assessment. Also share one element that is going well and one that needs a little work.

Come back together in the larger group. Here are some questions for initial discussion:

1. In what ways has God been teaching you and shaping this last week through the sermon, your personal time in the word and in prayer?
2. What does it mean to seek the welfare of a person?
3. What does it mean to seek the welfare of a city?

### Discussion, Reflection and Action..... 45 minutes

#### Believing the Truth

Read Jeremiah 29:4-9

- *Background:* Hananiah was a false prophet that Jeremiah had an ongoing battle with. Hananiah claimed that God would rescue the Israelites from Babylon in two years and therefore get ready to leave the city, while Jeremiah told the Israelites that their being exiled in Babylon was God's doing and therefore they ought to settle in Babylon and seek the welfare of that city.
- What did God tell the Israelites to do in Babylon?
- What does it look like to obey God's command in Austin?
- What did the false prophet Hananiah preach in Jeremiah 28? Have you heard a message similar to this today?
- NASB uses the word "welfare" to translate the Hebrew word, Shalom. Cornelius Plantinga defines "shalom" in this way:
  - "The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight is, of course, what the Hebrew prophets call shalom. We call it peace, but it means far more than just peace of mind or cease-fire between enemies. In the Bible, shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight, in which natural needs are satisfied, natural gifts fruitfully employed – the whole process inspiring joyful wonder as the creator and savior of all opens doors and speaks welcome. Shalom, in other words, is the way things ought to be." ("Not the Way It's S'posed to Be: a Breviary of Sin" by Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. in *Theology Today*, vol 50, No 2 – Jul 1993:182)

- In light of this, what does it mean to seek the shalom, the way things ought to be, of the city and to find our shalom in the shalom of the city?

## Responding to the Truth

- Think about your interaction with the lost and broken in our city. Does your life reflect that you have heard a message like Hananiah – waiting for God to rescue us from this evil city - or, are you living in light of the message of Jeremiah: to seek the shalom of Austin because we will find our shalom in the shalom of Austin?
- What would our lives look like if we were listening to Hananiah?
- What would our lives look like if we listened to Jeremiah?

## Applying the Truth

Break into groups of 3-4

### For The City Worksheet Exercise: (20 min.)

- Turn to **p. 41** in the Resources section and follow the instructions for Week 2. When you've completed the Week 2 assignment, come back to this part of the curriculum and continue with the following applications:
- Come up with one tangible thing you can do this week for the shalom of the city personally.
- Come up with one tangible thing you can do this week for the shalom of the city as group together.
- Commit to pray for the shalom of the city. Use the prayer calendar below as a guide and a start to form your own prayer requests before God on behalf of Austin.
  - Day 1: Pray that none will perish in Austin. That God will save the entire city. (2 Peter 3:9)
  - Day 2: Pray that our city's governing officials will learn to do good and seek justice. (Isaiah 1:17)
  - Day 3: Pray that the believers in Austin will cheer the discouraged and help the weak. (1 Thes. 5:14)
  - Day 4: Pray that the believers in Austin will have opportunities upon opportunities to share the gospel with their neighbors. (John 8:32)
  - Day 5: Pray for the protection of children of divorced families, abused and neglected children, foster children, and the orphans. (James 1:27)
  - Day 6: Pray that the Lord will stay the hand of violence in our city and dismantle evil plans upon our city. (Psalm 57:1)
  - Day 7: Pray and fast that the LORD will turn back His wrath upon the sin of our city. (Joel 1:4)

## Prayer Time..... 10 minutes

- Spend some time confessing and asking God for forgiveness for our failure, indifference, coldness or apathy to seek the shalom of Austin.
- Ask God to give you a heart that desires to pray and be broken for our city.
- Ask God for the shalom of our city just as in Christ He has given you shalom.

## BEFORE WE LEAVE

1. Commit to pray and fast together as a group this week. Pick one day together or even one meal together that you can give up together as a group for the purpose of praying for our city. (Find Prayer and Fasting resources at [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org))
2. HopeFest is Saturday, Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> and is a great way to serve the St Johns neighborhood, and those in our city who are under-resourced. HopeFest is a day of celebration, meeting needs and empowering families with resources. Your group can serve anytime from 9:30am – 3:30pm. Contact Jackie Markovich ([jackie@austinstone.org](mailto:jackie@austinstone.org)) if you or your group is interested in serving.

## PREPARATION FOR NEXT TIME

1. Review, read and pray over the Scriptures and material in this session.

*God is calling us by His power to build a great city, renewed and redeemed by a gospel movement,  
by being a church for the city of Austin that labors to advance the gospel  
throughout the nations.*

# Week Three: Holistic Renewal of the City

Welcome..... 10 minutes

Here are some questions for initial discussion:

1. Who was one of your childhood heroes? Why?
2. When you hear the word “justice” what comes to mind? When you hear the word “renewal” what comes to mind?
3. In your mind, what would a spiritually renewed Austin look like? A culturally renewed Austin? A socially renewed Austin?

Discussion, Reflection and Action..... 45 minutes

## Believing the Truth

*Background:* Just as in Matthew, Mark, and Luke of the New Testament we have a synopsis of the Gospel and the life of Jesus, in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther of the Old Testament, we have a synopsis of how God restored and renewed Israel. Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther had different jobs, talents, callings upon their life, but God used each for the purpose of continuing His redemptive work.

### Spiritual Renewal

Ezra had governmental authority (7:25), but his most important qualification was as a teacher of God’s law (7:10). The written word of God became a moving force in their midst (3:2; 10:3). He was used of God mightily to bring spiritual renewal in a time of great adversity and discouragement. In this role Ezra is a biblical model of a spiritual-change leader who influenced an entire society.

Read Ezra 7:10, 25; 9:1-11; 10:1-2

- What was the role of Ezra in restoring Jerusalem?
- What did Ezra have a proper understanding of which resulted in his brokenness and his prayer for the Israelites?
- What could be the problem in our lives if we aren’t broken over the sin in our city and if our hearts aren’t compelled to pray for our city?
- What was the result of Ezra’s teaching of God’s law, his prayers, and his brokenness?

### Social Renewal

Nehemiah was a political operative, an insider. He secured the grant, the letter of credit and leave of absence for the city’s rebuilding program. His prayer life was important but also what he did, which was community organizing and development. More than anyone in Scripture, this civic leader integrates the necessary perspectives and actions needed to transform cities today. He led the Israelites in rebuilding the destroyed walls of Jerusalem and repopulated the desolate and dangerous city.

*God is calling us by His power to build a great city, renewed and redeemed by a gospel movement,  
by being a church for the city of Austin that labors to advance the gospel  
throughout the nations.*

- Why was the city wall so important in this time?
- Why is it so important to move beyond prayer and into action? What are the dangers of prayerless actions?
- What are the broken walls in Austin? What are the broken social elements in Austin that needs to be restored and renewed?

### **Cultural Renewal**

Esther was a Jew who through God's providence became the queen of Persia. She forced cultural change through confronting the king about the injustice of the law. Esther gives us permission to reflect on our call to serve God within the matrix of a modern secular or oppressive system to confront evil and work for justice. reminds us to think about our vocational calling when it takes us off the theologically safe maps of everyday Christianity. The word God does not occur in this book. It was inconceivable to many devout Jews in ancient times that God could call God-fearing believers into a Persian palace for a divine mission, in this case to change or replace an unjust law<sup>1</sup>.

Read Esther 4:7-17

- What was requested of Esther?
- At what risk did Esther carry this out?
- Discuss the elements of Esther's response and how we should model her response.

### **Responding to the Truth**

- Do you identify yourself most with Ezra, Nehemiah, or Esther and why?
- What are areas of brokenness in Austin in those three groups: spiritual, social and cultural?
- Can pastors or "bible teachers" alone do the work of renewing Austin? Why or why not?

### **Applying the Truth**

Break into groups of 3-4

### **For The City Worksheet Exercise: (20 min.)**

- Turn to **p. 42** in the Resources section and follow the instructions for Week 3. When you've completed the Week 3 assignment, come back to this part of the curriculum and continue with the following applications:
- Come up with one tangible thing you can do this week to renew Austin's spiritual, social, or cultural condition.
- Discuss what your group can do together to engage the renewal of Austin in one of these ways for the long term.

---

<sup>1</sup> The unjust law was that a "certain people"(the Jews)would be destroyed because they did not obey the Persian law of bowing down and paying homage to high Persian officials (Ezra 3).

## Prayer Time..... 10 minutes

- Pray that the LORD will holistically renew Austin. Not only spiritually, but also socially and culturally.
- Ask God to show you your role in the renewal of Austin and that He would not allow you to just count on others to do the work of renewing.
- Pray that our entire church will catch this vision for the renewing of Austin and that each one will obey in engaging this great task.

## BEFORE WE LEAVE

1. As a way to affirm and encourage, take a few minutes to do the "hot seat" exercise. Select an individual in your group and write his or her name at the top of a piece of paper. Then pass it around the room and have each group member write, "This is what I've learned to appreciate about you," or, "This is what I've learned to value in you," followed by something specifically appreciated or valued. Only a phrase or one sentence is needed. When the sheet has been passed all the way around, have one group member read it aloud to the individual.
2. Plan a time in the next 3-4 weeks for your group to share a meal together. Get out your calendars and pick the date.

## PREPARATION FOR NEXT TIME

1. Review, read and pray over the Scriptures and material in this session.

*God is calling us by His power to build a great city, renewed and redeemed by a gospel movement,  
by being a church for the city of Austin that labors to advance the gospel  
throughout the nations.*

## Week Four: Repentance and the City

### Welcome..... 10 minutes

Here are some questions for initial discussion:

1. Where were you living at age 8? How many people were in your household?
2. Other than your identity as a Christian, what other *identities* reveal something about you? What, if it were not in your life, would make it difficult to *be* you? (A lawyer, student, mom, Texan...etc.)
3. What is something encouraging or good that happened to you this week?

### Discussion, Reflection and Action..... 45 minutes

#### Believing the Truth

Background: After spending years and years in captivity and slavery because of their rebellion, the people of God are now being brought out of captivity and back to Israel, and specifically to the city of Jerusalem. One of the forerunners and leaders of this return was Nehemiah, a cupbearer (trusted position in the King's court), civil engineer, and community organizer who had a deep, deep concern for the shalom of the city of Jerusalem.

Read Nehemiah 1:1-11

- In Verse 2, how do you see evidence of Nehemiah's concern for the city?
- In verse 3, where do you see evidence of broken people, broken places and broken systems?
- What was Nehemiah's response to the broken people, broken places and broken systems of the city (v. 4)?
- What other ways did Nehemiah respond to the brokenness of the city? (v. 5-11)
- At the end of v. 6 and beginning of v. 7, Nehemiah's heart for the city leads him to do what?

#### Responding to the Truth

Break into groups of 3-4

- Where have you been broken for the city as evidenced by your behavior?
- Nehemiah's heart and brokenness for the city leads him to confess and repent of sin and idolatry. When you hear the word "idolatry" what comes to mind?

## Applying the Truth (30 min.)

- To be broken for the city, we have to repent of our idolatry. Before we can repent of idolatry we have to know what it is. Read out loud the following quote about idolatry by David Powlison:

*This is the most basic question which God poses to each human heart:*

*"...has something or someone besides Jesus the Christ taken title to your heart's **functional** trust, preoccupation, loyalty, service, fear and delight? Questions bring some of people's idol systems to the surface. 'To who or what do you look for life-sustaining stability, security and acceptance... What do you really want and expect [out of life]? What would [really] make you happy? What would make you an acceptable person? Where do you look for power and success?' These questions or similar ones tease out whether we serve God or idols, whether we look for salvation from Christ or from false saviors. [This bears] on the immediate motivation of my behavior, thoughts, feelings. In the Bible's conceptualization, the motivation question is the lordship question: who or what "rules my behavior, the Lord or an idol?"*

- Idolatry is like a tree – it has branches and fruit that we can see. Take a few minutes and read through the following three fruits of idolatry. Which do you identify with most? Why?
  - ANGER: Have you been angry? Ask, "is there something too important to me? Something I am telling myself I have to have? Is that why I am angry -- because I am being blocked from having something I think is a necessity when it is not?"
  - FEAR/WORRY: Have you been fearful or badly worried? Ask, "Is there something too important to me? Something I am telling myself I have to have? Is that why I am so scared -- because something is being threatened which I think is a necessity when it is not?"
  - DESPONDENCY/HATING YOURSELF: Have you been despondent or hating yourself? Ask, "Is there something too important to me? Something I am telling myself I have to have? Is that why I am so 'down' -- because I have lost or failed at something which I think is a necessity when it is not?"

- Take a few minutes and read through the following root idols that produce that kind of bad fruit in your life. Which do you identify with most and why?

IDOL: **COMFORT** (*Privacy, lack of stress, freedom*)

**Price We Will Pay:** Reduced productivity

**Greatest Nightmare:** Stress, demands

**Others Often Feel:** Hurt

**Problem Emotion:** Boredom

IDOL: **APPROVAL** (*Affirmation, love, relationship*)

**Price We Will Pay:** Less independence

**Greatest Nightmare:** Rejection

**Others Often Feel:** Smothered

**Problem Emotion:** Cowardice

IDOL: **CONTROL** (*Self-discipline, certainty, standards*)

**Price We Will Pay:** Loneliness; spontaneity

**Greatest Nightmare:** Uncertainty

**Others Often Feel:** Condemned

**Problem Emotion:** Worry

IDOL: **POWER** (*Success, winning, influence*)

**Price We Will Pay:** Burdened; responsibility

**Greatest Nightmare:** Humiliation

**Others Often Feel:** Used

**Problem Emotion:** Anger

## Prayer Time..... 10 minutes

- Repent means “to turn away from”. Once you have identified the root idol that you identify and struggle with most, spend some time as a group in confession and repentance for those idols.
- Nehemiah didn’t just turn from sin and idolatry (v. 6 & 7), he turned to someone – God (v. 5 & 11). Repentance also means to turn **to** something or **someone** – Jesus. Pray and thank God for Jesus in these 4 ways:
  1. **Jesus lived for me.** Think about and give thanks for specific ways Jesus has lived obediently where I have failed.
  2. **Jesus died for me.** Think about Jesus' death on the cross for my specific sins and idolatry. Thank God that my sin has been punished once and for all.
  3. **God sees me in Jesus.** Think about how God sees me in Jesus, clothed with His perfect righteousness. Thank Him specifically for how He provides for me in Christ that all my idols promised but could not deliver.
  4. **Jesus lives in me.** Thank God that He does not leave me to live the Christian life on my own, but the Spirit of Christ now dwells in me. Ask Him to live His righteous life through me, specifically in the areas where I have confessed sin.

- Spend some time confessing the fact that you are more wicked than you ever dared believe, but that you are more loved and accepted by God because of Jesus than you ever dared dream.

## BEFORE WE LEAVE

1. Next week your group will be going on a Prayer Walk, and you will be selecting the location that you want to Prayer Walk. (A Prayer Walk is when 2-4 believers walk and pray in a particular area for a particular people, area or issue.) Here's how to prepare:
  - ☐ Get out your *For The City* Worksheets that you have been working on in your group time and talk about your findings. Are there any overlaps in your peoples, places or issues? Are there people in your group that have a real burden, passion or calling to a particular people, place, or issue?
  - ☐ Take some time as a group and talk/pray about selecting a particular people, place or issue. Feel free to break up as a group into smaller groups if you want to choose several different people, places or issues.
  - ☐ When you come to the Vision Group next week, be prepared to go on a Prayer Walk at the location of that particular people, place or issue.
  - ☐ *Examples:*
    - People: *young professionals*; they hang out on 6<sup>th</sup> street so we'll prayer-walk 6<sup>th</sup> street and pray for young professionals.
    - ... OR ...
    - Place: *my neighborhood*; plan on prayer-walking your neighborhood.
    - ... OR ...
    - Issue/Concern: *healthcare*; prayer-walk around the Capitol and pray for the people in the healthcare industry and for healthcare legislation
2. **Saturday, Oct. 25<sup>th</sup> is our Family Reunion!** You won't want to miss it. Plan on coming as a group – it will be on the new land. 7300 N I-35, Austin, Tx 78752

## PREPARATION FOR NEXT TIME

1. Look at next week's session on Prayer Walking. Be praying about your group's Prayer Walk, that it would be intentional, passionate, focused and that God would protect your group from the Evil One.
  - ☐ Bring walking shoes for next week's group time. You will be going on a Prayer Walk.
2. Review, read and pray over the Scriptures and material in this session.
3. Come to Family Reunion on Saturday, Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>!

## Week Five: Praying for the City

In Jeremiah 29:7 God commands His people to seek the shalom, the welfare, the peace, the flourishing of the city, and to pray on its behalf. This week your group will all go on a prayer-walk. Your group will be selecting the location that you want to Prayer Walk. (A Prayer Walk is when 2-4 believers walk and pray in a particular area for a particular people, area or issue.)

Here's how to prepare for your Prayer-walk:

- ❑ **Step 1:** Get out your *For The City* Worksheets that you have been working on in your group time and talk about your findings:
  - Are there any overlaps in your peoples, places or issues?
  - Is there anyone in your group that has a real burden, passion or calling to a particular people, place, or issue?
- ❑ **Step 2:** Take some time as a group and talk/pray about selecting a particular people, place or issue. Feel free to break up as a group into smaller groups of 3-4 people if you want to choose several different people, places or issues.
  - Examples:*
    - **People:** *young professionals*; they hang out on 6<sup>th</sup> street so we'll prayer-walk 6<sup>th</sup> street and pray for young professionals.
    - ... OR ...
    - **Place:** *my neighborhood*; plan on prayer-walking your neighborhood.
    - ... OR ...
    - **Issue/Concern:** *healthcare*; prayer-walk around the Capitol and pray for the people in the healthcare industry and for healthcare legislation
- ❑ **Step 3:** Go prayer-walking! (If you need to drive to the location and then prayer-walk, that's ok.)

Read the information below as you prepare for your prayer-walking briefing:

God is helping us push our prayers beyond the walls of the church buildings, into the neighborhoods, campuses and workplaces where He desires to bring the hope of His kingdom. In order to better pray with empathy and up-to-the-minute awareness of what God is doing in people's lives, many are praying as they walk through the streets of the city. We call this kind of on-site intercession "prayerwalking." It's simply praying in the very places where we expect God to bring forth His answers.

Prayerwalking simply helps us to draw nearer in order to pray clearer. Prayerwalking is usually a low-profile affair. Usually prayerwalking is being on the scene without making one. <sup>1</sup>

Timothy 2:8 urges that there would be prayer lifted “in every place.” Extending our prayers to every place may be the best way to actually pray, as verse one urges, “on behalf of all people.”

## How to Pray During a Prayer-Walk:

### 1. For every person and every leader (vs. 1-2a)

Pray God’s blessing upon every person. For some, express requests and thanks that they have yet to offer to God. For others, join them in crying out to God for things they desire and need. Pray blessing and stability upon the leaders of the community.

Read **1 Timothy 2:1-2a**: *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions...*

### 2. For the blessing of the entire community for God’s joy (vs. 2b-3)

Pray for Christians to display Christ’s name and character openly. Ask God to mature His people to become His servants throughout the community in the power of the gospel. When God accomplishes His blessing, it is “good” in His sight. Ask God to transform the entire community so that it reflects His goodness and peace.

Read **1 Timothy 2:2b-3**: *... that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior...*

### 3. For truth to salvation (vs. 4)

Pray for God’s desire to be satisfied, that every one of His elect would understand the truth of Christ as Savior. Pray for every person you see, that they will be saved.

Read **1 Timothy 2:4-5**: *... who desires all His people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.*

### 4. For the testimony of Christ (vs. 5)

Give praise to the One God and the sole Mediator who even now stands between these people and the God who desires them. Ask God to hasten the time of citywide testimony about Christ.

## How to Prayer Walk:

Prayer walking is fairly low profile. Walk two by two or with your family on a short designated route listening to the leadings of the Holy Spirit about what to pray. Prayers can be said silently, or in a whisper, or out loud. Engage the people of the place or neighborhood as you feel led. Don’t forsake opportunities to talk with people on the way!

## Here’s how to pray for the lost:

- ☐ Lord, I pray that you draw these to Yourself. (John 6:44)
- ☐ I pray that they will seek to know You. (Acts 17:27)
- ☐ I pray that they hear and believe the word for what it really is. (I Thes. 2:13)
- ☐ I ask You to prevent Satan from blinding them to the truth. (II Cor. 4:4; II Tim. 2:25-26)
- ☐ Holy Spirit, I ask You to convict them of their sin and need for Christ’s redemption. (John 16:7-14)
- ☐ I ask that You send someone who will share the Gospel with them. (Matt. 9:37-38)
- ☐ I pray that they would put all of their trust in Christ. (John 1:12; 5:24)

# Week Six: Launching Out for the City

Welcome..... 5 minutes

Spend some time debriefing your prayer-walk:

- What was most challenging about the prayer-walk?
- What was most rewarding about the time praying for the city?
- What insights did you gain into the brokenness of the people and/or place?
- In what ways do you feel that this may be a people, place or issue that God may be sending you to as a group?

Discussion, Reflection and Action..... 45 minutes

## Believing the Truth

Read John 20:19-21.

- Restate v. 21 in your own words. Find other verses in the Scripture that correlate with v. 21.
- Below, write down in one column all the reasons that you can think of for which Jesus came into the world. There are many places in Scripture where Jesus says why he came into the world, here are a few below.
- In a separate column, relate each reason in your first column to your Missional Community. Ask the question, “How and why was Jesus sent into the world? What does that mean for us as a Missional Community?”

How and why was Jesus sent into the world?	What does that mean for us as a Missional Community?
Mt. 9:13	
Mt. 18:11	
Mt. 20:28	
John 20:21	
Luke 4:18-19	
Rev. 21:5a	

## Read the following article about Missional Communities:

A Missional Community is intended to be more than a typical bible study. The Gospel is never static, but moves us into action. As we hear and believe the Gospel again and again, the love of Christ working within our hearts energizes us to practical works of love. We begin to ask, “What does loving my city and neighbor really look like?” This means that we will also want to avoid anything in our community group that does not have this goal of Gospel motivation and love:

**A Missional Community** is a partnership of Christians on mission with God for our city, who demonstrate the gospel tangibly and declare the gospel creatively to each other, our neighbors, and to the world.<sup>2</sup>

### What A Missional Community IS:

*A Partnership of Christians:* In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God has redeemed a people for himself whom he empowers and sends to be his witnesses (John 20:21).

*On Mission with God:* the Great Commission given to the early church was the command to make disciples: those who, because of what Jesus has done for them, actively live in his ways and help others to do the same (Matt. 28:18-20).

*To Our City:* God has called us to seek the peace, prosperity, welfare and flourishing of the city of Austin. We are to seek the shalom – the spiritual, cultural and social renewal – of this city. We will be a church FOR the city when we are full of communities that live on mission FOR the city (Jer. 29:7-11).

*Demonstrate the Gospel Tangibly:* Just as Jesus came demonstrating the kingdom through acts of sacrificial service, so we actively look for opportunities to meet the felt and real needs of our city and neighbors so that we become a blessing to them.

*Declare the Gospel Creatively:* An M/C must listen to and understand the stories of the city and their neighbors in order to be able to tell the Gospel Story in ways that are Good News.

*To Each Other, Our Neighbors, and To the World:* God’s grace in Jesus is good news for those in the church and those outside the church – we all need the gospel! Just as the Father sent the Son to a specific time, place, and people, so the Spirit does with the church, sending us to specific groups of neighbors.

*A Neighbor* is “anyone you cannot avoid” (Guder) or anyone who has needs that you have the resources to meet. Your neighbor may be those who live next-door, those you work with, those you play with, or those with whom you share some sort of affinity, including your immediate and extended family. Paradoxically, your neighbor may

---

<sup>2</sup> Credits: Steve Hart – Vintage Faith Community Church, Drew Goodmanson – Kaleo Church

*God is calling us by His power to build a great city, renewed and redeemed by a gospel movement, by being a church for the city of Austin that labors to advance the gospel throughout the nations.*

also be someone you have little in common with but whom God has placed squarely in your path or specifically called or commanded you to care for. In addition, your neighbors will most likely be both in the church and outside the church.

## **What a Missional Community is NOT:**

**A Missional Community is not a Small Group.** Unlike traditional small groups, the Missional Community does not exist primarily for the good of the group itself, but for the mission of Jesus. Likewise, the Missional Community is not one of many other programs at the church; rather, the Missional Community is the basic building block of the church.

**A Missional Community is not a Bible Study.** While a Missional Community will often study the Bible together, the goal is not simply more Bible knowledge or information; rather, the Missional Community studies the Bible to learn about what God is up to in the world so that they can be better equipped to actively join Him!

**A Missional Community is not a Support Group.** Our Missional Communities do not exist solely to care for and counsel one another. This is not just a time to hold each other accountable to personal holiness or to support each other in difficult times. All these things are important, but in a Missional Community they happen as we go about tangibly pursuing the redemption and renewal of our city. If at times we pull back from that in order to get more healthy in our personal lives, we always do so in anticipation of taking the healing that God is bringing in our lives to the city.

**A Missional Community is not a Social Activist Group.** While each M/C will often work together on a variety of projects, it is not simply focused on a social cause but about Jesus and his mission in our city. You will certainly have something of a shared burden for the needs of our city, but the Missional Community doesn't seek to simply advocate a cause but to demonstrate and announce the kingdom of God.

**A Missional Community is not another Weekly Meeting.** A Missional Community is a family – brothers and sisters in Christ – on a shared mission. The gathering of the Missional Community is not simply a committee meeting, and the Missional Community doesn't begin and end with the weekly gathering. A Missional Community shares all of life together through meals, celebrations, sorrows, and trials! We aren't simply meeting to plan and organize projects but to share life together as we go about mission in our city.

Rather than seeing the Sunday gathering as the front-end of mission, we need to be able to envision the Missional Community as the vehicle of mission and being the church, with the Sunday gathering as the time for celebrating God's grace, hearing stories of mission, and being equipped to go back into the mission field of our city and the world.

**A Missional Community** is a partnership of Christians on mission with God for our city, who demonstrate the gospel tangibly and declare the gospel creatively to each other, our neighbors, and to the world.

## Responding to the Truth

- What struck you most about what you just read about Missional Communities?
- In what ways does it differ from experiences you may have had with traditional “small groups”? In what ways is it similar?
- In what ways does this empower you to **be** the church, instead of just attending church?
- Review each of your *For The City* Worksheets as a group. Ask yourselves, “What people, place and/or issue is God calling us to redeem and renew **as a group**? What brokenness do we have a heart for? Is there one or two peoples, places or issues that everyone in the group seems to be leaning towards?”
- Identify the primary and secondary people, place or issue that you believe God is sending your group to as a gift: (John 20:21)
  - Primary mission: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Secondary mission: \_\_\_\_\_
- Up to this point in your Vision Series group you have received vision to redeem and renew broken people, broken places and broken systems. You have identified your neighbors (anyone you cannot avoid), places in the city, and issues in the city where there is a need for *shalom*. Referring to this chart that you have filled out and the calling of Jesus in Jn. 20:21, *repent* in prayer right now for each time that you have “retreated” from your neighbors and the city. First take a moment to repent in quiet before God; then repent verbally in group prayer.

## Applying the Truth

- Celebrate by taking Communion together! (see p. 36 for instructions)
- This is the completion of the six-week Vision Series and missional group experience together. Congratulations! Our prayer is that our church is on mission with God to the city like never before and that God has deepened and transformed each of our lives as we have been on mission together. You have committed only for 6 weeks, but as you reach the end of this time, our hope is that your group will want to stay together as a group. You may or may not choose to continue. If you decide not to, we ask that you help identify a leader among the people who want to stay. Training and support will be provided for these new leaders. Regarding the missional communities, some will continue meeting. Others will return to prior small groups; still others may choose to try another group with a different mission. We will help you with that process. Whichever option you choose, we pray you will continue to pursue being on mission with God with a small community of believers.

## Take some time and discuss your options as a group:

- ☐ We will stay together as a group and continue on mission together as a Missional Community. Review this statement:

*A Missional Community is a partnership of Christians on mission with God for our city, who demonstrate the gospel tangibly and declare the gospel creatively to each other, our neighbors, and to the world.*

What specific people, place and/or issue is God sending you as a group to join Him in His redemption and renewal?

---

- ☐ We will not stay together as a group, but we will help identify a host/leader from among the people who want to stay

- Host/Leader for those staying together:

---

- What specific people, place and/or issue is God sending you as a group to join Him in His redemption and renewal?

---

- Contact your Coach and let him/her know

- ☐ I am going to return to my previous Missional Community

- ☐ I am going to find another Missional Community with a different shared mission:

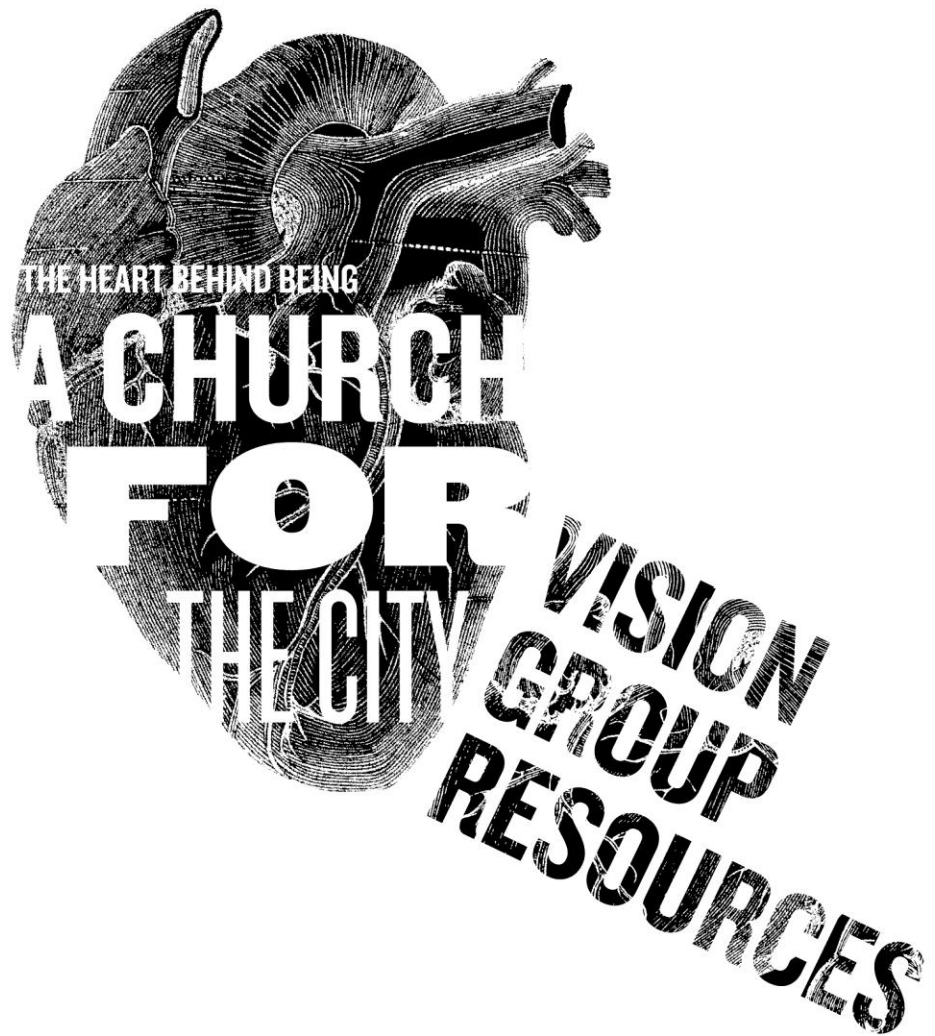
- Go to [www.groups.austinstone.org](http://www.groups.austinstone.org) to search for other Missional Communities

- ☐ I have a heart for a specific people, place or issue, and I would like to start a new Missional Community

- Contact your Coach and let him/her know

Throughout this Vision Series you have filled out a chart that should be your starting point for launching out on mission with God for our city, to demonstrate and declare the gospel. No matter which option you choose above, you need to start seeking specific ways to demonstrate and declare the Gospel to the people on your chart. What about the geographical places and issues that you identified? You should decide as a group how you will seek to be a missional community for the city while demonstrating and declaring the Gospel in each geographical area you identified.

*God is calling us by His power to build a great city, renewed and redeemed by a gospel movement,  
by being a church for the city of Austin that labors to advance the gospel  
throughout the nations.*



# GROUP AGREEMENT

It's a good idea for every group to put words to their shared values, expectations, and commitments. Such an agreement will help you avoid unspoken agendas and unmet expectations. Discuss your agreement during session 1 in order to lay the foundation for a healthy group experience. Feel free to modify anything that does not work for your group.

If the idea of a written agreement is unfamiliar to your group, we encourage you to give it a try.

**We agree to the following VALUES:**

<b>Clear Goal</b>	To grow missional lives by building a missional community
<b>Group Attendance</b>	To give priority to the group meeting (call if I am absent or late)
<b>Safe Environment</b>	To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved (no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes)
<b>Be Confidential</b>	To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group
<b>Missional Health</b>	To give group members permission to support, encourage and help me live a life that is on mission with God
<b>Welcome Newcomers</b>	To invite our friends who might benefit from this series and warmly welcome newcomers
<b>Building Relationships</b>	To get to know the other members of the group and pray for them regularly

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## VISION GROUP CALENDAR

Missional Communities share responsibilities and group ownership. It might take some time for this to develop. Shared ownership ensures no one person has responsibility for all the responsibilities of the group. Use the calendar to keep track of dinners, hangouts, mission projects, birthdays, or days off. Complete this calendar at your first or second meeting. Planning ahead will increase attendance and shared ownership.

DATE/TIME	LESSON	LOCATION	FACILITATOR	SNACK/MEAL
	<b>Week 1:</b> Our God is Mighty to Save			
	<b>Week 2:</b> Seek the Shalom of the City			
	<b>Week 3:</b> Holistic Renewal of the City			
	<b>Week 4:</b> Repentance and the City			
	<b>Week 5:</b> Praying for the City	<i>Our group will be Prayer-walking at _____</i>		
	<b>Week 6:</b> Launching Out for the City			

# COMMUNION FOR VISION GROUPS

If you so choose, as a small group you can celebrate by taking communion together.

## What is Communion?

It is a SIMPLE act, not an elaborate ceremony. It's a REMINDER of what Jesus did and is a unifying part of Christian fellowship. You'll need to have some simple grape juice and enough bread or crackers available to serve as the communion elements.

## Suggested Format

1. Read the following words of Jesus:

*The Lord Jesus on the night He was betrayed took bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper, He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."*

**1 Corinthians 11:23-25**

*For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.*

**1 Corinthians 11:26**

2. Distribute the elements and give people a moment of quiet personal prayer, then after a minute or so, receive the elements together.
3. End in a closing prayer of thanks to God for what He has done for everyone in the group.

# MISSIONAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

## Worship Christ

	Just beginning			Well developed	
I am experiencing the presence and power of God through prayer in my everyday life.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am faithfully attending my small group and weekend services to worship God .....	1	2	3	4	5
I am feeding myself consistently from God's Word so that I can bless others.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am habitually spending time with God through the reading of scripture and prayer .....	1	2	3	4	5
I am following the example of Christ in my personal holiness.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am participating in communion .....	1	2	3	4	5

Worship Christ Total \_\_\_\_\_

## Live in Community

I am actively pursuing biblical community.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am growing in my ability both to share and to show my love to others .....	1	2	3	4	5
I am willing to share my real needs for prayer and support from others .....	1	2	3	4	5
I am resolving conflict constructively and am willing to forgive others .....	1	2	3	4	5
I see myself as someone who cares for others in my group .....	1	2	3	4	5
I am diligent to not gossip, but instead use my words to give grace to those who hear.....	1	2	3	4	5

Live in Community Total \_\_\_\_\_

## Get Trained for Ministry

I am growing in my knowledge of the Word of God .....	1	2	3	4	5
I am learning more about the character of God.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am discovering and developing my Spiritual Gifts for ministry.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am regularly asking God to show me opportunities to serve others .....	1	2	3	4	5
I am involved in my small group by sharing some group role or responsibility.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am building discipleship relationships with other believers .....	1	2	3	4	5

Get Trained Total \_\_\_\_\_

## Make Disciples

I am pursuing intentional, transparent relationships with non-Christians in my sphere of influence.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am asking God to give me opportunities to share the gospel .....	1	2	3	4	5
I am identifying the mission that God has called me to.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am investing my time in another person or group who needs to know Christ personally .....	1	2	3	4	5
I am involved sharing the gospel locally to the poor and oppressed .....	1	2	3	4	5
I am involved sharing the gospel to unreached people groups globally .....	1	2	3	4	5

Make Disciples Total \_\_\_\_\_

<b>JUST BEGINNING</b> 0-20	<b>FAIR</b> 20-40	<b>GETTING GOING</b> 40-60	<b>VERY GOOD</b> 60-90	<b>WELL DEVELOPED</b> 90-120
-------------------------------	----------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------------

Optional Exercise: Have your friend, spouse, group leader, parent(s) and/or one additional Christian friend fill out a copy of this form before you complete the *Missional Health Plan*.

# MISSIONAL HEALTH PLAN

Elements (Scriptural Mandates)	Possibilities	Plans (Strategic Steps)
<b>WORSHIP CHRIST</b> How can I worship Christ in all that I think, say and do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prayer</li> <li>• REAP – feeding from God’s Word regularly</li> <li>• Praise and thanks to Christ</li> <li>• Prayer for the City</li> <li>• Sunday services</li> </ul>		
<b>LIVE IN COMMUNITY</b> How can I deepen my relationships with others? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family/friends</li> <li>• Relational/emotional development</li> <li>• Small group (missional community)</li> <li>• Living out the “One Anothers”</li> </ul>		
<b>GET TRAINED for ministry</b> How can I grow to be like Christ and serve others? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get Trained classes with my small group</li> <li>• Spiritual disciplines</li> <li>• Financial stewardship</li> <li>• Character development</li> <li>• Ministry to the Body</li> <li>• Leadership training</li> <li>• Continuing training</li> </ul>		
<b>MAKE DISCIPLES</b> How can I share my faith regularly? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends/family, work, neighborhood</li> <li>• Locally with the poor and oppressed</li> <li>• Globally in God’s Mission to the nations</li> <li>• Cross-cultural involvement</li> </ul>		

## VISION GROUP PRAYER & PRAISE REPORT

Briefly share your prayer requests as a small group, recording the request below. Remember to record any answers to prayer below.

DATE	PRAYER REQUEST	PRAISE REPORT

## For The City Worksheet Exercise (Week 1)

- **Step 1:** Identify your neighbors (*anyone you cannot avoid*) using the “Your Neighbors” Worksheet on **p. 43**.
  1. Are there any broken people on that list that God has given you a specific burden for?
- **Step 2:** In the “Neighbors” column of the *For The City* Worksheet, write your list of neighbors (below on **p. 44**).
- **Step 3:** In the “Description” column, write a brief description for each neighbor (young professional, Hispanic leader, working mom... etc.) including any brokenness you may see (alcoholism, depression, loneliness... etc.).
  - *Example:* Jane Doe ... single mother ... loneliness, lack of support, needs help with children, financial stress
- **Step 4:** In the “Retreat/Pursuit” column, identify whether you have been more like a Jonah (*retreat*) or an Abraham (*pursuit*) for these people. Have you retreated from or pursued these people for their good and the good of the city? Next to each neighbor, write “Retreat” or “Pursuit” in the “Retreat/Pursuit” column.

## For The City Worksheet Exercise (Week 2)

- **Step 1:** Identify the places you cannot avoid:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples of Places:**  
neighborhood, coffee shop, workplace, gym, etc.

- (Are there any broken places on that list that God has given you a specific burden for?)
- **Step 2:** In the “Places” column of the *For The City* Worksheet, write your list of places you cannot avoid (below on **p. 45**).
  - **Step 3:** In the “Description” column, write a brief description for each place (neighborhood, third place, workplace... etc.) including any brokenness you may see (isolation, individualism, divorce, injustice... etc.).
  - **Step 4:** In the “Retreat/Pursuit” column, identify whether you have been more like a Jeremiah (*pursuit*) or the False Prophets (*retreat*) for these places. Have you retreated from or pursued these places for their good and the good of the city? Next to each place, write “Retreat” or “Pursuit” in the “Retreat/Pursuit” column.

# For The City Worksheet Exercise (Week 3)

- **Step 1:** Identify the issues, causes or concerns that you cannot avoid:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

(Are there any issues, causes or concerns on that list that God has given you a specific burden for?)

**Examples of Issues / Concerns / Causes:**  
Alcoholism, Poverty,  
Sexual Addiction,  
Homelessness,  
Depression, AIDS,  
Abortion,  
Illiteracy/Education, Teen  
Pregnancy, etc.

- **Step 2:** In the “Issues/Concerns” column of the For The City Worksheet, write your list of issues, causes or concerns that you cannot avoid (below on **p. 46**).
- **Step 3:** In the “Description” column , write a brief description for each issue, cause or concern including any brokenness you may see.
- **Step 4:** In the “Retreat/Pursuit” column, identify whether you have been more like a Jeremiah / Abraham (*pursuit*) or Jonah / False Prophets (*retreat*) for these issues, causes and concerns. Have you retreated from or pursued these issues and concerns for their good and the good of the city? Next to each issue/concern, write “Retreat” or “Pursuit” in the “Retreat/Pursuit” column.
- **Step 5:** In the “Kind of Renewal needed” column, identify the kinds of renewal that would be needed, whether spiritual, social, and/or cultural. Feel free to put just one kind or all 3 kinds depending on the need. Next to each neighbor, place, and issue/concern, write the kind(s) of renewal needed in the “Kind of Renewal needed” column.

# For The City Worksheet Exercise

## Your Neighbors Worksheet

A Neighbor is “anyone you cannot avoid” (Guder) or anyone who has needs that you have the resources to meet. Your neighbor may be those who live next-door, those you work with, those you play with, or those with whom you share some sort of affinity, including your immediate and extended family. Paradoxically, your neighbor may also be someone you have little in common with but whom God has placed squarely in your path or specifically called or commanded you to care for. In addition, your neighbors will most likely be both in the church and outside the church.

Write down below all the people in these spheres that you cannot avoid:

The diagram consists of five overlapping circles arranged in a pentagonal pattern. Each circle is labeled with a sphere of influence and contains several horizontal lines for writing.

- Family**  
(immediate or extended)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Friends**  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Work**  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Fun**  
(Gym, hobbies, hangouts)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Acquaintances**  
(Neighbors, kids' sports teams, school, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

# For the City Worksheet

<b>Neighbors:</b> <i>(anyone you cannot avoid)</i>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Retreat / Pursuit?</b>	<b>Kinds of renewal needed</b> <i>(spiritual, cultural, social)</i>
1. <i>Example:</i> <i>Jane Doe</i>	<i>Single mother... loneliness, lack of support, needs help with children, financial stress</i>	<i>retreat</i>	<i>Needs spiritual renewal (isn't a believer - pray for her conversion) and social renewal (a community of believers to share the burden; help financially)</i>
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			

<b>Places:</b> (places you cannot avoid)	<b>Description</b>	<b>Retreat / Pursuit?</b>	<b>Kinds of renewal needed</b> (spiritual, cultural, social)
1. <b>Example:</b> Avery Ranch neighborhood	Neighborhood community... materialism, depression, divorce, individualism, loneliness, lack of community, living beyond their means, isolation	retreat	Spiritual renewal (conversion, repentance, etc.); Social renewal (real, biblical community; need a renewed concern for the poor and oppressed who don't live here)
2.			

God is calling us by His power to build a great city, renewed and redeemed by a gospel movement,  
by being a church for the city of Austin that labors to advance the gospel  
throughout the nations.

3.			
4.			

<b>Issues &amp; Concerns:</b> <i>(anyone you cannot avoid)</i>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Retreat / Pursuit?</b>	<b>Kinds of renewal needed</b> <i>(spiritual, cultural, social)</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AUSTIN STONE**

During your Vision Group experience, you might begin sensing a calling and desire to partner with The Austin Stone. We say “partner” rather than “member” to emphasize the fact that we hope and expect that our partners will be more than spectators. The role of partners is to be on mission with God, with the vision and strategy of the church, and use their unique gifts and talents to help fulfill the vision at The Austin Stone to be a church for the city.

The requirements for partnership at The Austin Stone include attending a Partnership Class to learn about the mission and strategy of the church as well as living out the elements together in groups which discuss the role of missional living. With the current Vision Series, we are covering mission and strategy through the messages on Sundays as well as the small group Guide and activities. With this Vision Group you also will have the opportunity to serve together and experience missional living together.

With this in mind, on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> the Connections ministry is hosting a Partnership Class for those who actively participated in Vision Groups. This will be a great opportunity to learn about partnership and get your questions answered. There will also be an opportunity to commit to becoming a partner with the Austin Stone Community Church.

Keep in mind - faithful attendance and participation in a Vision Group is a pre-requisite for this Partnership Class.

Sign-ups for the Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> Partnership Class will be offered on-line at a later date. Until then, keep in mind that participation in your Vision Group is required in order to attend the Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> Partnership Class.

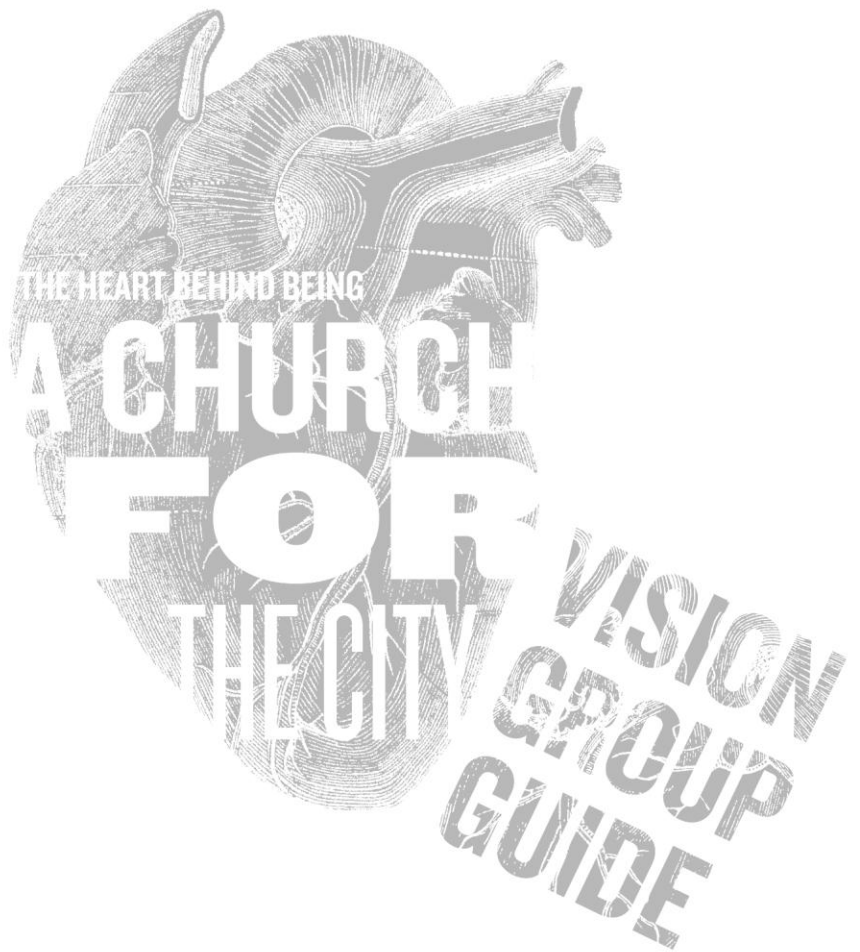
So, in order to become a partner, here are the steps to take:

1. participate in a Vision Group
2. attend the **Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> Partnership Class**

If you have questions, feel free to contact:

Todd Engstrom, Connections Associate: [todd@austinstone.org](mailto:todd@austinstone.org)

Theresa Claunch, Connections Ministry Assistant: [theresa@austinstone.org](mailto:theresa@austinstone.org)



THE HEART BEHIND BEING

**A CHURCH  
FOR**  
THE CITY

**VISION  
GROUP  
GUIDE**