

1 EKKLESIA

Ministry Expansion & Development

2 Introduction

- Ekklesia was created to be a very unique and distinct church.
- Church life was to be structured around community and not just a building, programs, or services.
- This is why we emphasize small groups as its unique dynamics better help us to develop quality relationships and so be a biblically functioning community.
- So with this in mind, what we do as a church should always be on what helps us as a fellowship to reach this goal.

3 Early Years

- When our church began . . .
 - We met in Small Groups (weekly)
 - We met in Large Groups (bi-weekly)
 - On the off weekends . . .
 - We held a Praise & Prayer Service
 - Workshops, Conferences, Retreats and Small Group Outreaches.

4 Growth

- Because of attrition every church or similar organization needs to grow.
 - People move away.
 - People pass away.
 - People leave the church for one reason or the other.

5 Growth

- The ways most churches grow are . . .
 - Walk-ins - due to advertising (Internet, Radio, and Yellow Pages)
 - Invitation - from a Church Member
 - Regular Weekend Service
 - Special Event
 - Building Appeal - noticed the church while driving past the facility.
 - Outreaches (Tent Services, Street Ministry, and Canvassing).

6 Possibilities

- While we do have a presence in the Yellow Pages and on the Internet, lack of a facility does hurt us with attracting walk-in visitors.
- However, not having a facility does give us other possibilities—
 - namely not be tied to the Sunday morning tradition, and
 - where the expression of Christianity merely becomes attending a service, instead of being a community of believers.

7 **Proposal**

- I'm recommending, we on a trial basis return to our roots and diversify our weekend large group gatherings.
- I'm proposing, we return to bi-weekly Celebration Services and use the alternative weekends for expressions of other kinds of ministry.
- I'm calling for us to integrate various other kinds of ministry that can not only help us grow, but also build community and outreach.

8 **Proposal**

- I would like us to continue to meet weekly in Small Groups.
- However, I would like for us to change the frequency of our Celebration Service to twice per month (bi-monthly) and meet on the 1st & 3rd Saturday evenings.
- On the 5th Saturday of the month, we could schedule a banquet.
- On the alternative weekends, I would like us to considering the following . . .

9 **Alternative Weekends**

- The options for our alternative weekends are as follows:
 - Prayer and Praise Service at a venue that's appropriate.
 - Cell Group Outreach or Fellowship.
 - Workshops, Conferences, and Retreats
 - VBS and other Children & Youth Ministries.

10 **Prayer & Praise**

- A Prayer & Praise service is a special service where we come to worship the Lord in an informal setting. Service usually lasts for 90 minutes and as we worship we pray for the following needs:
 - Our church.
 - Families & individuals in our church.
 - Our city, state, and country.

- Our missionaries and the lost.
- Also at this time, people are encouraged to use their spiritual gifts to edify the body.

11 **Conferences & Workshops**

- Over the history of Ekklesia, we have sponsored several workshops and conferences. The following are just a few of those events.
 - Marriage Conference(s)
 - Parenting Workshop.
 - Prophetic Conference.
 - Conference on the Holy Spirit.
 - Various Disciple Training Workshops.
 - Small Group Leaders Conference.

12 **Retreats**

- Weekend Retreats have been a huge plus for our church in the past.
- Having the whole weekend to spend time away from home on at a retreat is a luxury few churches are able to enjoy.
- We have had family retreats at state parks and Men's and Women's retreats at various retreat centers in the Region.
- It would be a wonderful treat for our church to be able to schedule these kinds of events once again and do so where we have the whole weekend to enjoy ourselves in the Lord.

13 **Purpose**

- So then, what we are wanting to do is not to reduce our ministry as a church, but to expand it, so that we can better achieve our purpose and be that biblical functioning community of believers.
- Just like a guitar with only two strings doesn't fulfill its purpose, so does a church that limits its ministry.
- But add more strings to that guitar and it will sound great.
- In the same way, we at Ekklesia want to expand our ministry from just Cell Groups and Celebration Services to other types of ministries as well.
- We want to become a place where beautiful music (spiritually speaking) is made.

14 **This Month's Schedule**

- So then, starting this week we are moving our Celebration Service from weekly events to bi-monthly services.
- We will meet on the 1st & 3rd Saturdays of the month.

- Next week will be the 2nd Saturday of the month and we are planning to hold a Prayer & Praise Service here at Highpoint, which will be 90 minutes of worship accompanied with prayer.
- We are looking at this to be also a time of personal ministry as well. People who would like to come to merely soak in God's presence are welcome to do so.

15 **This Month's Schedule**

- The 4th Weekend of this month, Sally and I are planning a Cell Group leader's dinner at our home.
- All Small Group leaders are encouraged to come and can bring their spouse and/or the host of their group.
- Dinner will start at 6:00 PM and immediately afterwards we will strategize on how to grow our groups and make them better.

16 **Special Opportunities**

- In the months of May, August, and October, we will have 5 Saturdays in the month.
- This will give us the extra opportunity to schedule either an extra Celebration Service, Family Fun Night, or Retreat.
- With this kind of schedule, it gives us plenty of opportunities to supplement different kinds of events and services in our church.
- This is a good thing!

17 **Summary**

- Implementing bi-weekly Celebration Services is not going to limit the ministry of our church, but expand it.
- By adding variety, diversity, and other possibilities, it is going to create more opportunities without becoming added burden.
- It is going to save us money and less wear-and-tear on our volunteers and key workers.
- Even though ministry requires sacrifice, it should be fun and fulfilling and not a burden or mundane chore.

18 **Love Feast**

- I don't know about you, but I loved our recent banquet at the Doubletree Suites Hotel.
- Not only was the venue wonderful, but it represented a very important element of the vision of our church and that was community.
- In fact, that setting was more reminiscent of the early church and their "love feast" than anything else.
- To meet in cell groups and then come together for a common meal is very much a New Testament pattern.

19 **Love Feast**

- It is my hope that we can do this more and more.

- We can come together as families and individuals and celebrate the “Body of Christ” and enjoy each other’s company.
- Let us work together so that the distinction and uniqueness of our church will continue.
- We don’t have to be like other churches, where it’s all about a building or a service.
- Let ministry be about people and about the establishment of the people of God in community.

20 **Agape Love**

- In my sermon on Valentine’s Day, I mentioned how the Greeks used three different words for love, while the English only has one.
- So when we read in the Bible the word love, it is easy for us to misinterpret the kind of love that God has for us and the love He wants us to give.
- To the Greeks “agape” love is self-sacrificing love, which is charitable and merciful.
- This is why in the KJV of the Bible, “agape” is often translated as charity.

21 **Agape Love**

- When we read John 3:16, how God so loved (agape) the world that He gave . . . His only begotten Son . . . we see agape (self-sacrificing) love in action.
- In fact, when Jesus taught His disciples the Great or New Commandment, He instructed them to express love (charitable love) to each other as He has been charitable, kind, and merciful to them. [John 13:34]
- This becomes clear when we read 1 John, If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. (1 John 3:17–18 NIV)

22 **Agape Love**

- Agape love also means that we are charitable to our enemies and those who persecute and hate us. [See Luke 6:35]
- Jesus promises us in that same verse that if we do show charity to our enemies then great will be our reward and we’ll be called sons of the Most High because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.
- Also, if we show partiality to those whom we like we’re not doing anything special in God’s eyes.
- As Jesus says, If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? (Matt 5:46 NIV)

23 **Great Reward**

- I’m all in favor of inspirational and exciting worship—where the gifts of the Spirit are in operation and alter ministry is performed.

- In fact there is nothing I enjoy more than an inspirational worship service where the presence of God's Spirit is felt by all.
- Nevertheless, worship in music and song is no substitute for agape love.
- The "great reward" that God promises us is through charitable love—in the form of all kindness and mercy.

24 **Communion**

- So then with all these changes we're making, they are all done so that we can be a blessed congregation.
- It is my firm belief that as we become a biblical functioning community, we will see the glory of God and when we pray God will say, "Here am I."
- Let us, therefore, as we take communion tonight, realize that love never fails.
- As we freely give the mercy and charity we have already received from God, we will indeed be blessed.
- For God watches over His word to perform it.

25 **The Lord's Supper**