

NEW COMMUNITY COVENANT CREATION WEEK #4

Intro

We unpack our seventh and final New Community rhythm this week. Remember, the goal is to come up with a covenant for your New Community. You are piecing together what your commitment to one another will look like.

There's an adage: "Aim for nothing and you'll hit it every time!" This covenant will serve to keep your life together as a gospel new covenant community moving in an intentional direction. Your facilitator will fill out a covenant template and share it with you at the end of the process.

This week we look at "Be a Blessing and Be a Blessing!" In some sense, this rhythm is the most important this year. We especially want to mature into fully orbbed, balanced New Communities by being on Christ's mission together.

Budget your time. Leave enough time to amply discuss the "What Will This Look Like Practically for Our New Community?" section and to summarize the past several weeks' study. Your facilitator will submit a draft of your covenant to church leadership. We'll provide feedback. Then you'll have a week to prayerfully commit to a final New Community covenant.

Grace and peace!

Be a Blessing and Be a Blessing!

The rhythm in a nutshell is:

4. **Be a Blessing and Be a Blessing**—The New Community rhythm of being a blessing strikes at the missional heart of the church. We seek to never lose our missional fervour as Christ followers. We seek to obey Jesus' great commission and continue his mission in the church and to the world. We seek to make disciples. We seek to be the "city upon a hill," shining good works of mercy and justice, that Jesus commands his people to be. We seek to be the salt and light of our immediate neighbourhoods, our city, and beyond.

The Biblical Basis for "Be a Blessing"

Let's briefly survey the Bible to get a sense of the importance of being a blessing in our covenant community life together.

Read Genesis 1:28 aloud together.

- a. Many Christ followers are familiar with Jesus' great commission. But did you know that Jesus' great commission is the redemption and final version of God's "original commission"? We find God's original commission in Genesis 1:28. What can New Testament Christ followers still apply from God's original commission to Jesus' great commission? How can understanding God's original commission help us fulfill Jesus' final and great commission?

Read Genesis 12:1-3 aloud together.

- a. There are few other Scripture passages that make clear that God's people are blessed to be a blessing. Share your understanding of God's call to the man we affectionately call "the father of our faith," Abraham. How does God's call on Abraham still apply to us today? How are we as Christ followers meant to be a conduit of God's blessing still today?

Read Psalm 68:1-6 aloud together.

- a. What sense of God's mission, urgency of God's mission, and intensity of God's mission do you get in verses 1-4?
- b. What do we see actually is God's mission in verses 5-6? How is this a beautiful irony given the warfare language in verses 1-4?

Read Isaiah 49:5-6 aloud together.

- a. Even in the Old Testament, God's end-game mission for Israel was to be a light to the rest of the world, to the Gentiles (non-Jews). Do you feel encouraged that God has always had a great plan of redemption for all ethnicities in his heart? Spend some time expressing praise to God for his desire to bless all nations with his salvation through Christ.
- b. How does God's working in and through history to bless all nations encourage/challenge you to be his blessing today?

Read Matthew 25:31-46 aloud together.

- a. In this passage Jesus himself gives us a sober picture of the final judgment. What separates the righteous from the unrighteous in Jesus' eyes?
- b. What definition of mission can we glean from Jesus' words in this passage?
- c. How should Jesus' words here keep us real in our living on mission?

Read Matthew 28:18-20 aloud together.

- a. We can never base doctrine and mission on just one Scripture. Mature Christ followers seek the whole counsel of Scripture. How does Jesus define his mission for his church in Matthew 28:18-20?
- b. Remember that this is Jesus' final commission. How should the "final words of Jesus" characteristic of his great commission influence our sense of mission? Put differently, how central and essential is making disciples in the definition of the church's mission?

What Will This Look Like Practically for Our New Community?

Let's bring our discussion on the Scriptures above full circle. Answer the following questions to help paint a clear picture of how your New Community will be Christ's blessing.

Try and boil down your answers to 3-5 clear and specific action points. Your facilitator will record the points into a covenant template.

- a. God calls us to the nations. Which people group will be our missional focus? This can be an ethnicity, a demographic, a mercy/justice ministry, ESL, a neighbourhood, a local school, a local food bank, youth shelter—the possibilities and needs are endless!
- b. What missions are our New Community members already involved with? Can we join with these ministries that our members are already a part of?
- c. What would good news look like to the people group we are sent to?
- d. In what places should we regularly hang out in order to build relationships with those we want to reach?
- e. What specifically will we do so that the people to whom we are sent will hear the gospel this year (e.g., Is there a need for a "Questioning Christianity," ALPHA, or Christianity Explored kind of course at our church? How can we intentionally share our faith story with them? Can we engage in one-on-one study of Scripture with them somehow?)?
- f. How will we bless those we are being sent to in word and/or deeds of mercy/justice? How will we serve the disconnected or under-resourced among the people we are sent to?
- g. How will we play and rest with those God is sending us to (because being missional also means being incarnational and being present with them in the everyday stuff of life!)?
- h. How will we as a New Community tangibly demonstrate the impact of the gospel in our own lives and overflow in service to King Jesus? How might we demonstrate Jesus's rule and reign through tangible service to those God is sending us to?
- i. What needs beautifying in our missional focus area/neighbourhood/people group? What specific projects or events do we need to accomplish or get involved in to demonstrate the restorative work of the kingdom of God?
- j. Can we serve together during our weekly celebrations with the larger body? Can we welcome people together? Can we host a special refreshment day? Can we host a Lunch, Laugh, Learn together?
- k. How can we commit to helping one another grow in serving in light of their unique design by God (i.e., identify spiritual gifts or personality types; write out personal mission statements; etc.)?
- l. How will we intentionally share what we have with one another and those in need?
- m. With what frequency will we "be a blessing"? Weekly? Once a month? Once a quarter? Once a year. Do we have the audacious dream of going on a mission trip together somewhere, locally, provincially, in Canada, overseas?
- n. Are we open to serving together through a non Christian organization as another layer of to our witness?
- o. Refer to the list below of potential ministries you could serve through. By no means is this list exhaustive. There are SOOOO many needs in Toronto. New Community members are welcome to make suggestions based on their connections, passions. Be creative! The important point is that you clearly define your mission and commit to it together.

Possible ministries (in no particular order):

Ministry	Description	Contact
Love A Village	Serving the least, the last, the lost in Malawi.	www.loveavillage.org Julie Seath julieseath@gmail.com
Wildwood Bible Camp	Gospel centred boys and girls summer camp from July to August.	www.wwbc.ca Matt Wilks matt.wilks@gmail.com
Scott Mission Downtown Toronto	Serving the homeless and underprivileged in various ways.	www.scottmission.com Holly Thompson hollythompson15@gmail.com
Scott Mission O'Connor	Serving the poor in various ways.	www.scottmission.com Chris Pignatiello chris@trinitygrace.ca
Men Ending Trafficking	Seeking to set women free from sex trafficking one woman at a time through various methods of advocacy. MET Christmas Banquet 12/16/2017	www.johncassells.com/met John Cassells
Trinity Grace Church ESL	Engaging international students and newcomers to Canada through ESL. We welcome volunteers with a heart to show the love of Christ and converse with our students.	Colin Brewster colinrb@gmail.com
Pregnancy Care Centre	Serving women with unexpected pregnancies.	www.iamnotalone.ca Linda Baartse linda.baartse@pregnancycarecentre.org Jerome Kucharczyk jerome.kucharczyk@hotmail.com
The Jesus Network	The Jesus Network is focused on being the 'hands and feet' of Jesus in the city of Toronto. Coming alongside and meeting the needs of people from various backgrounds, ethnicities, and religions.	Shawn Cuthill shawncuthill@gmail.com

End by committing your discussion and ideas to the Lord. Ask him for his Spirit's guidance to the right people, the right mission field at the right frequency.

Facilitators, Chris Pignatiello will reach out to you for covenant drafts.

Grace and peace!