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## OUR CHURCH

Every church has its own unique vision and DNA. We need to be faithful to what God has called us to be.

## OUR HISTORY

In 1988 after one year of intensive prayer Pastor David Mok felt he was ready to begin working in an area notorious for its drug dealing, gambling and triad activities. He knew that the new church would be radically different. This church had to be a life-changing, significant force and influence that would strike deep in the heart of the community.

Since Brisbane had many churches catering to predominantly middle-class Caucasian congregations, David also resolved that, as in Luke 14:15, he would go to the highways and by-ways to reach out and minister to 'the poor, the blind, the lame,' bringing them into a caring community that would meet their needs and help them integrate into mainstream society. Ps David was already operating a restaurant in the Chinatown Mall called 'Restoran Malaysia,' so he began the first restaurant church in Australia.

Every Friday night, Cornerstone Cafe was opened to bikies, street kids and anyone wanting friendship and coffee. Even until recently ICC has supported a popular feeding program every Friday and Saturday reaching over 150 people in Spring Hill and the Valley.

By 1989, the church which began with six people had grown to over fifty. It was time to go fulltime and it was necessary to move across the Chinatown Mall to a fully designated church building and office.

When numbers increased to over 200 it was time to find a new place. The building at 977 Ann Street was purchased and in 1999 it became our new home.

Today, the International City Church family is made up of over sixty nationalities from a cross section of professional and, business people, students and new migrants. It also runs the Multicultural Community Centre and the Asian Pacific Institute, which comprises the International Christian College, a language school and a Cross-Cultural Training Centre.

## OUR VISION

The Bible says 'where there is no vision, the people perish...'. This is the vision statement that we have today which has come through progressively from the early years.

Our vision is "to build a dynamic Multicultural Connect Church, that will impact this nation and beyond"

## OUR 4M VALUES

*“The word intolerance isn’t often used in a positive way in society. And yet when it comes to creating organizational clarity and alignment, intolerance is essential. After all, if an organization is tolerant of everything, it will stand for nothing.” (Patrick Lencioni)*

Values are what we consider important and worthwhile. They are our invaluable values. Commonly held “core values” are the keys to safe guard the unity and the purpose of the church. The apostle Paul encourages us to be “like-minded’ and to be “one in spirit and purpose” (Phil 2:2). Paul says of Titus: “... we have the same spirit and walk in each other’s steps, doing things the same way.” (2 Cor. 12:18)

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## MULTICULTURAL

God has called us to be a **model multicultural church**. A place of commanded blessing where we genuinely want to accept and love people from all nations, cultures, languages, generations, educational and financial backgrounds.

Our mission cry is “**BREAK DOWN DIVIDING WALLS**” as we consciously make an effort to break down walls of separation through:

- Celebrating inclusive worship
- Cultivating cross cultural relationships
- Coaching cross cultural competence

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## MINISTRY TRAINING

We believe in turning multitudes into ministers.

We believe in multi-generational equipping through the kids’ and youth ministry

We believe in equipping our people for godly relationships and families i.e through Embark. Discovery, Marriage Preparation Course, Marriage on Track, Marriage Alpha.

We believe in making disciples, mentoring and leadership training. (The discipleship pathway will be in a later chapter)

We believe sons and daughters will birth forth from our training program by growing through the seven gates—prayer, commitment, submission, discipline, responsibility, loyalty and vision

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## MIRACLES

We believe in being a presence-driven church-as opposed to a purpose-driven church or seeker sensitive church. This is why we allow flexibility in our worship and give permission to the Holy Spirit to interrupt our agenda.

We believe in spirit-led worship that ushers in the presence of God- vibrant, dynamic, free, diversified, culturally-sensitive and inclusive of all people groups, spirit-led and God-centred.

We believe in prayer and the prophetic ministry. We believe that we are to become a house of prayer for all nations-Mk 11:17. Through prayers, the direction and decisions of the church will be reviewed. We encourage individual prayer, prayer in the connect group, corporate prayer and massive prayer.

We believe the supernatural manifestations of God should be a norm. 1 Cor 2:4 Paul says, “I did not come in the persuasive words of man but with the demonstration of the power and the Spirit.”

We believe people can experience healings and enjoy divine health. We want to see our church become a “sick free zone”. The phrase “sick free zone” denotes a desire to see sick people who come into the church healed and restored. It is a prophetic declaration based on Ex 23:25 which says ““You must serve only the LORD your God. If you do, I will bless you with food and water, and I will protect you from illness. There will be no miscarriages or infertility in your land, and I will give you long, full lives.”

We also see that such miracles will not be confined to the four walls of the church; that as believers we are conduits of the presence of God and that signs and wonders should follow us every day and everywhere we go

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## MISSION

We believe in fulfilling the Great Commission locally, nationally and internationally

We believe in reaching the community by giving hope, encouragement and care to the underprivileged and disadvantaged as we believe the ICC should be a church without walls. Multicultural Community Centre is the charitable arm of the church.

We believe in reaching the marketplace. We believe in infiltrating the seven mountains of our cultures—business, entertainment, education, family, government, media and religion. We see involvement in the community, government and political arena as a vehicle and voice for righteousness to prevail. We believe Christians should rise to positions of influence in all these arenas and see the kingdom of God comes into our cultures.

We believe in evangelism and church planting.

We believe in worldwide and global mission. (Our priorities include supporting the next generation in funding orphanages, supporting apostolic works, emergency and disaster relief, etc).

Refer to the appendix for the ICC Mandate on Mission

## OUR CORPORATE CULTURES

Church corporate culture is formed through the influence of the leadership and the congregation and a variety of factors. It emerges over the years and becomes part of our identity.

### PRIORITY CULTURE

- Develop Guests' Eyes. People are our greatest asset, and we need to value people above everything, and accept everyone regardless of who they are. We want our guests to stay and become part of our fellowship
- Develop ownership of the church

### GENEROSITY CULTURE

- Generosity through hospitality is a practical expression of our love for people.  
Ro 12:13 NLT "Help the needy, get into the habit of inviting guests into your home for dinner, if they need lodging give to them."  
1 Ti 3:2; Tit 1:8 (Especially the leaders; this is a training for raising up leaders)  
1 Pe 4:9 (without grumbling)
- Generosity in giving one's talents for service. Mat 25:15-28 – If you have 5 talents, use ALL 5, not just 1.
- Generosity in financial support for fulfilling the vision of ICC. 2 Cor 8:1-9
- Generosity in time to help the poor, needy, sick and to encourage and build lasting friendships. Serve one another out of passion and love for Jesus, not out of duty.  
Mk 10:42-45
- Generosity in words and actions especially to those of the fellowship. Gal 6:9-10

### MOMENTUM CULTURE

- Seek to maintain a Positive Attitude. This oils the wheels of momentum, edifies the Church and brings glory to God.

Phil 4:8 exhorts us to *think* about *GOOD things* and **Mat 12:34** says that it is out of the abundance of the heart the mouth *speaks*.

Seek to think and speak *GOOD things* about one another, especially those in leadership.

- Seek to maintain the joy of the Lord and to spread His joy. Ne 8:10. The joy of the Lord is our strength and we need God's divine strength to keep going, especially when the going is hard.
- Seek to forget the past and press forward as the past is gone and serves only to hinder. Phil 3:13-14
- Seek reconciliation as offence will come, and God has commanded us to forgive 70 x 7. Seek to be a peacemaker and make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace Eph 4:3. Use Mat 18:15-17 principle to resolve any differences.

As we pray to be a dynamic and spirit-filled community of Jesus Christ offering a centre of community for Newmarket, Brisbane and beyond, we imagine **by 2020** we will:

- be **widely known** as a dynamic multicultural church, which is a house of prayer for all nations known for biblical truth, the supernatural presence of God, covenantal friendships, healthy connect groups, a strong leadership culture, inter-generational strength, social care and action, diversity, creativity, events, health and joy — grounded in a confident, well-articulated conviction and worldview about the lordship of Jesus Christ over all of life.
- have over 1000 disciples who have been through our Make Disciples Connect.
- have close to **100 connect groups, or more, (and possibly other interest based groups)** meeting each week (80% of the regular church members)
- have a **staff team of twenty** workers (full time or part-time equivalent that are called, equipped & experienced for the ministry)
- have a significant **internship, mentoring and discipleship programs** designed to serve the wider church as well as the seven mountains in society by raising up spirit-filled leaders (who possess the 5 C's – Character, Competence, Commitment, Chemistry, Capacity)
- have a total **income of more than \$2m** and be **giving away over \$1m** to missions and aid throughout the world and domestically
- be offering **Christian pastoral care** services and life coaching to church members and the wider community, specializing in prophetic healing and deliverance ministry to bring God's freedom and healing to families and those with mental health issues.
- be a **house of prayer for all nations** in order to establish a centre for God's authority and kingdom to impact society and nations.
- have begun to **assist and influence other churches through missions and leadership training** to have our 4M Values and DNA in order to become centres of influence and community for their regions and nations.
- to be a leading **multicultural/ multiethnic church** that demonstrates the *Revelation 7* unity of people from all nations, tribes and tongues surrounding God's throne, and to form or be part of a **multicultural network of churches** that are strongly linked through five-fold relationships (Eph.4:12) that desire the supernatural presence of God and are committed to bringing His kingdom realities to earth

***“For you will soon be bursting at the seams. Your descendants will occupy other nations” Isaiah 54***

**A. 7 Principles & Perspectives  
regarding Missions at ICC**

**B. Diversity of Missions**

**C. Fundraising**

7 PRINCIPLES & PERSPECTIVES WE HAVE AT ICC REGARDING MISSIONS

1. THE GREAT COMMISSION IS A COMMAND NOT A CALLING

“All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given unto me. Therefore, go into ALL THE WORLD and preach the gospel...”

- Australia is part of that WORLD, and thus, we firmly believe that we can do ‘missions’ in our own backyard! Accordingly, a portion of our missions giving will go to the spreading of the GOSPEL locally as well as internationally. (See below for some of our local missions initiatives).
- Jesus said, “white are the fields and ready for harvest.” In saying this Jesus was referring to the Samaritans, who wore white garments/ robes and were approaching him. The harvest is ready! Hence, we must lift up our eyes and see the harvest fields around us.
- A key part of this is the MULTICULTURAL VISION of our church – we see PEOPLE GROUPS from DIFFERENT NATIONS. Accordingly, at ICC we want to raise up key ethnic leaders who are fully committed to the vision and will partner with our church to reach out to people of various ethnic backgrounds locally and internationally.

2. SPIRIT EMPOWERED & LED

- We want to be obedient to the Holy Spirit in sending and giving resources (including human and financial resources). We want doors to be opened by

the Holy Spirit – as we understand God has HIS timing for certain people groups and works in communities and nations.

- Accordingly, we will *not* support any and every mission activity that comes to our attention, but rather, the Vision team and ministry leaders will do so prayerfully, listening to the direction of the Holy Spirit concerning our church's role in partnering with Him to accomplish *His* plans.
- We understand that the Holy Spirit will provide His guidance by revealing His plan particularly through the prophetic. Hence, we respect and will weigh prophecies given by recognized prophets who have integrity and are recommended and recognized by other church leaders.

### 3. APOSTOLIC & PROPHETIC

- We recognize that God often raises up a key visionary or person who is anointed by God to spearhead and start works in certain regions or communities. Such people have the ability to have great impact often in a relatively short amount of time. For example, the apostle Paul was able to go into cities in certain regions and plant churches and develop them to greater maturity. It is easy to recognize certain apostles who have planted hundreds of churches around the world, but there may also be leaders in the other sections of society that also have an apostolic type of anointing. For example, a business leader in the corporate world.
- We also recognize the importance of raising up leaders in the **seven mountains** (Religion, Education, Media, Arts & Entertainment, Business, Government) who can bring the light of the gospel and the influence of the Holy Spirit into these fields. A fundamental strategy for taking a mountain is consistent and united prayer (e.g. the prophet Daniel prayed three times a day and rose to become a key leader in charge of the Babylonian World Empire through faithful service and signs and wonders).
- We recognize the apostolic and prophetic anointing on our visionary leaders and want to fully support their missionary and church planting endeavors.
- We also recognize that as an apostolic and prophetic church, we can commission and send out workers into new harvest fields. Hence, we have a preference for homegrown leaders, who are sons and daughters of the house, who have displayed leadership and loyalty towards ICC. We believe in sending out homegrown leaders who have been equipped and anointed for such a time and work.

#### 4. NATURE AND SCOPE OF MISSIONS

- Jesus said in Matthew 25 'I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' We seek to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, welcome the lonely, clothe the unclothed, care for the sick and visit the prisoners. Jesus' number one priority was others, and it is also ours.
- Through the generous missions giving of our church we want to support a variety of missions projects locally and around the world. The heart and passion of ICC is to see non-Christians all over the world become totally committed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our first priority is to see Jesus' last command, "to make disciples of all nations", fulfilled.

#### 5. MAKING SURE THE MONEY GETS TO WHOM & WHERE IT'S NEEDED!

- This weighs heavily on our hearts. As stewards of God's house we want to ensure that the money is spent wisely. This means our missions works and giving must be Holy Spirit inspired and directed. Accordingly, we don't want to spend money on airfares when it's not necessary for someone to go. For example, we would rather spend the money to support a local worker in the mission field (e.g. a pastor) than sending five of our church members there on a short term mission trip which may not achieve much. However, we also recognize that it is necessary to send ICC leaders to meet the key leaders on the mission field to ensure that the work is being done and that it is bearing FRUIT!

#### 6. GATE KEEPERS (COUNTRY COORDINATORS)

- One of our key strategies to help ensure that works are progressing well is for us to link with a gatekeeper – who is a person who knows or has networks of churches and works in a particular country or region. These would be our foreign representatives that can help supervise and oversee the works that are going on in that country or region. For example the gate keeper might help us to coordinate and arrange an itinerary for our mission teams after identifying the need in that local community of region. The gatekeeper would also help in allocating and dispersing missions funds to key leaders and churches that need the money in foreign works.
- Gate keepers would be good networkers and have an apostolic style ministry and mandate.

- We hope that such gate keepers can come from our own house – for example they may be migrants to Australia who have a heart for their nation. In time they may return to their nation and start connect groups or plant churches.

## 7. MAIN AREAS OF FOCUS:

- We will care primarily for widows and orphans (the disadvantaged children and women)
- We will care for the foreigner in our land – including refugees, students and migrants.
- We will target missions works towards unreached people groups particularly in the 10/40 window (among the Muslim countries)

### DIVERSITY OF MISSION

- Apostolic mission – (iLink)\*
- Bringing Short term missions
- Church planting
- Disaster relief
- Engaging our local communities e.g. through MCC
- Funding sustainable mercy projects e.g. orphanages

### APOSTOLIC MISSION-ILINK – IMPACT LEADERS TO IMPACT NATIONS FOR THE KINGDOM

- Our aim is to promote and assist church growth in nations by motivating, encouraging and equipping pastors, in various nations by providing inspirational conferences, retreats and leadership training and development programs.
- In particular we propose to help leaders and pastors from smaller churches to work together and to help facilitate the connect cell system in such churches.
- It is envisaged that we will send experienced leaders from ICC to help train such leaders and ministry teams, while also sponsoring pastors to attend such training programs and retreats by paying for the food and accommodation to and from the program.
- Our pastors have already begun networking with local pastors in various countries and regions to further the spread of the gospel.
- We also seek to equip and train more overseas and local leaders and pastors by sponsoring and offering scholarships through the International Christian College (a.k.a. the Asian Pacific Institute, ICC's government - accredited training

college). ICC has helped train dozens of pastors and church leaders over the last 15 years through the bible college, primarily by sponsoring and offering highly - discounted fees and scholarships to students, as well as covering other operational costs and lecturer's fees.

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#### BRINGING SHORT TERM MISSION

- Every year the church mobilized a number of short term mission trips e.g. medical mission trip to Philippines, youth mission trip to India, etc.
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#### CHURCH PLANTING:

- All the money we try to raise for Missions must not blind us to the fact that the message of the gospel must go forth more powerfully. This is why equipping the ministers, and church-planting are so urgent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Starting in Australia, we aim to plant a variety of churches in nations that are represented by ICC members. These churches may range from connect groups in homes to missional-marketplace churches in workplaces to community centres. Such works may start through community, educational and life development programs (i.e. Life coaching and or language centers).
- It will also include church planting in the traditional sense – where churches with Sunday services are planted in particular localities. In the past we have inspired, initiated and assisted in church plants around Brisbane, as well as overseas in Singapore (the Harvest Force Church) and Hong Kong (ICC).
- We hope to partner with existing local churches and support key nationals who already know the language and customs in order to plant such works. These nationals may come from ICC (i.e. students who studied in Brisbane and who are now returning to the home country), or they may be locals in that country who have studied at bible college or come highly recommended from their local churches.
- It is envisaged that we would provide support by paying the salary of the pastor or ministry worker for a period of one year with an option for an additional year after that. It is hoped that the work would then be self-sustaining and be able to stand on its own feet and develop further by planting other works.
- We would also work closely with gate keepers / networkers in those countries.

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## DISASTER RELIEF

We also raise fund for disaster relief includes

- Tsunamis, bush fires, earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters that occur locally and globally.
- We have given funds to help Christian organizations provide emergency and rebuilding efforts after the 2006 Boxing Day Tsunami (Sri Lanka), the Japanese earthquake, Brisbane flood 2011, Pakistan floods.
- Our focus will be on funding Christian Aid agencies and helping local churches in these disaster areas.

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## ENGAGING OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

- Our focus is NOT just on international/global missions. We believe we can impact the world's best by starting to impact our own local community and city. As part of our multicultural vision we believe God has brought the nations to our own backyard.
- We want all our ICC members to understand the 'WHY' of missions and partner with ICC to reach out to friends, neighbors and people in our city from all walks of life – including neighbors, refugees, migrants, students and the disadvantaged. It is a command not a calling.
- Although we aim to enlarge and grow as a church, we don't simply want to be a mega-church that keeps buying and upgrading to a larger church building to house our growing congregation in one locality. Instead, once we have reached a critical mass (e.g. 1500 congregation size), we aim to start church planting through multi-site campuses around the city, thus accommodating greater growth and having a healthy church which has a strong community and family feel.
- We want to reach out to the lost children of God in our city through:

### General Church:

Connect groups - BBC

Outreach events

Multicultural festivals (e.g. Chinese New year & Mid autumn festivals)

Special Sunday Services of Honour (e.g. Mothers & Fathers Day)

Easter & Christmas evangelistic services/ dramas/ variety nights

WISH Conference + Relationship Seminars/ Courses

Outreach program to community – using Online websites – IN YOUR WORLD (testimony - based online outreach)

Visits to rehabilitation centers/ schools

## MCC – courses & programs

Refugee re-settlement  
Church members' involvement in other programs  
MCC volunteer register  
Aged care/ seniors' programs  
Nursing home programs

## Youth & Young Adults:

Student Alpha  
School visits/ Chaplaincy  
Club ICC market days and events/ activities  
Youth camps  
Uni connect groups

## Kids & Seniors

Weekly Mother's groups  
Kids playgroups  
VBS – Vacation Kids Programs  
Parenting Seminars & Courses  
Visits to nursing homes

## Marketplace:

Workplace and Marriage Alpha  
Life coaching/ business mentoring  
Language centers

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## FUNDING MERCY PROJECTS

Jesus said, "I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me." In India alone there are 25 million orphans who have no one to care for them, feed them, or educate them. Jesus said, "I was hungry and you fed me." We want to do more than just feeding these children, we want to give them an education, and help them grow in Christ.

Over the past 22 years as part of direct giving as well as our contribution to the AOG WORLD MISSIONS – we have been indirectly involved in all of these areas.

1. | 'I was hungry, I was thirsty'
  - Basic needs - food, water, shelter - feeding programs for the hungry. (e.g. Nicaragua)
  - Clean water projects (e.g. in Sri Lanka after the 2006 Tsunami)

## 2. 'I was a stranger'

- refugee resettlement
- Refugees & Migrants (e.g. The work of the Multicultural Community Centre)

## 3. 'I was sick...'

- Medical missions – from surgical teams who can conduct operations (plastic surgery/ burns – general surgery etc..) to medical mission teams – involving GP's & dentists providing very basic medical care in poor villages. The preaching of the gospel must be linked with this.

## 4. 'I was in prison...'

- Prison ministries
- Rescue those from prostitution and the sex trade
- Addictions (Drugs & Alcohol) – HIV/AIDS homes, Orphans & Children affected by AIDS or who have lost a parent to HIV/AIDS.

## 5. 'I was naked'

- Feed, house, clothe and educate children (complete, life transforming care)
- Orphanages & Mercy homes (e.g. projects to house and clothe children in Malaysia, North Korea and India). Examples: Kenya- This year we have sowed into the work of Dr James and Lucy Kiyapi (Lucy attended our church from early 2002) who run feeding programs for street kids and provide scholarships for disadvantaged students to help them through their entire high school education. In a nation which has been impacted by the AIDS epidemic many orphan children do not have a chance to receive a proper education and many orphaned girls are raped and forced onto the streets. We want to continue to provide education and help house young single mums to get off the streets.

FUNDRAISING:

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MAJOR INITIATIVES:

- **Heart for the Nation Giving:**
  - Every year we want to challenge every man, woman and child in ICC to make a faith promise to raise, save and sacrificially give an amount they have decided in their heart to missions.
  - It is hoped that every year each person will be so inspired and motivated to increase this amount that they give to missions.
  - We envisage to be giving over one million dollars to international & local missions by the year 2020.

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SECONDARY INITIATIVES:

- ***Special Collections:***
  - On certain Sundays of the year we may highlight certain missions projects and collect special offerings accordingly.
- ***Connect Group Special projects***
  - Child sponsorship (e.g. Dr Colleen Reddit's work in Chennai, India).
  - Raising funds for medical operations
- ***Fundraising activities & programs***
  - e.g. Youth group activities – car washes, chocolate drives etc...
  - ICC Kids offerings and fundraising – e.g. bible memory verses
  - Selling ICC resources such as books, sermon and music CD's and DVD's.
- **Other Miscellaneous**



# CONNECT GROUP STRUCTURE, LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## CONNECT GROUP STRUCTURE

### ICC OVERALL STRUCTURE

#### **ICC has three major structures:**

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#### THE GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE:

Government is ordained by God. Lack of government gives rise to anarchy.

The Governmental structure of ICC consists of the Board and the sub-committees. The function of the board is to guide and guard the church and its operation according to spiritual, legal, ethical and corporate requirements. Sub-committees are there to assist the Board members (they are not a decision making body). At present there are five sub-committees: Legal, audit and finance, staff and remuneration (HR), vision team and finally marketing/fund raising. Sub-committee members are people who are trained in their particular fields.

The present board members are, Ps Jonathan Mok, Ps Jeannie Mok, Ps Faith Leong, Cary Gan, Ademola and David Teoh.

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#### THE VISIONARY STRUCTURE

Without a visionary structure, anyone, anyhow, anywhere will do at anytime.

The function of the vision team is to provide spiritual and strategic direction in accordance to the vision of the church as cast by the Senior Minister. The team members are mature partners in ICC and consist of pastors and ministry leaders. The Vision Team members are also involved in leading and serving in an area of ministry in ICC. For example, the current vision team members are: Ps Jonathan Mok, Ps Faith Leong, Ps Olivia Teoh (Pastoral), Michael Chong (Youth & Catalyst), Dr Julian Mok, David Tan (Creative Arts), Dr Dominic Eu (Connect Groups & Missions), Dr Matt Bambling (Pastoral Care).

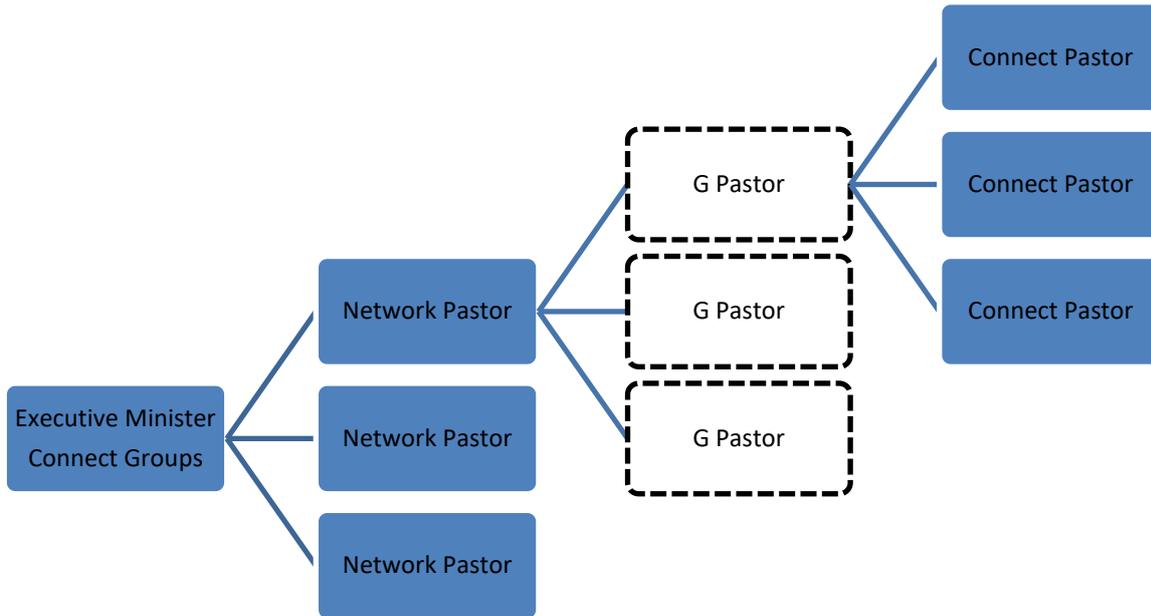
The Vision Team is also in constant consultation with the founding ministers for counsel and advice for major decisions. The senior minister as the leader of the Vision Team from time to time seeks input and advice from external five-fold, apostolic leaders who are in relationship with ICC. These leaders are recognised apostles and have led significant ministries and churches (e.g. Ps Roland Seow FGA Melbourne, Ps Danny Guglielmucci, EDGE Church Adelaide, Ps Mike Knott- ELIM New Zealand).

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## THE GROWTH STRUCTURE

Growth is natural because life is encoded with the growth factor. Healthy growth is the result of healthy life.

The connect group structure of ICC falls under the growth structure. Under the growth structure there is no “hierarchy” – all leaders will be called Connect Pastors as opposed to the FIVE-FOLD MINISTER



Connect groups are organised relationally. The Executive Minister for connect groups oversees several Network pastors who in turn look after several connect pastors. As the network grows, it may be necessary to add in another layer of leaders so that the span of care remains at 1:3 at all times.

Connect pastors, connect hosts and connect facilitators

There are three different level of connect leadership in a connect group

Connect Pastor	The one who provide strategic leadership and pastoral guidance to the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cast vision for the group</li> <li>• Provide strategic leadership to the group</li> <li>• Provide pastoral guidance to the group members (refer to G pastor for more critical issues)</li> </ul>
Connect Host	The one who facilitate and coordinates the group meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send email reminders</li> <li>• Roster people for different duties e.g. refreshments, worship, etc</li> <li>• Responsible for ensuring a good atmosphere for the meeting eg. Set up, welcome, etc</li> <li>• Keep up with those who miss the meeting</li> </ul>
Connect Facilitator	The one who are skilled to lead the discussions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for leading discussion and coaching others to lead discussion</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

In some connect group, one person can play all three roles. In other connect groups, there may be multiple people playing the different roles.

## WHAT IS A CONNECT GROUP?

Connect groups are small groups of people that meet regularly at home or other places in an informal environment. We have many different types of connect groups: Some are geographically based, some are language based. There are also connect groups for young professionals, young families, etc.

The word *CONNECT* stands for community outreaching of nations networking, equipping a core of three.

### Community outreaching Nations

God has designed us to live in community. We need God and we need one another. In the book of Hebrews, we are told to “not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing” but to continue meeting so that we can encourage and “spur one another on towards love and good deeds.” Connect group is the place where we can experience genuine friendship, unselfish loving, practical serving and all the “one another” commands in the Bible.

Community outreaching Nations speaks of our multicultural vision. We desire to see many nations being incorporated into our community.

### Networking

The connect group is not just a social group. We must continue to network by building relational bridges with those who do not know Christ. We share the Good News of Jesus Christ as we know He is the answer to the world.

### Equipping

Our dream is to turn multitudes into ministers. We are created to be contributors. God has given each believer a special gift. It is our responsibility to discover and exercise those gifts to bless others. In the meantime, by fulfilling those roles that God designed for you, you will discover great joy and satisfaction. Connect group is a good place to be equipped in the word of God as well as in character and competence for the ministry that God has for you.

### Core of three

In a connect group, it is difficult to disciple the members one on one. The core of three is a buddy system where two or three (maximum) can form a little group to provide accountability and support to each other during and outside connect group. It will also facilitate the development of closer friendship in a smaller group setting. The core of three should be from among the same gender and the accountability and relationship should be formed within the parameter of the connect group.

## LEADERSHIP STANDARD

In any local church it is important that there are some protective mechanisms in place to ensure that people are well cared for and being influenced in a positive way. For this reason, ICC has in place the following objective leadership standards with which any person occupying the privileged position of leadership in the Church needs to comply.

Being in leadership means being in a position of influence – that influence will either be positive or negative, depending on the quality of our lives. This is why Paul emphasized so strongly to his young leaders that they each needed to be an example to of the believers in every area of their lives.

The expectations for connect pastors are:

- All leaders need to be committed members (partners) of the church and are expected to fulfil the ongoing requirements of partnership, which include maintaining their own devotional life, weekly Celebration attendance (including prayer meetings), and regular giving of tithes and offerings.
- All leaders meet the character requirements for church leaders in I Tim 3.
- All leaders must be loyal to the Senior Pastor and his short and long-term visions.
- All leaders are to be an example in interpersonal relationships by treating people with gentleness and respect. In the event of conflict, resolution should be sought as soon as possible in an attitude of humility
- All leaders should protect and guard the unity of the Spirit in the church. If there are concerns involving any leader of the church (decisions made or action taken), these should be addressed quickly with those directly concerned so as to avoid allowing murmuring or gossip to undermine the unity of the church.
- All leaders Must attend the monthly connect discipleship meetings, Heart and Soul nights, as well as the annual Vision Day and Synergy conference
- In view of our standing in the local community, all leaders need to be willing to undergo a police criminal record check and any other checks (such as a Working with Children Check), agree to abide by the Code of Conduct, as well as other checks the church deems necessary for their area of involvement
- Leaders may in the course of participating in the life and ministry of ICC have access to information of a private and confidential nature. Information of this nature includes financial, emotional, physical and social information of members of our congregation and information relating to operations of our church. All Leaders will take reasonable precautions to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of any such information and not permit such information to be used for purposes other than ICC purposes.

### Special notes for Connect Pastors who are unmarried

Sex before marriage is an affront to God. The word of God advises that “there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality or any kind of impurity...” (Eph 5:3). As leaders we are held accountable to a higher standard of conduct. For unmarried connect pastors, it is our advice that you choose not to live in the same house as your boyfriend or girlfriend. We understand that in some circumstances, this might not be financially viable. It is permissible (though not preferable) to be living in a shared house (with other housemates) in SEPARATE rooms with your boyfriend or girlfriend.

We recognise that complying with these standards may require some lifestyle adjustments for some individuals. Impacting one life for eternity is worth any lifestyle sacrifice that leaders may have to make.

Our desire is not to become Pharisees who focus only on external conformity and who develop an attitude of superiority by looking down on those who have different standards. We want to simply be an example and not give any reason for causing someone to stumble, especially young people and new believers. Where people are disobeying the absolutes of God’s Word, we must lovingly confront them. Where there are differences over non-essential issues, we must graciously accept one another and allow people’s consciences to dictate their own decisions.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**A Connect Pastor** has three major roles and responsibilities:

**a. Leader-the key word is alignment**

- Heb 13:17-Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you”.
- The connect pastor should trumpet the vision established by the Senior Pastor and articulated by the Vision Team.
- Should fully understand and serve the vision of the church
- The connect pastor should provide direction to the connect within the parameter of the vision of the church.
- Strategize for growth and multiplication in consultation with the G-pastor.
- Identify and train potential connect assistants in preparation for multiplication
- Lead the weekly connect meetings
- Provide an outward focus for the group through reaching out to new people, praying for unbelievers

**b. Shepherd-the key word is Discipleship**

- Be shepherd of God’s flock. 1 Pet 5:2
- Build relationships in the connect group by loving people and caring for their well being
- Disciple the members in the connect groups. Intentionally bring each person through the discipleship pathway
- Minister to specific pastoral issues, refer on to Network/G-pastor if necessary
- Work with pastoral team to assimilate new members into connect group. Contact the names given within the time frame specified. Invite the person to connect group.

**c. Manager-the key word is empowerment**

- Empower the people in the connect group to be effective servants of God
- Disseminate information e.g. co-coordinating instructions for church wide projects and harvest events.
- Practical organization e.g. time and place of meetings, duty rosters, etc.
- Write weekly connect group reports to the designated person.
- Be proactive in communicating with the church office e.g. providing numbers for Senior Minister’s Dinner, functions, etc.
- Build team ministry in the connect group by encouraging participation and through delegation.

Some Important Points to remember:

- Always guard your connect group members against wandering into false teaching.
- Prayer is an essential ingredient of your connect group. Pray for the people in your connect group regularly.
- Refer any difficult counselling cases to your Network Pastor.
- Be sensitive to the length of connect group meetings and attempt to keep them to about 1½ to 2 hours. Meetings that are too long can drain people and discourage some from attending in future.
- Aim to start meetings on time, so those who come early will feel it was worth their effort.
- Be sensitive not to overtax the host's homes and make sure the host gets plenty of help before and after the meeting.
- Make sure children are sufficiently supervised during the connect group meetings. Be free to consult the Children's Pastor for additional resources.
- Have an 'empty chair' during each meeting and attempt to get your connect group members to fill the empty chair with a visitor for the following meeting.
- Avoid running the connect group meeting like another Sunday Celebration meeting. Generally have no more than 3 songs. Remember that the connect group is not a place for preaching, but for interaction and discussion.
- Ensure that the fortnight connect reports are submitted promptly
- Obtain permission from your Network/G Pastor before inviting an outside speaker.
- Obtain the approval from your Network/G Pastor **before** confirming any connect group weekend retreats.
- Avoid meeting whilst another major Celebration Event is being held by ICC Church e.g. Sunday AM meetings or special church events.
- We encourage that you use material provided by the church. Permission should be obtained from your Network/G Pastor for use of any other teaching material or videos.

# CONNECTGROUP MEETING FORMAT

## TWO KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE CONNECT GROUP

With any pursuit, unless we are clear about what we are trying to achieve we will become aimless, unproductive, without purpose and direction. If we state our objectives and clarify our desired outcomes then everything we plan and do is evaluated on that basis. If a particular activity or ideal fails to contribute to one of the stated outcomes then it should be discarded.

In ICC, we have two key objectives for our connect groups:

- a. Evangelism
- b. Edification

## PLANNING AND PREPARING FOR A CONNECT GROUP MEETING

The success of the connect group meeting will be largely attributed to the planning carried out prior to the gathering itself.

The meeting planner provided here uses the acronym P.L.A.N. which stands for

- P**oint—what are you trying to achieve?
- L**ogistics—what requires attention to create a focused, distraction free environment?
- A**ctivities—what will we do i.e task, study, etc?
- N**eeds—what needs exist and which will require prayer and attention?

## PROFILE OF A TYPICAL MEETING

Connect groups work because they are not just meetings. They encompass a relational environment through which ministry naturally operates. The connect group meeting is just one component of the entire connect group ministry. The flow of connect group meeting should fall naturally and should reflect a sincere relationship between the connect group members. The key to a successful meeting is not structure, but LIFE. Therefore, the following material should be used as a guideline to provide direction and structure.

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### WELCOME/ICEBREAKERS

- Ice breakers are *not* a game.

- They are activities that help people take the focus off themselves, so they will feel at ease with one another.
- They may require each person to say something on a pre-determined topic; or small groups of twos or threes may be required to accomplish a task in a limited time.
- They bring everyone in the connect group to a common focus.
- They help bind people together, usually on a superficial level – and that is what it is *supposed* to achieve.
- Do not expect too much from icebreakers.
- As the name suggests, they only break the initial reticence of everyone present.
- Some connect pastors mistakenly feel that icebreakers are a waste of time. No, they are not!
- They are extremely valuable for connect groups where people are beginning to know each other, as well as for connect groups that have been together for a long time.
- They are only TOOLS to help members of a connect group take the first step to enter into each other's lives after being absent from one another for several days.
- They are to *focus* the group as it meets. Icebreakers are able to achieve this vital step. Use icebreakers in EVERY MEETING!

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## SAMPLE ICEBREAKERS

1. If Jesus was coming to your home for supper, what very recent happening in your life would you like to thank Him for?
2. What are three of your favourite activities?
3. What is your favourite time of the day, and why?
4. You are at a friend's house and you find a dead bug in your salad. What would you do?
5. What is the best thing for you to do when you feel yourself becoming angry?
6. Describe yourself in four words.
7. What is your favourite junk food?
8. If you had to move and could only take three things, what would they be?
9. What was the best advice you have ever received?
10. If you could do anything you wanted to do, what would you do?
11. If money were no object, what fun thing would you most like to do?
12. What was the most significant thing that happened to you last week?
13. How did God bless you last week?
14. Share one of your strengths.
15. What is the best gift you received as a child?
16. What would you do if you could take a day off work this week?
17. Name a vehicle that best describes you and explain why?
18. Does your name have a special meaning? Were you named after someone special?
19. What is the best compliment you have ever received?
20. Who was the most interesting person who ever visited you or your family?
21. What is the one thing you like about your life?
22. If someone were to ask you a question guaranteed to get you talking, what would that question be?
23. What was the first trip you remember taking with your family and what do you most remember about it?
24. Whom do you respect the most?
25. Have you ever wanted to trade lives with another person? With whom?
26. What are three of your favourite activities?
27. What was your funniest dream?
28. What animal best describes your personality?
29. What ability do you possess that you like the most?
30. Describe your favourite family pet from anytime in your life?
31. What would be your ideal holiday?
32. If your electricity went out for a week, what would you miss the most?
33. Which animal best describes your mood right now?
34. What are the three things you would most like to accomplish this year?
35. If you were to take a 10-day trip in a car with your family or friends, what would they most likely hear you complain about?
36. If God put you completely in charge of creating heaven, what would it be like?
37. If you didn't have to worry about making a living, what would you most like to do for the rest of your life?
38. What is the one thing you never did in high school that you wish you had done?
39. If you could live in any other time period, past or future, what period would you choose? Why?
40. If you knew that tomorrow would be the last full day of your life, how would you spend the day?
41. How would you describe yourself (without mentioning anything about what you do for a living)?

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WORSHIP-REACHING OUT TO GOD

“Speak to one another with Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph 5:19-20). Ways of doing this:

- With a few songs
- Read a Psalm aloud in unison or let each person read a verse in turn
- Ask for a period of silence for one minute; encourage members to consider ways God has comforted them in past situations
- Close in a prayer of thanksgiving for Christ’s presence within the group
- Whether by youtube, dvd or live, worship should be planned carefully

Refer to appendix for further advise on how to lead worship in connect groups.

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WORD-EDIFICATION

“Let the Word of God dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God” (Col 3:16)

In ICC, we based the Bible discussion on the sermon notes which is available for download on the ICC website under connect group updates. Remember the person who leads the Bible discussion is meant to be a facilitator not a preacher.

The goal of connect group discussion is “life transformation”  
 “To teach is to create a space where obedience to truth can be practiced.”  
 Parker Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known*

**TRUTH**  **→ LIFE**  
**When groups land on one end of the continuum, the results can be destructive.**

Truth Focused Group	Life Focused Group
Know the answers to the questions	Knows the answers to their problems
Focus on information: what does it mean?	Focus on introspection: How do I feel?
Reward members for being right	Reward members for being real
Community is built on the principle of agreement	Community is built on the principle of acceptance
The goal is a well-informed student	The goal is a well-understood self

The place where truth meets life is called love. We want our connect groups to be love-focused group.

Love-focused Groups
Knows the truth about God and Me Focus on transformation: how am I becoming like Christ Reward members for being honest with God and others Community built on the principle of authenticity The goal is a well-ordered heart

*“Research tells us that people remember far more of what they say than what they hear, and far more of what they discover for themselves than what they are spoon-fed. Hence, a question that sparks discovery and gets people to say out loud what they know is an essential tool in teaching.”*

Question and Answer: Dialogue is the best way to learn.

Some key points to remember:

- Questioning: ask open ended questions rather than closed questions. Keep it simple. Don't ask multiple, technical or complicated questions.
- Listening. Physically and emotionally focus on the person who is talking. Convey your interest and intention to listen. Face the person to whom you are listening; lean forward if you are sitting, relax and maintain good eye contact. Use brief phrases like “yes, really?” and “how interesting” to show the speaker you are attentive. Listening is a real art, and just as important to effective communication as speaking.
- Seeking information and opinions. Use questions with members who have not spoken recently, and those who have good ideas or opinions. The use of first name is important. Examples: “Mary, what do you think about the second question?” “Joe, I'd be interested in your opinion on this subject.”
- Clarifying. Misunderstanding can arise when we assume we understand a speaker's meaning. When the meaning is unclear, ask a question for clarification. Examples: “I am not sure what you meant? Can you restate that?” “Could you repeat that and say a little more about what you mean?” Clarification is complimentary, as it shows the speaker you are listening and attentive.
- Paraphrasing. A listener restating a speaker's thought or idea in his own words demonstrates careful listening and concern. Examples: “This is what I heard you saying...is that it?” “Mark, your central concern is...” “David, your reactions seem to be...”
- Justifying. This involves asking people to give reason for what they have said, and should be done in a positive, non-argumentative way. Justifying helps a group stay on a subject. Examples: “Where do you find that in the passage that we're studying?” “Why do you say that?” “What is the connection between what we are discussing and your comment?”
- Re-directing. When a group member continues to address all his questions and comments to the leaders rather than to the group, use re-directing. Use names, encourage members to talk with each other. If Mary continues to focus on the leader, the leader might respond to her question, “Tom, what do you think about Mary's last question?” “How would you answer that Tom?”
- Extending. This involves adding to or expanding a line of thought in a discussion. After an answer is given, or a comment made, the leader might ask, “Does anyone have anything to add to what has been said?” or, “Is there anything else someone would like to comment on at this point?”

- Summarizing. At various points in a group discussion, it is helpful to briefly summarize and highlight what has been previously said. This technique works effectively when a group gets bogged down, since it outlines where the discussion has been and should be going. The leader should summarize carefully, not omitting the group members' names and ideas.
- Affirming. It is always important to recognize and affirm the person who is talking. To one you might say, "Thank you for your comment."
- Being concrete and personal. Use "I" messages instead of "you" messages. Communication improves when members take responsibilities for their own ideas or feelings, using the personal pronoun "I". To say "I feel" or "I think" is much more direct and helpful than "some people think" or "some believe".
- Being personally implicated. When a discussion seems too general, vague or abstract, a "personal implication question" helps to keep the conversation more direct and specific. Examples; 'what is your opinion about that?' "How would what you are talking about affect you personally?" "have you ever struggled with this issue yourself?" "Sometimes we are abstract when discussing Scripture; how does it affect you day to day?" "How does this scripture affect my daily life?"
- Handling talkative and silent members. Excessive talkative members can be handled through the proper use of group dynamics, nonverbal communication, and the seating arrangement. Eye contact is important; the leader should break eye contact with the talkative person (sit beside him and not across from him), and maintain consistent eye contact with a silent member (sit opposite him). When the talkative person pauses in the middle of a lengthy speech, the leader should break in and say, "I like to hear from someone who has not spoken yet" The leader might direct a question to a silent member; "Jim, what do you think is meant in verse 2?" Problems can cause people to talk too much, so try to visit this person after the study. Ask him to observe the next two connect studies and determine who is contributing and who is not.

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## WORK

"But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth"

Jesus knew that the tendency of his followers would be to stay in Jerusalem and minister there. He wanted his followers to minister both in Jerusalem and outside as well. In the same way, we want our connect members to have their needs met, and we also want them to be empowered to extend the Kingdom of God outside the connect meeting. During the 'work' part of the meeting, we strive to keep the balance between ministering to our group and focusing on the Great Commission to reach the lost with the Gospel.

### I. WORK WITHIN-MINISTRY TO THE GROUP MEMBERS

After the discussion, allow time for ministry. Getting the connect members to minister to each other and to encourage one another is essential. It is good sometimes to break into smaller group and pray for each other. Be sensitive as people share their heart and needs.

## II. WORK WITHOUT-FOCUS ON OUTREACH

Pray for unsaved friends and relatives. Briefly share the vision of the connect group as well as the vision of ICC and update on upcoming outreach events.

- I. Spiritual Preparation
  - Be a worshipper yourself!
  - Live in the word
  - Have the right attitudes
  - Prayer
  
- II. Ask three questions
  - Where is the place I'm leading people with each song?
  - What happens in my spirit at the end of each song?
  - Where would the people be by the end of each song?
  
- III. Choosing a song list

DO NOT ASK PEOPLE TO CHOOSE SONG RANDOMLY

  - Choose a theme
    - Celebration
    - Warfare
    - Evangelistic
    - Unity
    - Adoration
    - Healing
  
  - Build a repertoire
  - Focus—man-ward vs God-ward
  - Use of keys
    - Choose keys that are close together; C-D
    - Choose relative keys: A-D
    - Modulation of keys-Transpose up and down
  
  - General guidelines
    - Avoid switching abruptly
    - Avoid abrupt rhythm switches
    - It's easier to flow from fast to slow
    - Provide smooth transitions between fast and slow songs
    - Rehearse and sing through your song list
    - Use transition songs
  
  - Teaching new songs
    - Introduce new songs at an appropriate time
    - Beware when using an old song—the group may not know it
    - Do not introduce more than one new song
    - Ensure that the lyrics are available
  
  - Common mistakes
    - Leaving people standing too long
    - Singing too many songs

- Singing too long
- Trying to teach too many songs
- Talking too much
- Poor key selection
- Not supplying lyrics/words
- Drawing attention to SELF
  
- Some Do's and Don'ts
  - Don't introduce every song
  - Do be enthusiastic
  - Avoid endless repetition
  - Do be definite
  - Don't drive or rebuke the people
  - Don't preach to teach
  - Do be flexible
  - Do provide explanations for newcomers
  - Know your main songs
  - You don't have to sing every song you've planned
  - Don't stop after each song
  - Keep the music flowing
  - Don't be afraid of silence but don't pause too long

# PASTORAL CARE

In ICC, we want to care for our members to enable them to experience the abundant life in Christ.

### **Different level of care in ICC**

#### Continuum of care

1. Believers caring for one another - Believers are exhorted to love another. At times this will take the form of encouraging one another, allowing another person to vent anxieties in a safe and caring environment, providing friendship and practical assistance in times of needs. No training is needed for this.
2. Pastoral Care (Primary Care) - Pastoral care at this level including a broad range of helping acts including listening, supporting, comforting, being a friend, nurturing, feeding, leading, praying and providing practical assistance. General training in the skills of active listening, empathy, providing appropriate scriptures, etc is helpful for people at this level. Awareness of own self-limitation and knowing how to refer on is essential. Connect Pastors generally function at this level.
3. Pastoral Counselling/Spiritual Direction (Specific guidance or critical care) - Pastoral counselling involves more depth. Its aim to assist a person to work through a specific problem that is causing them difficulty. These problems may include: marital issues, addictive behaviour, anger management, etc. While the same micro skills such as active listening, empathy and guiding are needed, this process involves a higher level of skills, life experience and knowledge of the scriptures. This level of care is provided by the pastoral staff or those selected and trained through the pastoral care ministry.
4. Professional Counselling  
Professional counselling is required for certain people where the problems may be serious, entrenched and require more time and commitment to work through the issue. Counselling and professional therapies are generally highly structured process, where the focus is to assist the clients to work through those issues and areas that impede their adequate functioning. This type of help requires the knowledge and understanding of counselling theories and practices.

The higher the level, the narrower the focus and depth of care/client issues and the higher in terms of time and commitment, skill, knowledge and training, as well as the intimacy, vulnerability and risk.



One of the key roles of the connect pastor is to provide primary care for the connect group members. Primary care refers to the day to day caring for the members. It is distinguished from critical care when there is a crisis or a pastoral issue that is beyond your ability to handle e.g. suicide, substance abuse, marriage break up, etc.

## LIFE COACHING

We also provide life coaching to our leaders and members. Life coaching differs from pastoral care in that life coaching is developmental while pastoral care tends to be remedial (when problems already occurred). Life coaching can help you to build awareness of your personality, how to listen to God for life transformation (journaling), etc.

## BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR SHEPHERDING

### BIBLICAL REFERENCE TO SHEPHERDING:

- Jesus was a true shepherd (1 Pet 5:4, John 10). Really, the sheep are not ours but God's.
- God separated some people out to be shepherds of the church .  
Acts 20:28 "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood."
- The minister appoints connect pastors to look after the connect groups. Just as Moses appointed leaders for the smaller groups according to the levels. (Ex 18:25)

## 1. Why do there have to be Shepherds?

- Sheep need a leader. Num 27:15-19
- Sheep will suffer. Zech 10:2
- Sheep will wander. 1 King 22:17, Eze 34:4-6
- God gave us shepherds. Jer 3:15

### SHEPHERD LEADER

As a shepherd-leader, your primary focus is **relationship**. Forming an authentic relationship is the first step to intentionally care for your connect group members. People want to be built into, cared for and loved. They first want a shepherd who feeds them rather than a supervisor who leads them. Their primarily want a shepherd who cares for them, who seeks to understand them—their personal walk with God, their family life, their relationship to the church. One who helps them discern next steps of personal spiritual growth or how to fulfill their potential in the Lord Jesus, the ultimate shepherd gave us an example when he says: “I know my sheep and my sheep know me”

A tender, compassionate heart is a key facet of intentional shepherding. God described his heart for shepherding in Eze 34. Key responsibilities of a shepherd are:

- To strengthen the weak
- To heal the sick
- To bind up the injured
- To bring back the stray
- To search for the lost

The Bible distinguished between a true shepherd and a hired hand

SHEPHERD	HIRED HAND
Cares to the point of sacrifice	Quits when it gets tough
Knows sheep personally	Know sheep as a flock
Intimate relationship with God	In it for personal advancement
Heart for the sheep	Just doing the job

## THINGS TO TAKE NOTE IN PASTORING YOUR PEOPLE

1. Pastoring people can be hard work but it is also rewarding. Peter tells us, “And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away” (1 Peter 5:4). Get ready to embark upon the greatest adventure of your life, one with eternal rewards.
2. At some point in your journey as a connect pastor, you will encounter pain, loss, disappointment. Therefore, it is so important to keep up your own spiritual growth so that you continue to receive the grace that is all sufficient for you.
3. Be available but draw appropriate boundaries. As a connect pastor, you need to learn to draw physical as well as emotional boundaries. Physical boundaries refer to boundaries on your time, your energy, etc. A connect pastor should be generous with his/her time but this doesn't warrant the deterioration of personal or family life.

For example, if your connect group members phone you at inappropriate times then kindly tell them not to call during that time again, unless it is an emergency. Suggest other times or ways (email or on another phone line) they can contact you that are better for you; if you know of times that would not be good for you and your family, let your connect group members know of them from the outset. It's okay to set time limits on phone conversation and one to one conversation.

We have had examples of connect group members who called at early hours in the morning to ask their connect pastors to pick them up from the city as they couldn't get public transport, members who hang around until midnight, etc.

Connect pastors also need to know how to draw emotional boundaries. As connect pastors, we need to empathize with our members when they go through a time of grief, loss, etc but we need to learn to cast those burdens upon the Lord and not allow those feelings to overwhelm us. Unhealthy boundaries cause us to think: I am responsible for his moral breakdown, depression. Etc. Healthy boundaries means: I have done everything within my power and will continue to pray for him but ultimately he/she has to be responsible to his/her own decisions and choices.

Larry Crabbe, a famous author on counseling, commented in his book, *The Key to Caring*, that one must not confused between goal and desire. He says: “A goal may be defined as a purpose to which a person is unalterably committed. He assumes unconditional responsibility for a goal, and it can be achieved if he is willing to work at it. A desire may be defined as something wanted that cannot be obtained without the cooperation of another person. It is an objective for which a person can assume no responsibility, because it is beyond his control. Reaching a desire must never become the motivating purpose behind behavior, because then a person is assuming responsibility for something he cannot fulfill on his own”. A connectpastor can make it his goal to build relationship with each of his member at least once a week but his desire that these members will open up to him may not be accomplished without the cooperation of the other parties.

4. We do not recommend a connect pastor to minister to or visit a member of the opposite sex alone. If you are married, you should bring your spouse with you. If you are single, bring your co-leader with you

5. As the connect group grows, it will not be possible for you to build relationship with everyone. Start building a core group and train up assistants/apprentices to help you to follow up and care for the rest of the connect group members.

#### PRACTICAL WAYS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIP IN THE CONNECT GROUP

1. Model openness and transparency by sharing about yourself.
2. Aim for frequent connection. In addition to the connect meetings, contact each of your connect group members regularly. Utilize phone call, sms, emails, msn, etc to keep in touch. Internet social network e.g. Facebook should be used with caution. ICC is currently constructing an intranet that will enable us to connect with each other through the website.
3. Create an atmosphere of care in the connect group meetings for praying for each others.
4. Celebrate the milestones in the connect group members' life e.g. engagement, weddings, graduations, birth of a child, etc.
5. Remember and celebrate each other's' birthdays.
6. Be available at the critical times in a members' life e.g. deaths, critical illness, break up of marriage or relationships, etc. Be sure to inform your G-pastor about these situations.
7. Help each other practically e.g. moving house, child care, etc.
8. Have a structure to share burden together e.g. email the prayer needs to the whole connect group, etc.
9. Follow up if a person has missed connect or church to show concern.

#### Giving Members spiritual guidance

As connect pastors, you are not expected to be “professional counsellors”, however there'll be times when the members in your connect group will look to you for guidance.

Psalm 73:24 says “You guide me with your counsel”. So we see that counselling involves the act of giving guidance.

- A guide listens carefully to find out where the person wants to go.

A travel guide sets out all the available options for clients and then listens to their desires and requests and assists them to reach the destinations of their choice. The guide does not try to convince clients that they really want to go the Bali when they have clearly stated their desire to go the Europe. The guide is there to guide, not control. Of course, the caveat is the word of

God, if the person is taking a path contrary to the teaching of the word, the counsellor must speak the truth. It is the truth that will set people free. (Jn 8:31-32)

- Shares knowledge that may help.

If we continue with the same analogy we see that the travel guide possesses the knowledge that clients need in order to most effectively reach their destination. Whether the clients choose to take the advice is their decision. The guide simply shares information to help facilitate a smooth holiday. People are ultimately responsible for their own actions and attitudes.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad” (2 Cor 5:10)

“So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God” (Rom 14:12)

Beware of spiritual abuse! “Spiritual abuse is the mistreatment of a person who is in need of support, help or greater spiritual empowerment, with the result of weakening, undermining or decreasing that person’s spiritual empowerment”

“Spiritual abuse can occur when a leader uses his or her spiritual position to control or dominate another person.... It involves overriding the feelings and opinions of another” (“The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse” by David Johnson and Jeff Van Vonderen, pp. 20-21)

- Offer Support
- Serves

BABY DEDICATION

The following should answer some common questions and give information for new parents about having their baby dedicated back to God.

**What are Baby Dedications?**

Our children are a gift from God. Jesus was brought to the temple by Mary and Joseph to be prayed over and dedicated back to God. It is an acknowledgement that, even though this child is a gift from God, this is God's child and He will guide you as you raise this child before Him.

At this time, parents are also prayed over for wisdom and God's blessing as they honour Him in raising this child.

To dedicate your baby to God is to declare that you will train this child in the ways of the Lord. You are placing this child in God's hands and trusting that He will be guiding you as you have asked Him to. It is acknowledging that this child is safer in the hands of the Almighty God than trying to do it alone without Him.

**Is a Dedication a substitution for Baptism?**

Baby dedication is an act of the parents, whereas Baptism is an act of the individual before God.

Baptism is something that is done by a believer with the full understanding of what they are doing, making a declaration and choice for themselves to take this obedient step in their walk with God.

A baby dedication is done by parents for the baby where the parents are placing the child in God's hands, and cannot be a substitute for something that is done by free will and choice of the child concerned (at some later date).

**Who/where do I bring my baby to for a Dedication?**

As Jesus was brought to the Leaders of the synagogue, so can our babies be brought to the Leaders of the Church. In the context of ICC, Baby Dedication take place during one of the combined services

This is a great opportunity to invite family and friends to the service to share this special time. Your baby will also be presented with a "Certificate of Dedication" on this special occasion.

Please contact Olivia at the church office to book for baby dedication.

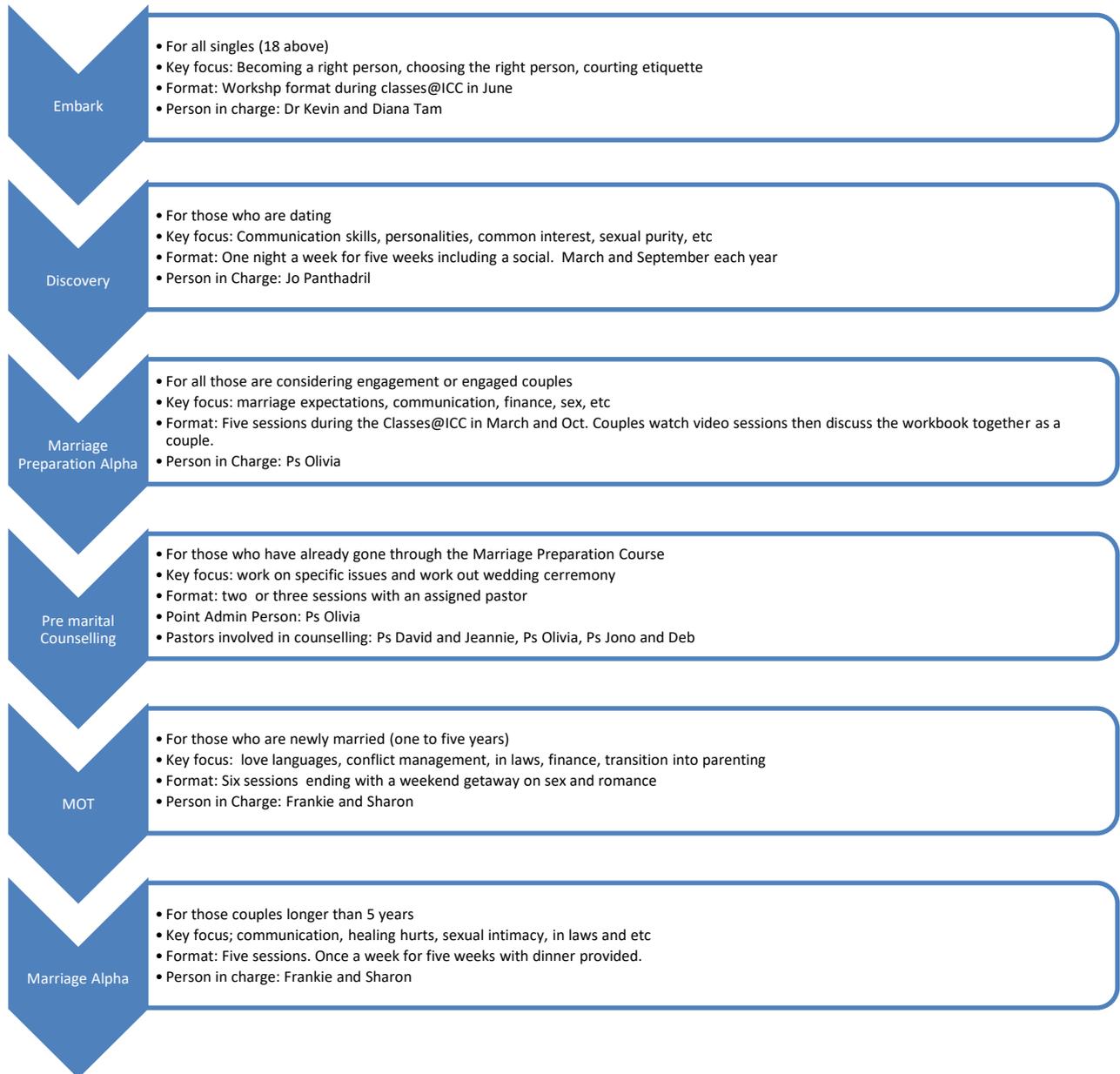
**Do we perform Baby Dedication for Non-Believers?**

Baby dedication is meaningless for nonbelieving parents as they have no intention to train the baby in the ways of the Lord

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## RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

### ICC has a complete relationship ministry



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### IF YOUR CONNECT MEMBERS ARE SINGLES ARE CONSIDERING RELATIONSHIP

Choosing a life partner is the next biggest decision other than accepting Jesus as your personal Saviour. The Embark course aims to equip the singles with the fundamentals of making wise decisions in terms of choosing a life partner as well as becoming the persons that will be great blessings in relationships.

Do encourage the singles in your connect groups to attend the Embark course which is generally on in June.

Person in Charge—Kevin and Diana Tam

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#### IF YOUR CONNECT MEMEBRS ARE DATING

##### Discovery

Discovery will help the courting couples to learn more about the person they're dating and themselves. They will learn useful skills and concepts like understanding their individual personality and that of their special someone to ensure communication is effective, conflicts are resolved constructively and most of all, arm themselves with what they need to decide if and when they should be taking their relationship to the next level.

Person in charge—Jo and Jiesi Pandathril

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#### IF YOUR CONNECT MEMBERS ARE GETTING MARRIED

From time to time you may have the joy within your connect group of having one (or two) of your members approach you saying to you that they are wanting to get married. After celebrating the joyous news with them, here are some points for you to assist in guiding the couple in the right direction in getting married as part of ICC.

##### **Eligibility**

The Bride or Groom must be an active member of ICC Church or the child of an active member to use church facilities. Any other applicant(s) must be approved by the Pastor in charge of the ministry.

##### **Pastoral Approval**

The pastors of ICC will personally officiate or approve the selection of another minister to officiate the ceremony.

##### **Marriage Preparation Course**

The bride and groom must complete a marriage preparation course conducted by the pastors of ICC prior to the date set for the wedding. The Marriage Preparation Course is conducted during the March and Oct Classes@ICC. At the end of the course, the couple will be asked to fill in a pre-marital application form.

##### **Pre-marital Counselling**

After the Marriage Preparation Course, the pastoral care coordinator will arrange for the couple to have several pre-marital counselling sessions with one of the pastors. Though the

couples can state their preference, it is not guaranteed that they will be assigned to their preferred pastor.

ICC pastors may choose not to marry any couples who have not completed the pre-marital counselling of the church (the couples concerned may choose to marry in other venues by another pastors/civil celebrants)

The couple must show seriousness and commitment in preparation for the marriage not just for the wedding. The pastor is not obligated to give consent to the wedding in the event of a major concern regarding the preparedness of the couple for marriage. In such cases, a postponement of the wedding will be recommended

### **Wedding Application**

A Notice of Intent to Marry form has to be filled out at least one month before the wedding.

The form has to be filled out by the bride and groom and the officiating celebrant/another celebrant on the pastoral staff.

Bring along original certificates of birth, your passport (if an overseas citizen), copy of any fiancé visa, any Decree Absolute or Certificate of Divorce or Nullity, or Death (of previous spouse) if you have been previously married. A copy of those documents will be taken to be forwarded to the registry office.

### **Reserving the Date**

The date and time of the wedding and related activities must not conflict with other scheduled activities of the church. Arrangements for rehearsals and the ceremony must be cleared with the church manager prior to placement on the church calendar. A/V Technician must also be available before the wedding can be calendared.

To be reserved on the church calendar, all forms must be completed and the security deposit received by the church office at least three months prior to the wedding.

### **Building/Personnel**

The church manager will go through and explain the building usage policies as well as the booking of AV personnel etc.

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#### **IF YOUR CONNECT MEMBERS ARE NEWLY MARRIED (ONE TO FIVE YEARS)**

Marriage on Track (MOT) is to cater for those newly married couples. The program consists of six sessions including an information session as well as a getaway weekend.

The MOT program is designed to educate and equip young married couples to tackle issues common to young couples and to have the right foundation to make their marriage last the distance.

Through a combination of inter-active teaching, small group discussions, couple exercises, the following topics will be include:

- Effective communication and handling conflicts
- Affairs proofing your marriage
- Handling family finance and budgeting
- Biblical roles of husband and wife
- In-laws and cross-cultural issues
- Romance and sex (conducted in a getaway location)
- Planning for parenthood

Person in charge: Frankie and Sharon

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IF YOUR CONNECT MEMBERS HAVE BEEN MARRIED FOR A WHILE AND WISH TO ENHANCE THEIR MARRIAGE

### **The Marriage Course**

The aim of the Course is to help couples grow closer and build a healthy relationship that will last a lifetime. The talks are practical, informative and fun.

There is never any group work and you will never be asked to share anything about your relationship with anyone other than your partner.

Over the sessions you will discover practical tools to help you:

- understand each other's needs
- communicate more effectively
- grow closer through resolving conflict
- heal the ways you've hurt each other
- recognize how your upbringing affects your relationship
- improve relationships with parents and in-laws
- develop greater sexual intimacy
- discover each other's love languages and much, much more!

## Why do the course?

Regular check-ups help a car run smoothly and reduce the risk of breakdown. The best sports professionals spend hours being coached and perfecting their technique. The greatest achievements in life take practice, training and dedication. It is the same with marriage.

A strong, loving and lifelong relationship doesn't happen by chance. It takes effort and dedication to keep the fun and romance alive. We can all learn how to make even the happiest marriage better.

Would you like your relationship to be the best it can be? If you answered 'yes' to any of those questions then this course is for you! The Marriage Course is for any couple, whether you have been together for one year or 61 years and whether you feel you have a strong relationship or are struggling. If you have a strong marriage this course will help you make it even better and will reinforce your good habits. If on the other hand your marriage is in difficulty, the course will help provide you with very practical tools to help you work through the issues. Some couples who are separated have used the course as a way of trying to get back together.

Whatever your situation, the practical tools you learn will help improve and strengthen your relationship.

While The Marriage Course is based on Christian principles, it is designed for couples with or without a Christian faith. Many couples who are not churchgoers have commented that the Christian content was presented in a way that did not make them uncomfortable at all.

The course takes place over seven evenings. The evening starts around 7:15 pm and finishes around 9:15 pm. Each session includes:

**Fantastic atmosphere** that many say feels like a date night. **A romantic table for two** giving you space to relax and chat while enjoying coffee / tea and supper.

**Practical talks** that are informative and fun, played on DVD. They include filmed clips of couples sharing their own experiences and street interviews from around the world.

**Coffee and private discussion time as a couple.** You will be given topics to discuss (sometimes with the help of an exercise). Music is played so you can't hear couples on other tables and they can't hear you!

**No group work**, so relax - you will not have to share anything about your relationship with anyone else.

**Homework** - at the end of each session you are given some homework to do together. This will help you to build on what you have learnt and give you the opportunity to apply it to your relationship. Don't worry - it won't be marked! It isn't looked at by anyone else and is just for your own benefit.

Person in charge: Frankie and Sharon

## **OTHER PASTORAL ISSUES:**

### **Death of Loved One**

- Send a short note or card
- Express your sorrow by simply saying “I am so sorry about \_\_\_\_\_’s death
- Provide meals for the family and inquire about other specific needs you may assist with
- Listen. Allow the family to talk about the loved one
- Remember the family at holidays, birthdays and anniversary of the death
- Jn 11:25 Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life.<sup>[a]</sup> Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.
- 2 Cor 1:3-4 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

### **Study Problems**

- Lack of motivation is normally due to lack of purpose. Help the person set goals. Ask: what do you think are the consequences if you continue this way? Are you happy to live with the consequences?
- Identify some of the root problems: lack of discipline, poor study habits/strategies, language problems
- Help them develop good study habits:
  - Discover their key productive time
  - Find their key learning styles e.g better study alone or with someone
  - Don't procrastinate
  - If it is a language problem, read up before class, take copious notes or borrow notes from others, do not be afraid to ask.
- 2 Tim 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

### **Personality clashes or offence between members**

- Talk to the individuals involved separately. Listen to both sides of the story.
- Encourage them to apply the biblical principles. Matt 5 and Matt 18
- Empathize with their feelings. Don't try to talk people out of how they feel at first. Just listen and let them unload emotionally without being defensive. Feelings are not always true or logical.
- Get them to confess their part of the conflict. Confession is a powerful tool for reconciliation. Often the way people handle a conflict creates a bigger hurt than the original problem itself.
- Emphasize reconciliation, not resolution

## Common Questions and Answers

### 1. What's the policy on borrowing and lending money in the connect group?

First of all, no connect pastors should be borrowing money from connect group members. The members find it hard to refuse and it makes a connect pastor obligated to the connect group members which reduces the effectiveness of his/her leadership. Secondly, a connect pastor if approached by a connect group member should not feel obligated to lend money. You should only lend money as a friend and if you do want to lend money to people, have the attitude that if the person doesn't return the money, you are at peace with it. Discourage the practice of borrowing and lending money within the connect group. Sometime, connect group members may have genuine needs for financial help. If possible, give rather than lend to avoid disappointment.

### 2. Should a dating couple be in the same connect group?

We do not have a policy on this matter. Past experience however shows that unless a couple's relationship is steady and ready to get married, it is not always advisable for them to be in the same connect group. Often time, a couple breaks up and causes the connect group to be divided as different members get caught in the relational conflict or issues.

### 3. Is it okay for me to invite a special speaker to the connect group?

Before you invite any special speaker, you should consult with your Network/G-pastor. Please do not send out an invitation before talking it over with your Network/G-pastor. This is to avoid putting your Network/G pastor in an awkward position to have to say yes even though he/she may not be comfortable with the speaker you invite or the embarrassment that you have to cancel the invitation should your Network/G pastor strongly object the proposal.

### 4. If my connect group members ask me to keep confidences about his/her issues, what should I do?

The ability to keep confidence is important for building trust with the connect group members. However, there are times when you must not keep confidence:

- If it affects the unity of the connect or the church e.g. if the person has something against the leadership or the church
- If it has implications for other people for example, the person is getting married but has confessed to you that he is still attached to his old girlfriend
- If it is more than you can handle. I had a case where a connect group member fell pregnant and had come to the connect pastor in confidence that she was going for an abortion as she didn't want her parents to know about it. The connect pastor agreed to do it and carried that guilt for years.
- If it is a potentially life threatening issue e.g. the person has suicidal thoughts.

To avoid the predicament of breaking confidence, always warn the person who talks to you that you will always strive to keep confidence but you will have to tell your Network/G-pastor about it if it concerns the church or has serious implications for others or his/her wellbeing. Before reporting, give that person a chance to speak to the party concerned, offer to go with the person. If all else fails, you must inform your Network/G-pastor.

**5. Do I allow members from another church to join our connect group?**

We do not encourage members from another church to join our connect groups. First, it causes confusion in terms of pastoring. For example, if the person has a character issue, who is responsible for teaching him and guiding him? Who is he ultimately accountable to. Also, the church that he attends may have different values/belief from our church. If you have a few of your members who are from another church, it creates inertia in the connect group, hampering your effectiveness to bring the connect group into alignment to the church. Finally, as a connect pastor, you have limited resources and time, it's far better to invest those resources into members who are willing to be trained up to follow the vision of the church and to take on leadership in future.

### Emergencies

Contact the police, ambulance or fire service straight immediately. Such crises should include:

- Life threatening situations
- Severe accidents or emergencies
- An attempted suicide or threatened suicide
- Present threats of violence by a person to himself or herself or to others

### Serious situations

As a connect pastor, you are expected to provide support and encouragement to members of your group. However you are not trained to be a professional counsellor, so you should not assume such a role. Instead your responsibility is to provide opportunities for your members to receive the appropriate care they require. Situations that may need professional help:

- Thoughts/ threats of abortion
- Serious marriage problems
- History of past abuse
- Addiction e.g. substance abuse, alcohol, gambling, etc.
- Severe personality disorders
- Mental disorders or dysfunctions

### Crisis care

If there is a crisis such as bereavement, miscarriage, divorce, etc. connect pastors are often the first point of contact for any crisis in the life of the connect members. Though you are not called upon to give professional intervention, certain things to remember are:

Avoid offering platitudes and superficial comments such as:

- "It will take some time, but you'll get over it"
- "Try to be strong for your children"
- "You are lucky that it wasn't any worse"
- "It was God's will"
- "You should have heard what happened to me..."

Provide meals for the family and inquire about other specific needs you may assist with, such as caring for the pets or mowing the grass.

Say " I am so sorry this happened to you.."

Listen, listen, listen and be slow to speak.  
Quick to listen" means listen to the heart cry

Good resources:

Lampman, Lisa Barnes (ed), *Helping A Neighbor in Crisis* (Wheaton, Tyndale House, 1997). This is an excellent resource for connect pastors. Easy layman terms, concise and very practical tips on how to provide support to people in different crisis.

### **People to Contact**

**Contact your immediate G-leader first or one of the Vision Team pastors**, and together work out a plan and steps as how to help the members.

### **Here are some useful numbers:**

Emergency	000
Alcoholic Anonymous	(07) 3255 9162
Gambling Helpline	1800 222 050
Queensland Housing Crisis Line (for temporary accommodation)	(07) 3367 2522
Telephone interpreter service	13 14 50
Domestic Violence Telephone Service	1800 811 811
Peter Janetzki & Associates (Christian counseling service)	(07) 3822 8336
Legal Aid Call Centre	1300 65 11 88
Women Legal Service (Brisbane)	(07) 3392 0670
Teen Challenge Queensland	(07) 3422 1500

### **Pastoral team phone numbers (in emergency):**

Ps Faith (Ngar Fei)	0413 048 768
Ps Jonathan Mok	0413 774 783
Ps David Mok	0411 160 239
Ps Jeannie Mok	0412 644 813
Ps Olivia	0413 386 831

## MY MEMBER SAYS HE/SHE HAS SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

**For immediate crisis intervention when life may be in danger, ring the police on 000. If can't get through, call 112. If the danger is not imminent, you must still ring the police on 33646464**

### 1. If a person is really intent on killing themselves, do they show any warning signs?

Many people who are suicidal, communicate this intent to those around them. However, these indicators are often subtle and can be very difficult to notice. Understanding some of the warning signs can help us to understand someone at risk. Warning signs may include:

- The recent suicide, or death by other means, of a friend or relative;
- Previous suicide attempts;
- Preoccupation with themes of death or expressing suicidal thoughts;
- Depression, conduct disorder and problems with adjustment such as substance abuse, particularly when two or more of these are present;
- Giving away valued possessions, making a will or other final arrangements;
- Major changes in sleep patterns, including too much or too little;
- Sudden and extreme changes in eating habits, losing or gaining weight;
- Withdrawal from friends, family or other major behavioural changes;
- Dropping out of group and social activities;
- Personality changes such as nervousness, outbursts of anger, impulsive or reckless behaviour, or apathy about appearance or health;
- Frequent irritability or unexplained crying;
- Lingering expressions of unworthiness or failure;
- Lack of interest in the future;
- When there have been other indicators of a potential suicide attempt, a sudden lifting of spirits may point to a decision to end the pain of life through suicide.

### 2. Are people who threatened suicide just seeking attention?

All suicide attempts must be treated as though the person has the intent to die. Do not dismiss a suicide threat or attempt as simply being attention seeking. It is likely that the person has tried to seek attention and, therefore, this attention is needed. The attention that they get may well save their lives.

### 3. What should I do?

**1<sup>st</sup> RESPONSE is very important. You need to be pro-active and portray yourself to be a caring and safe person.**

- a. Evaluate the **LETHALITY**. How potentially lethal is the situation? Think escape (safety, protection) plans for yourself, just in case. Don't compromise yourself as a suicidal person may become a homicidal person.
- Check that your mobile is working and on redial to your carer who's on standby.
  - Let your carer know the address & how to get there.
  - Get carer to call in 15 mins. Your answer 'Call me back in 15 mins' means situation is not that safe.
  - 2 x 15 mins is a signal for carer to call Police & Ambulance.
  - 'Call me back in 1 hour' means you are ok.
  - After knocking on the door, step back & wait for person to walk into the house first with you following behind. Never allow him to walk behind you.
  - Survey room & check escape routes – ensure that the door is not locked, place is safe.
- b. Quantify **perturbation**. How HOT is the Suicide threat. On a scale of 1 to 10 assess their pain. Remember 80% of suicides are planned. **IF TOO HOT RING POLICE OR AMBULANCE ON 000.**
- c. **Retrieval**
- Ask "Are you suicidal". Use the suicide' – be direct, honest and bold. Don't use vague terms eg 'Harming yourself' 'Hurt yourself' 'Doing something stupid'. Directness leads to openness which creates a bridge and this facilitates the venting process.
  - If the answer is yes. Ask "How are you going to commit suicide? When...? Where....?Why....? Remember suicidal people are planners.
  - Listen. Use the 80-20 rule. You listen 80% and talk 20%. Do not attempt to counsel them. Just allow them to off-load their problems. This will in turn reduce their pain and angst.
  - Explore any signs of vomiting (Have you taken something?), Bleeding (self-inflicted?) Breathlessness (Asthmatic? Have you taken something?) Disfigurement (Don't assume it is old) Pain (Where is the pain?)
  - If the answer is no, apologize and said you needed to know. Offer future help and follow them up. Say 'If you happen to feel suicidal at any time, please call me immediately and I'll get help.' Get the person to promise not to do it. Get them the help needed – practical, counselling etc.
  - If the person is ambivalent: 'Will I or won't I?' The final part of the ambivalence struggle is RIGHT Time vs. WRONG Time. Say "this is the wrong time because I can help you'. BEWARE of sudden unexplained behavioral improvement after suicidal depression. They may have decided to complete their suicide. 'The calm after the storm'

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## MY MEMBER JUST FOUND OUT THAT HER HUSBAND IS HAVING AN AFFAIR

It is difficult for someone who has not experienced a partner's affair to understand the shock, sadness and pain that comes when someone has pledged to "forsake all others", betrays that sacred promise. Infidelity shakes its victims to the very core.

What can you do?

- Get them to contact one of the pastors straight away
- Allow plenty of time for grief, sadness and anger. A listening ear is of such great value at this time.
- Help them explore the meaning and practice of forgiveness
- Encourage them to rely on God for their worth
- Pray for them
- Offer practical help for them and the kids
- Should they separate or divorce, offer support and practical help. Be sensitive especially on Valentine's Day, mother's day, birthday, anniversary, etc.

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## I THINK MY CONNECT MEMBERS IS SUFFERING FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence can occur in many forms and can affect people of any age. If someone is hurting you it can be very scary and it may be hard to know how you can stop it. It is important to remember that no one has the right to be violent towards you and there are people out there who can help.

Below are some of the forms that domestic violence may take:

**Physical** - If someone is hurting you then you will probably have to take some action. Some forms of physical violence are: pushing, shaking, slapping, and forcing you to do sexual things against your will, throwing things at you, damaging your property, hurting or killing pets.

**Emotional** - This form of violence is often unrecognised and can be very hurtful. Some forms of emotional violence are making threats, speaking in a way that is frightening, putting you down, and emotional blackmail.

**Economic** - Having money and being able to make decisions about it, is one means of being independent. If someone is controlling your money, keeping you financially dependent, or making you ask for money unreasonably, then this is a form of violence.

**Social** - This form of violence may happen in conjunction with other forms. If someone is insulting you or teasing you in front of other people, keeping you isolated from family and friends, controlling what you do and where you go, then they are being violent and you may need to take some action.

## How you can help?

- Remember as a connect pastor, your role is there to support. Refer them to the Pastors for professional help.
- Safety is always the first priority. If there is any imminent danger, call the police. Another useful contact is Violence Against Women, Australia Says No—1800 200 526
- Helpful things to say: “It takes a lot of courage to talk about something so painful. Thank you for trusting me enough to share this with me”; “It’s not your fault. You are not responsible for your husband’s abusive behavior”
- Provide practical help. While abhorring the abuse, many women hesitate to leave their violent husbands out of fear of enraging their husbands, losing their financial security, having their shame exposed or failing to make it on their own. Many of these are realistic fears. If the abused makes the decision to have a time of separation after counseling, be there to provide practical help.
- Pray for them
- Help scriptures: Ps 10:17-18; Ps 31:1-2; Ps 72:12-14

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### MY MEMBER CONFIDED IN ME THAT HE/SHE HAD BEEN ABUSED BY A FAMILY MEMBER/AN ADULT

- Report to your G pastor straight away
- Your G pastor will determine whether it is mandatory to report the incident
- If the person is not a minor (over 18), and the abuse is still ongoing, encourage the person to report to police. Offer to accompany the person to do so.
- Be there to support as this is a very emotional matter but wait for your G pastor’s direction as what actions to take.

# DISCIPLESHIP

There's a story about an ancient Indian prince and a peasant who play a game of chess. The prince, thinking there's no way the peasant could win, says, "Beat me and I'll give you whatever you want - fine clothes, a feast, a palace - anything". They start playing, and in one of ancient India's great sporting upsets, the peasant beats the prince. The prince says, "What do you want?" and braces himself for the damage - only to hear the peasant ask for one grain of rice.

"Put one grain of rice on the first square of this chess board. On the second put two grains, on the third put four grains. Double the grains for each square of the board," says the peasant.

The prince laughs at the peasant and readily agrees, because, being royal and in a parable, he is also stupid.

He orders his Rice Keeper to put the rice on the chess board. Only to find he's ruined. The chess board has 63 squares and he would have had to come up with, 2,223,372,036,000,000,000 grains of rice (an estimated 153 billion tons of rice).

This story tells us of the incredible potential if we will each win one soul, and disciple that person until he/she in turn becomes a discipler. In multiplying disciples that way, we have the potential to win the entire city of Brisbane, in fact, the entire nation of Australia. In Isaiah, it says, "the least of you will be a thousand". By becoming a pastor of one, we initiate a domino effect that will impact not just that one individual, but his children, his children's children, the people he comes into contact with, potentially a thousand souls through the generations.

The vision at ICC is to build bigger people. We are not statistics-oriented...we are people oriented. We believe in growing people, forming people, so they can rise up to fulfill their calling. Jesus said He would build his church; our job is to build disciples. Statistics, reports and systems are tools to assess whether we are doing our job properly.

Discipleship is an organic process, not an organization process. We can aim to have everyone in our connect groups go through all the foundational courses, Encounter Camp and everything that is listed on the template, and still not necessarily produce a group of passionate, Christlike disciples. Discipleship is a matter of the heart for Prov 4:23 says the heart affects everything we do. God always works from the inside out. He works on our hearts or our inner thoughts, attitudes and motives. If our thinking can change, then our behavior will follow. So often we focus on external behavior, which can result in mere conformity without any true inner change or transformation. The ultimate test of whether we have impacted the heart of a person is when he/she is free from any command or power we may exert and yet still reflects the influence of our values and passions.

Bill Hull in his book, *The Disciple-Making Church*, gives us some insight as to how we can achieve this end. He defines discipling as "The intentional training of disciples, with accountability, on the basis of loving relationships". "Intentional" means there needs to be a planned strategy, including a method and a model. "Training" implies a prescribed course of study and a specific process that people go through. "With accountability" is important because people need help to keep their commitments. "Loving Relationships" provides the loving support environment in which disciple-making can best take place.

With this in mind, the Discipleship 360, incorporating Classes @ICC, Foundation class etc. ensures that there is intentionality and training in our discipleship process. Also this year accountability will be greatly emphasized with the connect pastors profiling and ensuring the members are moving along the gates of progress.

Loving relationships, however, is not something that can be measured easily. The goal is to develop quality relationships with the people in the connect group by expressing interest in their personal lives through asking questions and active listening. Have the desire to be spiritual father or mother to them.

Two other factors are necessary to move people along the spiritual journey: Motivation and mobilization.

To motivate people is to help people to see what they can become and then lead them to make a commitment to achieving that God's given potential. We motivate people through a number of ways:

- Personal example. Passion and enthusiasm are is contagious. As leader, we need to an example of a fervent disciple. Be totally committed to our own spiritual growth. Be open and real about our struggles and victories.
- Impart vision
- Counsel
- Encouragement
- Challenge

Mobilization means to delegate and release people into significant ministry. Provide opportunities for practical implementation of what has been taught. Our goal is to mobilize people to regularly serve others with their gifts and abilities on a regular basis.

As connect group, we cannot cause growth in another person but we can provide an environment that facilitate and support growth.

### **Defining a disciple biblically;**

The word "disciple" literally means A LEARNER. According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, it denotes "one who follows another's teaching". But a disciple was not only a learner, he was also AN ADHERENT. For this reason disciples were spoken of as IMITATORS of their teachers.

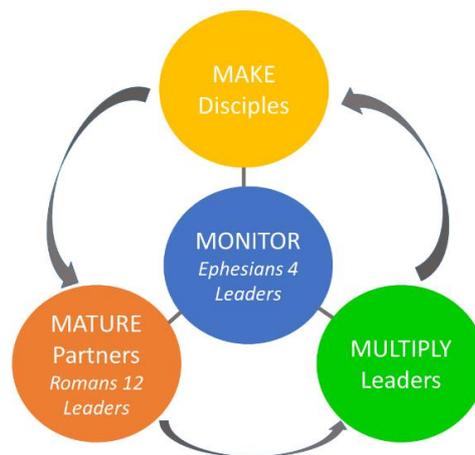
According to Lk 6:40, the goal of discipleship is to be like Christ. Some of the indicators of a disciple as spoken by Jesus are:

- One who abides in the word. Jn 8:31
- One who loves his brothers and sisters. Jn 13:34-35
- One who bears much fruits. Jn 15:8

*Matt 28:19-20 "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

*Eph 4:11-12 "Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work & build up the church, the body of Christ".*

The goal of discipleship is to BE LIKE JESUS, and to be FISHERS of MEN.



## 1. MAKE DISCIPLES:

We believe making disciples is the key mission of the church. A disciple is a learner, a student and in this instance, a follower of Jesus Christ.

A disciple is measured by criteria set out in the book of 1 John:

- *Encounter Christ* – as Saviour & Lord (Revelation & Relationship with Jesus)
- *Enforce the New Life* – Sin to Grace (Separation)
- *Enjoy the word of God* – reading, meditating & journaling the Bible (Transformation; Rom. 12:1-2)
- *Engage in the Local Church* – 'We get to' serve (Activation)
- *Evangelism* – be a fisher of men (Demonstration)

We facilitate this process through one-on-one discipling, dialogues in a small group environment, self-learning resources as well as teaching and modelling.

## 2. MATURE PARTNERS - From multitudes to ministers

We also believe that every believer should be equipped to do the works of the ministry. God has given each of us gifts (Romans 12) and an assignment which needs to be activated for his kingdom. The task of the five- fold ministers is to equip the people for ministry.

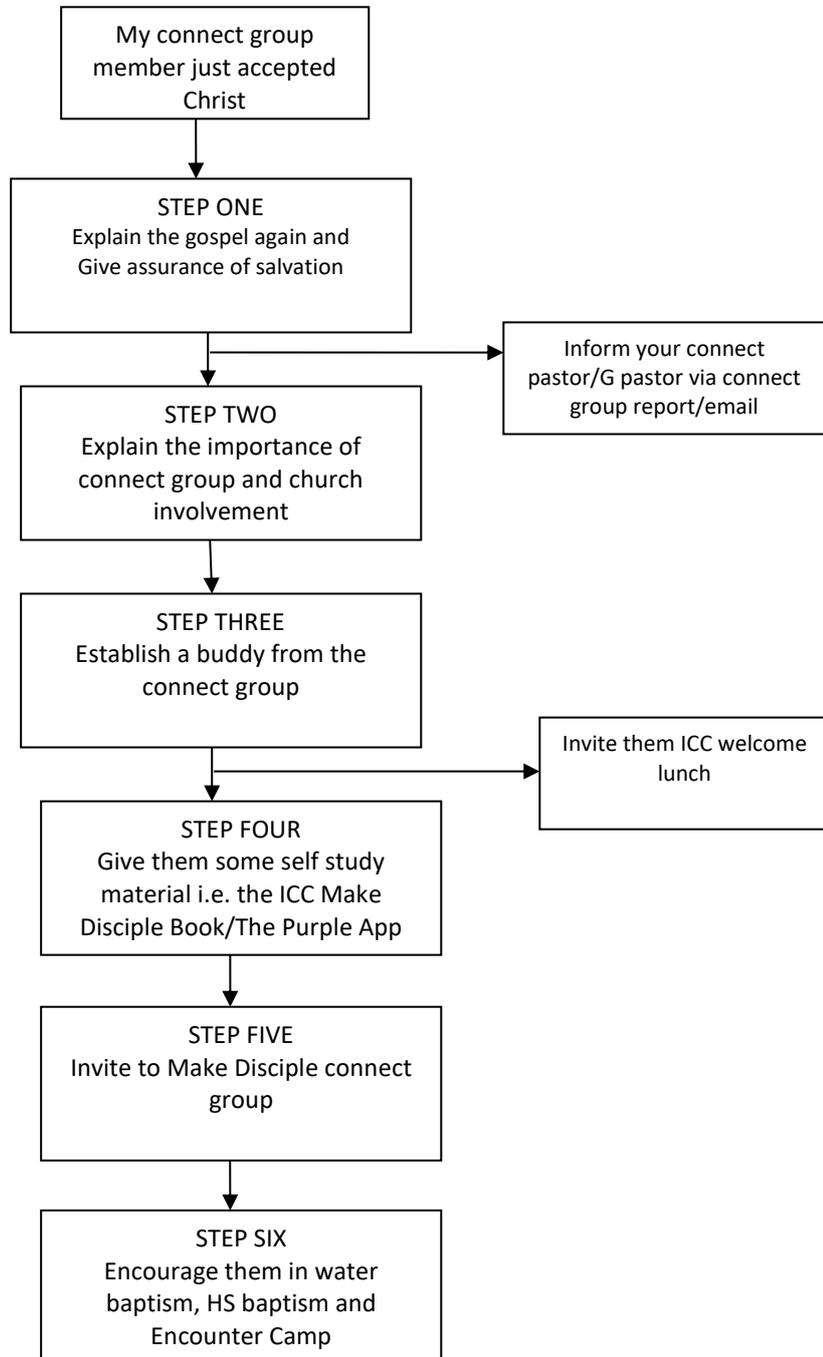
Partners - Time, Talents, Treasure. Vision, Values, Vocabulary.

- Partners are those who embody the ***spirit of Epaphroditus*** (Phil.2;25) of whom Paul called his ***fellow brother*** (family), ***co-worker*** (working for the gospel) & ***fellow soldier*** (to fight the spiritual battles).
- Partners are also **vision carriers** (who carry the vision of the house) and **vision carers** (who care for the vision by caring for people & the leaders).

## 3. MULTIPLY LEADERS – (we are developing a leadership pattern for those who complete the Make Disciples & Mature Partners).

We look for the 5C's in a leader -  
***Character, Competence, Chemistry, Capacity, Commitment***

SOMEONE IN MY CONNECT GROUP WANTS TO ACCEPT CHRIST/OR MY CONNECT GROUP MEMBER ACCEPTED CHRIST LAST SUNDAY DURING THE SERVICE



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## PRAY THE SALVATION PRAYER WITH THEM

Dear Lord Jesus

I believe you died for my sins and were raised from the dead. I confess I am a sinner and ask you to forgive me. Help me to forgive others and cleanse me by your Blood, come into my heart, take over my life and be my Lord.

Father, I am now your child and I confess Jesus as my personal Saviour. Fill me now with the Power of your Holy Spirit and change me forever in Jesus name, Amen.

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## SHARE THE BASICS OF GOSPEL WITH THEM

You can choose any of the following approach

a. Roman Road

- Romans 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- Romans 5:8 - But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Romans 10:9 - That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
- Romans 10:13 - for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

b. Four Spiritual Laws

- ❖ The First Law—God loves you and offered a wonderful plans for your life  
John 3:16 and John 10:10
- ❖ The Second Law—Man is sinful and separated from God. Thus, he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life.  
Rom 3:23, Rom 6:23  
Man was created to have fellowship with God; but, because of his stubborn self-will, he chose to go his own independent way, and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is an evidence of what the Bible calls sin.
- ❖ The Third Law—Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's in. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.  
Rom 5:8 (he died for us); 1 Cor 15:3-6 (He rose from the dead); Jn 14:6 (he is the only way)
- ❖ The Fourth Law—we must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives  
John 1:12

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## EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTGROUP AND CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

When we place our faith in Christ, God becomes our Father, we become his children, other believers become our brothers and sisters, and the church becomes our spiritual family. A

Christian without a church is a contradiction. The Bible says a Christian without a church is like an organ without a body, a sheep without a flock, or a child without a family. It is an unnatural state. It is important for you to attend the local church faithfully.

People can easily attend church, be part of a large crowd but never really get involved, make friends, develop their spiritual gifts and be accountable in a practical way. Our Connect Groups fulfill these important elements of church life. That's why in ICC, we encourage everyone to be part of a connect group. The phrase "one another" appear more than fifty times in the New Testament. We are commanded to love one another, pray for one another, serve one another, etc. You can't really practice these by sitting at home or even sitting in church looking at the back of someone's head.

Invite the person to the next ICC Welcome lunch.

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#### ESTABLISH A BUDDY WITH THEM

The role of the buddy is to be the main follow up person for the new believer.

In the first week after the person accepted Christ, the buddy should call or visit the new believer as soon as possible. A new believer is most vulnerable at this stage. Be a friend, do fun things with them as well. Answer any questions they may have. Offer to pick them up for church or connect groups.

The buddy will also ring and meet with the new believer at least once a week to help them apply what they learn whether through self-study

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#### GIVE THEM SOME MATERIAL FOR SELF STUDY

The Purple App is a good resource for self-study

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#### ENCOURAGE THEM TO JOIN THE NEXT MAKE DISCIPLE CONNECT

Encourage them to join the next Make Disciple connect, which will help them to go through the Make Disciple book in a small group setting.

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#### ENCOURAGE THEM TO BE WATER BAPTISED AS WELL AS TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

You may want to encourage them to join the pre-baptism briefing or revise the chapter on water baptism in the Make Disciple book

### **The Meaning of Baptism**

Water baptism is not just a religious tradition or meaningless ceremony. It is an important experience and act of faith in the Christian's life. Baptism is a visible act with a spiritual meaning.

In baptism believers identify themselves with the death, burial and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:1-9, 11-12; Col. 2:12; 3:1). It is a symbolic yet real experience.

Baptism is a symbol of a believer's new life in Christ. We bury "the old life" and we rise to walk in a "new life" (Rom. 6:1-12). Baptism is like a wedding ring – it's the outward symbol of the commitment you have made in your heart. Just like a great wedding doesn't make a great marriage, so a great water baptism doesn't make a great Christian life. Our commitment has to be followed through and lived out on a daily basis.

### **Why be Baptised?**

- ❖ Jesus himself was baptised (Mt. 3:13-17). He was not a sinner, yet he humbled himself in obedience to identify with us and give us an example to follow.
- ❖ Jesus commanded it (Mk. 16:16; Mt. 28:16-20). Water baptism is an act of faith and obedience to the commands of Christ. If we love Him, we will keep His commandments (Jn. 14:15; Jas. 2:17-18). Water baptism is not optional. To refuse baptism is to disobey the clear word of God.
- ❖ Baptism declares that you are a follower of Jesus Christ. It is a public confession of your faith in and commitment to Jesus Christ. It is a public celebration announcing your personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is the next step after salvation through repentance and faith and is an important foundation for the Christian life (Heb. 6:1-2).
- ❖ Baptism by immersion is also one of the requirements for partnership at ICC. It's one of the ways people in the Bible said, "I am part of this family called Christians"

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### BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

When we become a Christian, by inviting Jesus Christ to come into our life to be Lord and Saviour, we receive the Holy Spirit. The Spirit comes to live inside of us (Jn. 3:6-7; Rom. 8:9-11). Jesus also wants to baptise us with the same Spirit so that we are filled with the power of the Spirit (Mt. 3:11; Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He is equal with God the Father and God the Son. Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as the Comforter or the Helper (Jn. 14:16-17). The Holy Spirit comes to give us power to be God's witnesses, to guide us and to help us communicate with God directly through prayer.

### **Examples of being "Baptised (or filled) with the Spirit"**

Here are some examples of people being born again and then filled with the Spirit's power.

- ❖ Jesus' disciples – Jn. 20:19-22; Acts 2:1-4. They were told to wait for the power of the Spirit.
- ❖ The Samaritans - Acts 8:5-7, 14-17.
- ❖ Cornelius' household - Acts 10:44-48.
- ❖ The Ephesian believers - Acts 19:1-7.

The Biblical evidence of being filled with the Spirit is speaking in "tongues" or in spiritual languages.

### **The Importance of Speaking in tongues**

- Jesus introduced it (Mk. 16:17; Acts 2:4).
- It was given at the birth of the church (Acts 2:4). All 120 believers spoke in tongues.
- It was God's idea - He created and endorsed it.
- The early church continued to experience it. (Acts & Epistles)
- Paul promoted it (1 Cor. 14:5, 18, 39). He spoke in tongues more than anyone, told no one to forbid it and encouraged its proper usage. Therefore, it must be important!

### **The Purpose of Speaking in tongues**

- To help us communicate with God (1 Cor. 14:2a) through prayer (1 Cor. 14:14; Rom. 8:26-27; Eph. 6:18) and praise or worship (Acts 2:11; 1 Cor. 14:14-16).
- To edify or build ourselves up (1 Cor. 14:4a; Jude 20).
- To reveal mysteries to us (1 Cor. 2:7-16; 14:2b; Mt. 13:11) from the Bible or from God's heart.
- To release power within us (Acts 1:8; 4:31; Eph. 3:16).

### **How to receive the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit"**

- Prepare your heart by having a clear conscience (1 Jn. 1:7-9; 3:21).
- Believe that it is available and that God wants to fill you (Lk. 11:13; Acts 2:38-39).
- Ask for the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 11:9, 13).
- Give praise to God with your voice (Lk. 24:49-53).
- Have someone pray with you and lay their hands on you if necessary (Acts 8:17).
- Speak forth in a new language as the Holy Spirit gives you the words (Acts 2:4).
- Continue to use your new spiritual language on a regular basis and believe for God to increase the flow of His Spirit within you (Eph. 5:18).

## SAFER CHURCH GUIDELINES

In the Connect groups, we need to ensure that we provide a safe place for the members. This include venue safety and people safety.

### VENUE SAFETY

- This is to ensure the safety of those attending the connect groups especially if there are minors (kids and youth under the age of 18) in the connect group.
- Ensure a safe physical environment e.g. beware of water on tiles, electrical cords that may cause tripping, put any poisonous substance out of reach if there are little kids around, etc.
- Assess the risks of activities involved. For any high risk and off-site activities such as white-water rafting, high ropes activities, etc. if you organizing it under the banner of the connect ministry, please inform the connect administrator or else your activities will not be covered by the church insurance. Should the church choose not to host those activities, you have the option of running those activities as a friendship group with the awareness that individuals are responsible for their own insurance.
- (Especially for the youth connect) Any minor (kids or youth) involved in high risk activities should have signed a liability release from their parents/guardians. However it is important to note that a liability release form does not actually indemnify against an accident. Individual leaders may be protected where all due care has been taken, but a church may still be deemed liable, where duty of care failures is proven.
- Should there be any serious incident, please inform your G pastor, fill in an incident report
- Ideally, every connect group should have one person who have current first aid training.
- Those homes hosting the connect meeting should have a basic first aid kit.

### FOOD SAFETY

- Beware of food safety practices in terms of food preparation and storage
- Beware of food allergy in the group. Avoid food with nuts
- Parents with children with the risk of anaphylaxis

### PEOPLE SAFETY

The use of electronic media for communication is part of everyday life. Connect Pastors must be mindful of the position of trust they hold by:

- Being transparent and accountable in the use of electronic communication especially with children or young people. It is recommended that in the case of electronic communications with children under 16 will be done with the full knowledge and permission of the parents/carers of the children or young people.

- Not transmitting, downloading or storing any communication that is: discriminatory or harassing, derogatory, obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic, defamatory, threatening, for any purpose that is illegal or contrary to the code of conduct.
- Watch out for any signs of child abuse. Report any reasonable suspicions or concerns of abuse, any disclosure of abuse (past or ongoing) to your G pastor immediately.