

# GOSPELLING HANDBOOK

A small guide for Missional Communities



**SACRED CITY**  
C H U R C H



## **WHAT IS GOSPELLING?**

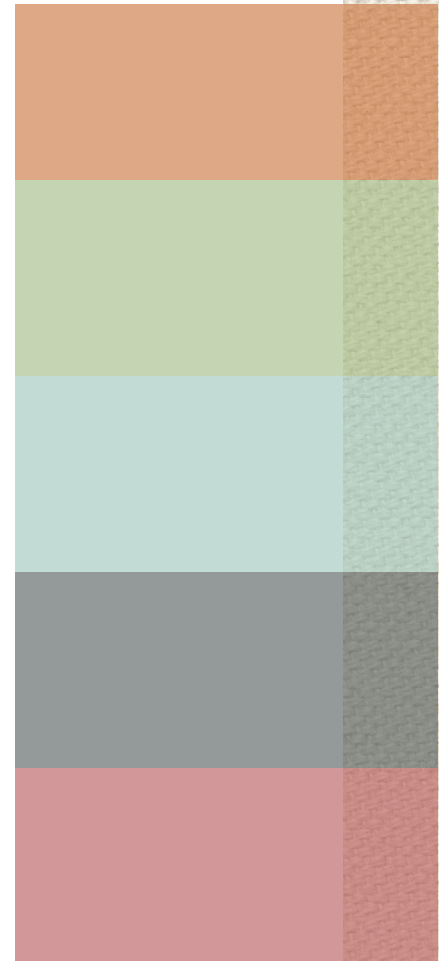
### **GOSPELLING GUIDELINES**

- a. Listen with Gospel ears
- b. Remember that God is sovereign
- c. Don't make it about you
- d. Save all advice for later
- e. Allow feelings
- f. Limit personal sharing
- g. Confidentiality

### **ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS**

- a. Extensive questions
- b. Intensive questions

### **EXAMPLES OF GOOD QUESTIONS**



# WHAT IS GOSPELLING?

Gospelling is the practice of applying the balm of the gospel to a person's heart, idols, wounds, story, or world-view. It is how we counsel people in and with the gospel. Our theology always informs our practices. So it is important to be regularly reminded why and how we do what we do.

Gospelling takes place in relationships with others when we see or hear ways that they are failing to believe the truth of the gospel, and are living in a way contrary to it. By asking good questions, we can help people see these "gospel snags" and draw them to faith and repentance.

This guidebook serves to provide the guidelines of gospelling, as well as examples of helpful (and unhelpful) questions to ask as we gospel others.

## GOSPELLING GUIDELINES

### LISTEN WITH GOSPEL EARS

There is ONE dominant story that all stories will ultimately find their place and their completion in, and that is God's Story - the gospel. His story precedes, finishes, corrects and makes sense of all other stories. In order to effectively administer the gospel to people, we must listen with "gospel ears" for where any part of someone's story is not in line with or influenced by the gospel.

### REMEMBER THAT GOD IS SOVEREIGN

Through the sovereignty of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit, each Missional Community or Fight Club gathering (or any other of our gatherings) will be unique in that the Spirit will determine who and how to settle upon. Members of a Missional Community should leave their agenda at the door and submit to the leading of the Spirit.

### DON'T MAKE IT ABOUT YOU

When a person is sharing their story, do not reply with comments such as, "Oh yeah, I do the same thing..." or "Just the other day I was..." etc. By doing so, you redirect the conversation off the person who was sharing, and onto yourself. It's okay to identify with a person in their struggles, but keep the focus on them. Consider alternative response such as, "That sounds really difficult - how is that situation affecting you right now?"



# **GOSPELLING GUIDELINES**

## **SAVE ALL ADVICE FOR LATER**

The gospel is good news NOT good advice. Advice seeks to change behavior without changing the heart. The heart is the only place real change can take place, and that is where the gospel changes us - so we seek to engage people on a heart level. That means if a person is struggling with a pornography addiction, we don't start with advice (i.e. suggesting they put accountability software on your computer). The person's problem is much deeper than software - they're addicted to pornography because they DESIRE something about it. You should first ask questions to discover what they're failing to believe about God, and save the practical advice for another time.

## **ALLOW FEELINGS**

We we are gospeling, we desire to create a safe place for people to share. That means that often times, they will become emotional. They may cry, get angry, and experience myriad emotions in between - and that's good. Emotions reveal things in their heart, so we don't want to stifle them. Small actions, like putting a hand on the shoulder of someone who is crying, can send nonverbal cues to "hold it together" or "you're making us all really uncomfortable." Therefore, we don't do those things when someone is emotional. If someone is very angry we want to discover what is making them so angry, rather than trying to get them to calm down or allowing ourselves to get angry with them. Emotions are signposts that direct us to heart idols.

## **LIMIT PERSONAL SHARING**

It is important as Missional Communities grow that each person limits the amount of sharing they give on a weekly basis. Gospeling is not effective when twenty-five people are all trying to get a word in. God may be showing you something or you might just have something you want to say, but often it is helpful to hold onto it for a moment and praying about it before speaking up. If certain people are dominating conversations and not allowing others to speak into things, someone will need to ask them to hold back for a while.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Since we desire to create a safe place for intimacy and sharing, keeping things confidential is of utmost importance\* (the proverbial "What happens in Missional Community stays in Missional Community"). Nobody wants his or her junk to end up on Facebook or told to others in the church. Respect those in your Missional Community and keep things shared to yourself.

\*The only exception to this is the understanding that some things should be shared with the Elders in order for good shepherding and discipleship to take place. Still, this sharing is only the responsibility of the Missional Community leaders.

# ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS

There are two categories that most questions will fall into: extensive (broad and basic), or intensive (narrow or pointed). When we are gospeling others, both types of questions will come into play.

## EXTENSIVE QUESTIONS

Broad or extensive questions are the “getting to know you” variety, and give us an overarching view of what someone may think their problem is. We can think of these questions as addressing the fruit of what the person is sharing - the present problem, behavior, sin, or struggle.

We shouldn't make conclusions based on these extensive questions. This is where intensive questions come in.

## INTENSIVE QUESTIONS

Narrow or intensive questions are more pointed and detailed. These questions get to the heart of the matter, and we can think of them as addressing the root of what the person is sharing - their idolatry, desires, or disbelief about God and their own self.

Both types of questions are needed and helpful in gospeling others.

## EXAMPLES OF GOOD QUESTIONS

Below are some examples of helpful questions we can ask as people are sharing. This is by no means an exhaustive list, and each situation and story is different (so you may need to contextualize these questions or ask them in a specific way to be effective).

### GENERAL QUESTIONS AND QUESTIONS ADDRESSING IDENTITY

- What are some of the most significant memories from your childhood?
- What was your relationship with your parents like?
- What do you think of when you hear the word “father”?
- Were you close to your siblings?
- What did your friendships look like growing up?
- Can you see your sin in that?



- Do you think you're trying to earn your forgiveness (or acceptance, righteousness, favor) from God?
- Are you surprised by your sin - do you think you're "better than that"?
- How do you think God views you?
- What is your view of God right now?
- What currently gives you the biggest dose of self-worth?
- Who or what do you look to for your sense of identity and purpose?
- Where do you think God is in the midst of this \_\_\_\_\_ (struggle, sin, trial, etc.)?
- What are you hoping to gain or accomplish by living this way?

## **QUESTIONS ADDRESSING ANGER**

- What do you want that you're not getting?
- What are you getting that you don't want?
- Do you believe your perceived "rights" are being violated or denied?
- Who do you think is denying you those rights?

## **QUESTIONS ADDRESSING DISCONTENTMENT**

- What do you think would make you truly happy?
- Do you nag, whine, or complain often?
- Questions addressing guilt and shame
- Do you believe God has actually forgiven you of your sin?
- In feeling guilty over your sin, are you holding onto that guilt as a way of paying "penance"?

## **QUESTIONS ADDRESSING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS**

- What do you expect of others? (In your home, your workplace, your Missional Community - these may all be different.)
- Are those expectations realistic and biblical? (Or are they unrealistic and sinful?)
- Is it important for you to be accepted by others?

## QUESTIONS ADDRESSING STRESS AND ANXIETY

- What do you think is causing your stress?
- Why do you stress and worry - what are you hoping to accomplish?
- Do you believe that God is actually in control of this situation?
- Do you actually believe that God is good?
- Do you actually believe that God is gracious and gives grace to people?