

HOUSE CHURCH **Values and Practices**

1. Follow Jesus

Our one obsession is to truly know this Man—not based on what another person or on what a book says, but to know Jesus, the Son of God, as we discover Him personally. We want to know Him and to obey Him, as He obeyed the Father and moved with the Holy Spirit.

12 And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? Deuteronomy 10:12-13

In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And His commands are not burdensome. 1 John 5:3

But Christ has blessed you with the Holy Spirit. Now the Spirit stays in you, and you don't need any teachers. The Spirit is truthful and teaches you everything. So stay one in your heart with Christ, just as the Spirit taught you to do. 1 John 2:27 (and Jeremiah 31:34)

PRACTICE: We do this by placing the totality of the Scriptures in the forefront - Genesis through Revelation. We love His instructions, His words and His ways from the first page to the last and we give ourselves to them. We do this not to acquire knowledge but to discover who He is, how He loves, and what He desires.

We put a high importance on prayer and worship because they turn our attention to God and connects our hearts together as we extol Him and His ways. God dwells in the praises of His people so we place an emphasis on worshipping Him together because He is worthy of all praise. Let not the rocks cry out!

2. Love Deeply

We desire to extravagantly love our brothers and sisters in Christ as Jesus commanded us to do. Love is an extension of Who God is and is not based on how we feel. It is a decision we make to die daily and to follow the clear command of God. We long to be ones that give that love freely to one another through sharing, caring and through bearing each other's burdens.

*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13:35
You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. Leviticus 19:18*

All the believers were together and had everyone in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Acts 2: 44-45

PRACTICES: Meeting in homes fosters relationships. People cannot sit in the back row and just observe. We long to have the “love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost” (Romans 5:5) so that we can love the way He does. This is a supernatural mystery that we seek out in order to be like Him. He loved completely and we long to do the same. We are committed to learning how to live life together as a reflection of the Love that He has for us. We are resolute on this topic for how can we love God if we cannot love our brother? Our culture and normal human frame runs in the exact opposite direction. This is a counter-culture approach that was a non-negotiable way of life for Jesus, and we must take the same stand and appeal to the Lord to help us die daily to our own wants and desires in order to walk the way He walked.

3. Disciple ALL

Discipling is a requirement of the Kingdom. We are committed to both go out and make new disciples and to continually encourage one another to grow in Christ through the teachings of the Father and of the Son. God’s desire was that all would come to know Him and what He requires, and that is our desire as well, in our quest to be more like Him.

“And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant— these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, “I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.” Isaiah 56:6-8

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always. To the very end of the age. Matt 28:19-20

PRACTICES: We long to see those that don’t know Jesus to come to know Him and grow in Him. As we love Jesus well, we will begin to love what He loves and that is to bring people into His family. Our house churches will rhythmically create opportunities to invite friends and family to join them. People are NOT our project. This is not a “4 Steps to Evangelism” mindset; we just want to love people and be open to times when the Holy Spirit opens a door to share the goodness of God. Jesus came for the lost and He called to ordinary men and women to come follow Him. He called each of us to be Fishers of Men so we consider making new disciples as one of the greatest cries of our hearts...Lord, make us capable and worthy laborers for the harvest.

We believe that making disciples is for all people, for all times. We will never stop learning and growing, and we desire to be ones that comes along side of other believers to encourage them and to help them grow so that we will all run the race well. This requires deep trust and relationship beyond just a once a week gathering in order to honestly speak into each other's lives with all love and humility. Loving well means we bring accountability to each other's lives, as the Lord leads.

4. Equip one another

The body of Christ was meant to equip each other. The Kingdom is not about the gifting of one particular man or woman. We each have a part to play, and we each have something to bring. As we allow each person, young and old, to bring their piece we will see a well-rounded mature body emerge.

So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Eph 4:11-13

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good...just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 1 Cor. 12:7,12

PRACTICE: Churches in a home environment allow for the walking out of this value. As we all dig daily into the Word, the Holy Spirit will teach us and open our eyes to truths that we then share with each other during our gatherings. Each one, teaching each one - no gift is more necessary or more important than another. We make space and encourage each one to contribute, and we also receive in the context of submission and order. At The Way St Louis we believe that as the body moves, grows, expresses and matures, we will truly be His hands and feet.

MEETING IN HOMES IS NOT THE POINT, HOWEVER IT IS THE BEST MODEL IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH THE VALUES AND PRACTICES WE DESIRE TO EMBRACE.