

Missio Dei Church

Plans and Goals for 2018

as presented by the Elders of Missio Dei Church

John Gruber, Justin Gruber, Jesse Gruber and Nathan McCargo

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Dear Missio Dei Church

Almost every year since we have begun as a body back in 2013 we have recapped that year's blessings and looked forward to the next year's goals. We like to look at this time as something important: *We have another year before us. Will it be one of growth, or one of stagnation?* As elders, we must answer these questions for ourselves personally, but beyond that, we will answer to God for each and every one of you as well, and so it is our desire to have particular goals set not only for you, but also for ourselves as elders.

On December 31st, Elder John taught us on these goals in his sermon entitled Recap 2017. This article will outline each of them briefly below so that we can all move forward together as a family in 2018.

At our last elder meeting, we each agreed that the goals set for by John were to be prominent in the daily life of us at Missio Dei. Therefore, *it is our expectation that each Covenant Family Member engage deeply and regularly with the Recap 2017 teaching and the goals contained in it.* This means that we will be teaching on these topics throughout the year, bringing them up in Community Groups, and challenging each other and our Covenant Family Members with these goals regularly.

How can we move forward together as a family if we all do not take ownership for this material and engage with it in 2018?

So let's dive in.

GIVING

Whose money do you manage?

In 2018, it is our goal to see an increase in consistent, generous, cheerful giving. Some of you do not give, and you should start. Some of you give, but not consistently, and you should start. Some of you give reluctantly, not readily, and you should start. Some of you give out of guilt, but not cheerfully, and you should start.

Biblical giving is grounded in the concept of stewardship. God owns everything, and anything we *think* we own is God's. Because of this, we should have an open hand to anything and everything we own. 2 Corinthians 9 outlines some ways we should and should not give:

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

Our generous, open-handed giving ends in cheerful giving and God's glory. Therefore, we are to examine our finances closely to determine how much we can give. We do not hold to a certain percentage. Many churches teach the Old Testament tithe (10% of income). We do not because for some 10% may be too much, and for others 10% too little. Instead, we are to give "as each has decided in his own heart." So, in 2018, get your hands dirty in your finances and evaluate or reevaluate your giving to Missio Dei.

LOCATION

How will changing location help us fulfill the ministry mission to our community?

For several years now, a new location has been in our yearly goals, and as of yet, God has decided to continue to grace us with our current building. We have faith that God can and will do great things with Missio Dei in 2018 as He has in years past, and we surely hope that moving us to a more suitable location is a reachable goal for us this year. There are, of course, benefits to renting our space, however, as leaders it is our desire to alleviate the burden of setup and takedown week in and week out. Many churches flicker and fade away from burnout at this point, and, by the grace of God, our people have shown a tremendous amount of resilience and perseverance on the setup/takedown teams. Moving will free up a lot of time and energy that we could devote to other things such as additional teaching and ministry opportunities that we currently don't have available at our current rental.

Naturally, this ties very much into giving, as we would expect our cost at a more permanent location to increase from where we are in our rental home. Currently, we are estimating that a monthly income of \$3,000 would allow us to move and continue to maintain saving and outpouring of funds into our local community. To put that into perspective, if every current member (22) gave \$34/week, we would meet

our goal. If 30 people gave \$25/wk we would hit that goal. Is it reachable? Yes. Do we need to step up and get this done? Absolutely.

WHOLISTIC PERSONAL GROWTH IN CHRIST

Personal growth is always visible to others.

John made an important clarification on this point. The term “wholistic” is not referencing our own personal lives, it is referencing us as a community. *Wholistic* in the sense of each and every person at Missio Dei is to be experiencing personal spiritual growth in Christ leading to obvious visible change in that person’s life, and in the dynamic of our church family as a whole. This might seem obvious, after all, isn’t that what a church is? However, this is much more difficult in practice than it is in theory. Have you spent years living a stagnant Christian life? Have you backslidden farther in 2017 than you ever have before? Have you disengaged (either intentionally or unintentionally) from the things of God and from this church community? Then may the Lord convince you to change! And not just one or two of us, *all* of us need to change.

After a wonderful passage on the Church as a body, Paul concludes with this thought: *If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.* This means that we cannot slack off. No one can afford to slack off when it comes to spiritual disciplines and spiritual growth. If even one does, the whole body suffers. We must understand this if we are to strive for wholistic personal growth in Christ leading to obvious visible change in us.

How do I start? We as elders are looking into some different things to help facilitate this exact kind of growth, and we are excited to be presenting some options to you in the near future. Be on the lookout, and more importantly, be ready to engage with it!

In addition, John challenged us to be reading Romans 12 together as a family this year. Have you? Will you? What would our church look like if we fulfilled even half of the call in Romans 12?

INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

Is MD faithful to the Word?

Now, this is intended for the membership to think through, and less of “Is the leadership faithful to the Word in preaching/teaching?” We, as leaders, always strive to be biblically sound in our preaching and orthodox in our theology, and we will always invite challenges against us if we fail to live up to this high call God has placed on our lives.

But the follow up question here is this: *Is Missio Dei faithful to the weekly teaching, community groups, and men’s and women’s groups?* Are you faithful in attending? Are you sacrificing something to be there? Are you committed to your own personal spiritual growth enough that you will not miss a

primary thing for a secondary thing? We are a young church, and that has a whole slew of challenges to face in our generations. We live in a “you do you” culture that does not practice self control and the prioritization of important things over fun, comfortable things. Yet, this is our calling as Christians. In Luke 14, Jesus calls his disciples (this *includes* us as modern day disciples) to a radical denial of self. And not just, “*Oh man, CG is on the same night as the Eagle’s game,*” type “denial of self.” In the middle of the passage, Christ says, “*Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.*” (vs 27). Jesus is literally saying that whoever is not ready to walk, as Jesus did, to their deaths, cannot truly be a disciple of Christ. Too often we lose this among the flashing lights of the feel-good culture around us, but Christ did not call us to some halfway Christian life. His call on your life is 100% all the time. So be sure to keep primary things primary in 2018.

INDIVIDUALLY COMMITTED IN SERVICE

Are we planned out, scheduled out, and having everything in its place?

We’ve already talked about giving, but that was specifically giving of your money. As we saw in Luke 14, Jesus wants our life, and while we’re still living our life, He wants our *time*. In our Covenant Family Membership document, we lay out the foundation of what this means for those seeking to become a member at Missio Dei Church:

Being committed as a CFM carries the following familial expectations: 1. Family Gathering- active participation in ministry and service, and active involvement in corporate worship (attendance, worship in song, prayer, and sitting under teaching), 2. Family Connection- to be known intimately in the Missio Dei family (established through attending Community Groups, Bible Studies, and other discipleship opportunities), and 3. Family Caring- generous giving of time, talents and material and financial resources (giving generously and regularly of their finances, serving regularly in church events as well as in day to day service of other church members).

At our core, it is our desire to echo Christ in Luke 14. If it’s all He wants, it’s all we should strive to give. This, however, requires forethought. Insight. Time in planning and organization. Are you doing that? You can’t commit to service if you don’t know how to properly manage your life and your time. If you need help becoming more organized, there are plenty of resources available, including *Do More Better: A Practical Guide to Productivity* by Tim Challies which will provide you with a Christian perspective on organization and productivity for God’s glory.

ADDING TO THE CHURCH

Do we have open and unashamed conversations about Jesus Christ with people you know?

First and foremost God is always responsible for adding souls into His family. We do not carry any salvific abilities. And yet, God has called us to a life of evangelism (Matt. 28). This is yet another simple fact about what Christianity is, and yet the question ever haunts us, doesn't it? *Are we sharing the gospel we claim is so precious with the people around us often and regularly?* This is something that we can never do enough, and yet we're doing far too little. So, that's why this is our goal in 2018, not so we can grow Missio Dei's numbers, fame, or giving base, but rather so that we can stand before God as obedient children of His Word and commands.

DEVOTED IN PRAYER

Posting and praying are two different things.

And finally, we were challenged to be devoted in prayer. If we're honest, we can probably say to ourselves that we're not the best at prayer. We know we need to, but we don't. Perhaps we don't know how, perhaps we're just lazy. Either way, this final goal is a high calling. Paul Miller rightly points out that, *You don't "experience" God. You get to know Him (through prayer). You submit to Him. You get to enjoy Him.* Prayer is an integral, foundational means of grace to the believer, and we are to be people who bathe each and every decision, request, and praise in prayer to our Father. Prayer will unite us together as People of the Way, and will grow us closer together as a family as we lift one another up in prayer as we live life together.

CONCLUSION

And so concludes our goals for Missio Dei Church for the year 2018. As was mentioned earlier, a Family Meeting will take place in short order to go over these goals in more detail, as well as to outline for you our plan to help us all grow in each and every one of these areas *together* in 2018.

On behalf of the Elders of Missio Dei Church,

*May Christ be your glory and goal in 2018,
John Gruber, Justin Gruber, Jesse Gruber and Nathan McCargo*