

# Parkview

ALLIANCE CHURCH



## DISCIPLESHIP PLAN 2011

**Our Mission:** Loving God and loving others in our church, in our community and in our world.

**Our Vision:** Imperfect people sharing hope and love in our community.

**Discipleship Defined:** The ongoing pursuit of becoming a fully devoted follower of Jesus as led by the Spirit and guided by His Word.<sup>1</sup>

## REVIEW OF THE DISCIPLESHIP PLAN PROCESS

As we look at a comprehensive discipleship plan, we wanted to include as many people in the discussion as possible. Thus, we spent September 2010 communicating the process and inviting all of Parkview's family to join the discussion. In October 2010, we had in-depth discussions on the Staff and Elder's level as well as took time in a Sunday morning service for a "Listening document" exercise. We also hosted a Town Hall meeting to discuss this further in both large group and small group settings. In November and December 2010, we took this information and began to "flush it out" as leadership. In January and February, we drafted a plan that was reviewed and reworked through several drafts as it was discussed on the Staff and Elder's level. In April 2011, ministry leaders held focus groups to discuss the draft plan. Final changes were made and the Elders voted on the final plan in early Spring 2011. This plan will then be communicated to the congregation in late Spring 2011 for implementation Fall 2011.

## THE SITUATION

The Barna Research Group recently announced that according to their extensive research, one of the top concerns for the Christian Church, in general, was that it is becoming more theologically illiterate.<sup>2</sup> This is alarming, not because we simply want people to be more intelligent Christians, but because it is symptomatic of believers not growing in their

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<sup>1</sup> As defined at our 2010 Elders and Staff Retreat focused on our Discipleship Plan.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.barna.org/culture-articles/462-six-megathemes-emerge-from-2010>

relationships with Jesus. This represents a reality that your leadership has seen at Parkview and a trend we do not want to see continue. To that end, we desire to strategically and intentionally shift this reality through the communication and program structure. This trend is not isolated to one age group or another but something we see systemically and something we want to engage holistically.

To that end, we desire to go back to God's Word and His instruction to identify the basic components of discipleship. Although we may differ on how we live each of these out (our discipleship plan allows for this), we are commanded and instructed to do several things in order to grow in our relationship with God.

We theologically understand that God is the one who transforms us by His Spirit but we are also called to partner with Him in this process. Jesus uses the analogy of a plant to refer to our spiritual growth (Luke 8 & John 15). We need make sure we are in the right soil, receiving the right nutrients to grow. Also, in Hebrews, we learn that this growth needs to occur with others in Christian community (Hebrews 10:24-25)

The following plan is our desire to lead God's people in greater love for Him and for others as He has explicitly commanded us to do (Matthew 22:36-40). Our plan sees more people have more opportunities to learn God's Word. Our hope is to have a plan that is biblically based and culturally relevant.

Note that this plan is an ongoing process and is fluid. We desire different results and so we will be doing some different things. However, they will all constantly be re-evaluated and changed as needed, as we move forward. After the first program year, we will go through a comprehensive evaluation process and make any changes to this plan that is needed for greater effectiveness in the discipleship process.

## INTRODUCTION

Because discipleship (*The ongoing pursuit of becoming a fully devoted follower of Jesus as led by the Spirit and guided by His word.*) is more than an individual intellectual exercise but involves our total lives being increasingly surrendered to the will of God<sup>3</sup>, we see four areas in the discipleship process. To aid in this analogy and communication, we are using four colors of puzzle pieces as a picture of the discipleship process. We see that there are four primary areas that Scripture teaches that are key components to our spiritual growth and development (Actively Learn, Purposely Practice, Be in Community and Go on Purpose). These four areas can be incorporated into our lives in a wide variety of ways; however, we, as a church, desire to help us do this in strategic ways in each of these important areas.

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<sup>3</sup> Romans 12:1 "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."

# THE PLAN



## ACTIVELY LEARN

*Scripture commissions the church to teach (Matthew 28:20) and it calls us, in all stages of life, to learn (Psalm 78:1-8). In order to love God with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength (Mark 12:28-31), we need to know who God is and what He has said to us through God's Word. Consequently, we need to be active learners and not just passive learners. We need to be actively learning about God's Word and who He is. This takes effort, discipline and self-sacrifice. We, as Parkview, can't make people learn but we can provide comprehensive teaching (learning opportunities) for all ages. It is our deep desire to see more people engaged in God's Word in more ways.*

- **Kids (0-12)**

- **11:00am Sunday Morning Kid's Program**

- We love kids at Parkview, recognize their special place in the Kingdom of God (Matthew 19:14), and we want them to be fully devoted followers of Jesus as led by the Spirit and guided by his Word. Consequently, we want to engage as many of our kids as possible, teaching them about God's love through Scripture and empowering families to teach their kids in their homes (Deuteronomy 6:4).
- Therefore, we plan to move our Bible focused curriculum from 9:45am to the 11:00am hour Sunday morning. It will begin at 11:00am and go for the entire hour of the service. This will take the place of "Stay and Play" and bring our focus to one strongly effective ministry. We foresee this allowing us to focus our energy and our volunteer base, utilize teachers for "shifts" of several weeks to teach the most children about God's Word and allowing parents to fully participate in the 11:00am Worship Service.
- We recognize that, currently, we have children who come for our 11:00am service with their parents but who do not come to Sunday School. We desire to engage as many children as possible with God's Word in an effective and engaging way. By moving our attention to 11:00am we, thus, will engage more children than ever before, have a better potential pool of volunteers, and it also allows parents the ability to fully engage with God's Word in the main worship service.
- Connected with this, we will strategically attempt, through programs and material, to engage the entire family with the goal of empowering parents to disciple their children.

- **Youth (13-18)**

- **Fusion (Wednesday Night)**

- Along with fully participating in a weekly worship service and any of the adult orientated teaching, our teens will focus their age specific Bible teaching during their weekly Fusion (Bible Study) Night that has in-depth Bible

teaching as a key component to it (this is then applied and taken a step further in smaller groups during their Small Groups time at Fusion).

- **Adults (18 plus)**

- **Weekly Corporate Worship**

- Since regular corporate worship is a key component to spiritual growth and development, we are encouraging everyone to make a commitment to attend our corporate worship service weekly.
- We will develop a “Carry-Out” Web-based component connected with the weekly sermon for further reflection, application and discussion. For example, if the morning message was on the importance of showing hospitality, a “Carry-Out” discussion and application (through an online blog done through our Church Website) would be written regarding how this is carried out in our lives (“Ways to practically show hospitality this week” for example). Depending on the topic, specific challenges might be given on how to do this or further questions for reflection. This will help to take the weekly Sunday Morning teaching to the next level of discussion and application.
- As a long-term goal, we will also develop weekly sermon based Small Group Curriculum options for Small Groups to use. This will provide small groups with the option of using curriculum based on the weekly sermon in their existing small groups.

- **Parkview Advances<sup>4</sup> – Intensive and In-depth**

- By providing direct and targeted in-depth teaching we are able to deal with specific topics with quality instructors centered on God’s Word.
- This is an attempt to teach God's Word to more people, at more times. We are NOT dropping adult Sunday School, we are not reducing the amount of teaching. We are expanding not contracting.
- One of the critiques we received from the congregation was that the times of “immersion” didn’t work for some and others did not like the time frame for “Life Long Learning.” Thus, we want to create a new way of structuring this important component of discipleship that is varied and flexible (allowing for varied time schedules, shift work, farming schedule, etc). As a result, the following will be done in a variety of formats (including online) at a variety of times, on a rotating basis. They will also take place in short-term commitment settings (varying from afternoon, evening, morning, weekend, Saturday, Sunday morning (9:45am), Sunday afternoon (lunch class after church), etc.). This flexibility will also allow us the ability to schedule things somewhat around the agricultural calendar. Parkview Advances are about specific topics and are largely learning orientated, they are different than Small Groups as they occur around specific topics, are content orientated and are short-term. These short-term strategic teaching events will focus around four main topics (following are some examples):

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<sup>4</sup> “Parkview Advances” is our current working name but it will most likely change as we move into the fall.

- Discovering Christianity
  - Discovering Christ (Baptism)
  - Discovering the Holy Spirit
  - Discovering the Church (Membership)
  - Discovering Spiritual Gifts
  - Discovering Spiritual Disciplines
  - Etc.
- Christian Life Issues
  - Budgeting
  - Pre-Marriage
  - Marriage
  - Parenting
  - Etc.
- Bible Study
  - How to read and study the Bible
  - Book of Jonah
  - Book of Ephesians
  - Etc.
- Theology
  - Who is God?
  - What is the Trinity?
  - What is Sin?
  - Etc.
- To this end, we will recruit a *Parkview Advances Director* to give leadership to this key and important area.
- **Ongoing Online Community Reading/Discussion Groups**
  - In addition to Parkview Advances, we plan on beginning online corporate reading/discussion groups through Facebook or another web portal around four topics (Bible, Christian life, Theology and Leadership) that occur on a rotating and ongoing basis. The hope is to engage our people in common material together on a regular basis.



## PURPOSELY PRACTICE

*An often forgotten area in churches is the biblical necessity of regularly reading God's Word, praying and practicing spiritual disciplines. Scripture calls us to fast (Matthew 6:16-18), memorize Scripture (Psalm 119:11), meditate on God's Word (Psalm 1:2), etc. The challenge is, in our busy culture, these disciplines and practices take a back seat and, as a result, there are detrimental consequences. To that end, we desire to see people, of all ages, reading Scripture regularly, memorizing God's Word, praying regularly and practicing spiritual disciplines.*

- **Kids**
  - **Scripture Reading and Memorization**
    - As part of the take home material used in their program on Sunday morning, there will be included scripture reading and memorization.
    - Over the long term, the hope will be to sync the scripture reading and memorization with the whole church so that families are learning and memorizing together.
  - **Personal Prayer Time**
    - Encourage kids to pray regularly through the curriculum used and ask questions about this during the small group component of their program time.
  - **Spiritual Disciplines**
    - We will introduce the concept of spiritual disciplines to kids, in appropriate ways, so they are part of their Christian understanding and practice at a young age.
- **Youth**
  - **Scripture Reading and Memorization**
    - For our Young people, we would encourage the use of Scripture reading plans (same as Adults) and regularly memorize Scripture.
    - Over the long term, the hope will be to sync the Scripture reading and memorization with the whole church so that families are learning and memorizing together.
  - **Personal Prayer Time**
    - We would encourage young people to daily have a time with God and thus, would not only provide youth specific resources online but also have these resources available in our church library.
  - **Spiritual Disciplines**
    - This is an area that our youth will focus on mainly during their Sabbath Saturdays. We desire to introduce, teach and practice spiritual disciplines with our youth people in a variety of formats and times including their mentoring relationships.

- **Adult**
  - **Scripture Reading and Memorization**
    - We will include Scripture Reading Plans in our bulletin and website to aid this area.
    - We will include monthly Bible memorization into our Sunday Morning Church life – included in the bulletin and spoken about on stage.
      - This will be reinforced in Small Groups and other ministry areas.
      - Over the long term, the hope will be to sync the scripture reading and memorization with the whole church so that families are learning and memorizing together.
  - **Personal Prayer Time**
    - To provide needed resources for this in the church library to borrow with a special section designated to it.
    - To provided these resources through our website with links to purchase these materials if desired.
  - **Spiritual Disciplines**
    - As physical exercise is for the body, spiritual disciplines are training for the soul. Thus, we want to be holistic and intentional about this area of discipleship. We not only want to teach this, we also want to help people practice this in their lives. (For example, we don't just want prayer to be a value on paper but a practice that pervades the people of Parkview).
    - We will look to have 1-2 yearly spiritual retreats to focus on teaching and practicing spiritual disciplines.



## BE IN COMMUNITY

*We are called to be in authentic Christian Community with others that is Spirit led, Christ focused and biblically guided. This is part of how we grow, how we are cared for and how we care for others. Therefore, we want everyone at Parkview to be involved in Christian Community in some way. We define Christian Community as relationships with one or more believers that is Christ centered, biblically guided, Spirit led, authentic, meets regularly and provides accountability (Acts 2:46-47; Hebrews 10:24-25; Ephesians 4:15; James 5:16). This can take place in various forms and we will provide the following to help facilitate it.*

- **Kids**
  - For our kids, this would take place as a component of their Sunday morning program. This would be a component of their time together introducing them to what Christian community is and how it is important in our Christian lives.
- **Youth**
  - For our youth, this would take place in two ways. First as the small group component to Fusion (Wednesday Night). This is a strong component of their time together as they reflect on their Scripture lesson, apply it to their lives, care for each other, and pray together. Second, through their mentoring relationships.
- **Adults**
  - There are three areas we, intentionally, do to help facilitate this as Parkview:
    - **Christ Centered Recovery Groups**
      - These are groups that meet focusing on Christ and the truth of Scripture but specifically dealing with areas of addiction with others who are struggling in similar areas. Community is key in these groups.
    - **Parkview Small Groups**
      - These are groups of people who meet regularly to study God's word, care for each other, speak truth in love with one another, pray for each other, etc. These are on-going longer-term inclusive groups that build Christ-centered relationships that, over time, help facilitate continued Christian growth.
    - **Parkview Mentorship Relationships**
      - We also believe that Mentorship is another way to experience Christian community and works very well for some people. We, therefore, help facilitate mentorship relationships. These are also on-going intentional Christ-centered relationships that, over time, continued, help facilitate Christian growth.



## GO ON PURPOSE

*We strongly believe that our mission (Loving God and loving others in our church, in our community and in our world) is not just something we do as a result of growing in our relationship with God but it is a key component of that growth and discipleship (Matthew 22:36-40; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8). Using our Spiritual gifts and sharing our faith with others are key elements of the mission God has given us. Therefore, we strategically hope to facilitate this part of the discipleship process.*

- **Kids**
  - **In Our Church**
    - We want our kids to be serving in the church in age appropriate ways using and discovering the Spiritual Gifts God has given them.
  - **In Our Community**
    - We want our kids to see their role in our community as not simply a consumer but as someone who brings God's hope and love by sharing their faith with their words and their deeds.
  - **In Our World**
    - We want our kids to be a part of God's work around the world and desire to expose them to international missions not simply academically but also in practical ways. Therefore, we see this as part of their Sunday morning program activities: writing cards, raising money, meeting international workers, etc.
- **Youth**
  - **In Our Church**
    - We want our youth to be serving in the church using their Spiritual Gifts that God has given them.
    - We will hold it a value to have young people in ministry in anyway they desire and encourage this involvement.
  - **In Our Community**
    - We want our youth to see their role in the community as not simply a consumer but as someone who brings God's hope and love by sharing their faith with their words and their deeds.
    - Therefore, in addition to personal and spontaneous acts of service and evangelism, they will, as a group, corporately serve in our community 2-3 times per year in planned and programmed community service activities.
  - **In Our World**
    - We want our youth to see their role in the great commission.
    - Therefore, we see them hearing and being a part of international missions indirectly through information, meeting and hearing from international workers, raising fund, etc.
    - We also see them being practically part of cross-cultural missions trip experiences. Thus, we will endeavor to do a youth cross-cultural missions

trip every two or three years, giving opportunity for our young people to be involved directly in God's work cross-culturally.

- **Adults**

- **In Our Church**

- Every believer has been given gifts to use for the church. We, therefore, encourage every believer to use those gifts in some capacity. To that end, we will offer Spiritual Gift Discovery training through Parkview Advances as well as a list of serving opportunities through [www.ministryopps.com](http://www.ministryopps.com).

- **In Our Community**

- Because we are committed to being the love and hope of Jesus to our hurting community we encourage everyone at Parkview to be involved in and committed to their respective communities.
- Thus, because we can do some unique things together that we can't do individually, we will have opportunities to serve in Parkview ministries that meet these needs.
- We also purposely commission Parkview people every year not just to be in ministry in the church but see their community ministry as equally important.

- **In Our World**

- We are devoted and passionate about the work of God in our country and in our world. Therefore, we desire each person to be a prayer partner and promoter of missions.
- Although not everyone is called to full-time international work, we will provide direct opportunities to share the love and hope of Jesus 1-2 times per year in a variety of different ways through short-term missions trips/experiences.
- We desire to educate people with missions moments in the service and a yearly missions conference.
- In addition to this, we want to encourage people to pray and financially support the international work of God.
- Foster Strategic Partnerships with our International Workers and with our sister church in Quebec.

# KEY IMPLICATIONS

## Sunday Mornings

- Our Sunday mornings will change in that there will not be “Sunday School for all ages” as we have traditionally done it. Children will now only meet at 11:00am with the hope of including more kids, programming with greater excellence, and helping families engaged God’s Word on Sunday morning. This change does not mean that we will not have Adult Discipleship (Parkview Advances) opportunities on Sunday morning at 9:45am but that this opportunity will exist along with other times and locations. This structural change will also help us to have the option, for some point in the future, of moving to multiple services as we grow and harness our facilities to their greatest potential.

## Library

- This plan will involve a greater use of resources and, thus, we foresee our Library being used more. We also see a need for helping get resources in the hands of our people and so perhaps seeing a “bookstore” type component (maybe a partnership with Verses) to the Library develop over time to meet that growing need.

## Technology

- We see our Grow (Discipleship) Plan using technology but not being dependant upon it so that those who are not technologically savvy are not held at a disadvantage when it comes to discipleship at Parkview.
  - Thus, we will utilize our website, discussion groups and Facebook more.
  - To help people create their own plan and be involved more, we will utilize the service of *Monvee* ([www.monvee.com](http://www.monvee.com)). This is an online assessment tool that helps to create an individualized plan for discipleship that utilizes all four of the components we have highlighted (although they use different language to refer to each). This service only compliments our discipleship plan and this is not a necessity for anyone to use in order to have equal access to classes and materials we offer.
  - We will look at setting up a secure and content controlled internet kiosk at the church building that would help to include more people and be engaged with what is happening on this end.

## Staffing/Leadership

- This plan sees some minor effect to our staffing including adding a Spiritual Discipline dynamic to Florence’s role and the addition of someone (initially a volunteer) to oversee the Parkview Advances classes and curriculum (*Parkview Advances Director*).

- To accomplish this plan we will need the commitment of our people in their time and gifting. We will need more teachers and volunteers as we pursue our lofty plans of more intentional discipleship for all ages at Parkview.

### **Connection to our Numeric Growth and Facility Plan**

- We are very aware that our Grow (Discipleship) Plan has effects in a variety of different bigger picture elements to Parkview including our Numeric Growth and Facility Plan. The thing we want to avoid is having a plan that is not conducive to growth or having programs that would either limit growth or need to be changed again in the coming months because of numerical growth. Therefore, we want something that can grow with us.
- Because we see multiple services (multiple times and potentially in multiple locations) as being the most effective way of facilitating growth in our future, this plan allows for this without demanding it at any time. We can grow with this Grow (Discipleship) Plan and it can grow with us.