

BECOMING A



FLOURISHING CHURCH

Guidebook

**Flourishing Churches** are led by

**Flourishing Leaders** who are

**Flourishing Disciples**



Dear Church Leader,

We are thrilled that you and your church are engaging in the Becoming a Flourishing Church material. We often find that churches have spent so much time and energy coming into ECO they are at a bit of a loss as to what to do once they are actually in ECO! The following material is meant to help your church refocus its energy, health, and vitality now that you are part of the growing movement of ECO churches.

**The premise of this series is that flourishing churches are led by flourishing leaders who are themselves flourishing disciples.** It is our prayer that as you engage with the material personally, you will grow in your own discipleship and spiritual maturity, and that you will have a greater sense of your individual call and role as a leader.

It is also our prayer that as you engage with this material collectively as a body of believers, that you will have a greater sense of how your church can grow and move forward so that it can flourish mightily, just as God designed it to do. We look forward to seeing and hearing how God moves in your life personally, as well as in the life of your church. May you continue to flourish for His kingdom!

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Dana S. Allin  
Synod Executive

Rev. Lisa S. Johnson  
Director of Lay Leadership Development

# Table of Contents

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Introductory Materials.....                             | Pages 3 to 6   |
| Session One - Introduction.....                         | Pages 7 to 9   |
| Session Two - Flourishing as a Disciple (Part 1).....   | Pages 10 to 17 |
| Session Three - Flourishing as a Disciple (Part 2)..... | Pages 18 to 19 |
| Session Four - Flourishing as a Leader.....             | Pages 20 to 25 |
| Session Five - Flourishing as a Church.....             | Pages 26 to 32 |
| Session Six - Next Steps to Flourishing.....            | Pages 33 to 37 |

# Becoming a Flourishing Church Process

## Q & A as you begin



### Who should be involved the Flourishing Church process?

The material is designed for current elders on session. However, other groups within the church such as deacons, staff, or ministry teams could benefit greatly from engaging in the process.

### What is contained in the six sessions?

The first session introduces the process and begins to get leaders thinking about what it means to be a flourishing church. The second and third sessions help leaders discover their own health as disciples of Jesus, and develop an individual plan for continued growth. These sessions also help normalize conversations in meetings about the vitality of our personal discipleship. The fourth session looks at the five-fold gifting in Ephesians 4. This scripture passage gives leaders a better understanding of the role that God has called each person to play in the church. The fifth and sixth sessions look at the vitality of the congregation in six areas. These sessions help churches to discern where to focus energy for growth in the coming year.

### How long will the process take?

It is assumed that your session or leadership group will meet monthly and therefore the process would take six months to complete. Some groups might meet two times a month and thus the material would take three months. It is recommended however, that you do not go any faster than twice a month, as there is homework and reflection that needs to be completed in between sessions. Each session takes approximately one hour to complete. Schedule timeframes are given for each agenda item. Before you begin, please appoint a group facilitator to help plan and prepare each meeting. A note to Flourishing Church facilitators can be found on pages 5 & 6.

### How do we schedule time for "Becoming a Flourishing Church?"

Our experience is that in order to have personal and communal transformation as a group, you need to be prepared to devote an hour to this material each time you meet. We would not recommend adding an additional hour to an already long Session meeting. Rather, devote an hour to this material and you will find that the rest of your business will get done quicker and with a better spirit of cooperation.

### What is the structure of each session?

Each session has six components. First is to prepare our hearts and minds to focus on what God wants to do in our lives and leadership. Second is to listen to the material on the video. Third is to individually reflect on what we have just heard. Fourth is to share with one another what we have heard using some targeted questions. Fifth is to decide what we will do individually or as a group in response to what we have heard. Sixth is to pray and commit ourselves and our actions to the Lord.



## How do we decide what to do after the six-session process?

At the end of the process, your leadership will talk about the strengths and weakness of you or your church. This discussion will lead to developing an action plan for how your church will want to grow in the next year. Each church that is participating in the process will be assigned an ECO liaison. This liaison is very familiar with the available resources and how to coach your leaders in developing an action plan.

## How do we register as a church?

In order to assign you a liaison, as well as to seek your feedback, we ask that all participating churches register. Each church should choose a person who will facilitate the process and keep it moving forward. Usually this facilitator would be the pastor, however it could be someone else. We ask that only the facilitator register his or her church to avoid duplicates and confusion. There are several ways to register:

1. There is a form that was in the packet that was mailed to your church that can be filled out and sent back.
2. There is a copy of the form included in the online version. See below for more information about the online content.
3. You can e-mail Kim Davis ( [kim@eco-pres.org](mailto:kim@eco-pres.org) ) with the following information:
  - Church Name
  - Address
  - Facilitator Name
  - Facilitator E-mail
  - Facilitator Preferred Phone Number

## What materials do we need?

A paper copy of the Guidebook and a DVD will be sent to your church after the National Gathering. The church can then make copies as needed for all who are participating. All materials are also available online. To obtain online access, go to [www.flourishmovement.org](http://www.flourishmovement.org) and register for a complimentary account. Then sign up to take the “Becoming a Flourishing Church” class, which is also complimentary.

The online format will have an electronic copy of the Guidebook, which each participant needs. All of the videos associated with each session are also available, as well as any supplemental or additional material that may be needed. For example, in Session 4 there is an additional video of Alan Hirsch explaining APEST at our National Gathering in 2014 for those that want a deeper explanation than is provided in the session.

Another valuable resource is the ECO liaison who will be assigned to your church and is available for questions. Your liaison will be particularly beneficial in the last two sessions to help your church leadership determine a path forward.

## What if I want to go through the material but my church is not ready?

Obviously, the best way forward is for a whole church session or wider leadership to engage the process. However, sometimes the church is not ready or is involved with something else. If that is the case, an individual can always obtain a free account at [www.flourishmovement.org](http://www.flourishmovement.org) and sign up for the free class “Becoming a Flourishing Church”. Taking the class will give one access to all the video and material and people will likely find some benefit by engaging in the material individually.

## What if I have other questions?

You may post your questions at [www.flourishmovement.org](http://www.flourishmovement.org) on the e-course under “Forums” and allow others to converse with you. Your ECO liaison, will contact you shortly after you register and can answer your questions. If you have questions prior to registering or receiving your liaison, please contact Lisa Johnson at [lisa@eco-pres.org](mailto:lisa@eco-pres.org).



## Note to Facilitators:

Thank you for agreeing to lead your Session through the “Becoming a Flourishing Church” process over the next six months. Your leadership role is an important one both in the technical sense and in the spiritual sense. You are welcome to have more than one facilitator, if you prefer to work with others in this role.

Technically, you will be in charge of details: scheduling, preparation, communication, staying focused on the agenda, staying on schedule, and encouraging each person to do the assigned homework.

Spiritually, you are helping to create an atmosphere where your team makes space for God. Your goal as a facilitator is to help your team listen for God and listen to each other while working your way through the materials provided. In order to be an effective spiritual leader, we suggest that you spend some time in quiet preparation with the Lord. This resource has been intentionally designed to be transformational and not just informational, so the role of the Holy Spirit is vital in this endeavor.

## Before you begin “Becoming a Flourishing Church”:

1. Introduce the resource to your team via your enthusiastic personal explanation of it and hand out the Guidebooks to each leader.
2. Decide when is the best time for your team to do the process together. You will need one hour per session. You will need at least 2 weeks between sessions for homework assignments.
3. Look at a calendar and decide when you will start and finish your 6 sessions.
4. Register as a church. See registration options on page 4.

## Before each session, you will need to get a few things ready:

1. Prepare yourself spiritually to be open to how the Holy Spirit wants to move among your team. Look over the agenda for each session.
2. Prepare the DVD/downloaded video to be viewed by your group. (Please note that Session #3 has no video).
3. Remind leaders to bring their Guidebooks to each session. (Please note: before Session #5, you will need to make copies of the Church Health Survey for each leader.)
4. Have a whiteboard or flipchart to write down information for the whole group as needed.



## During each session:

1. You will set the tone and the rhythm of your time together. You will provide transitional introductions for each part of the agenda. For example, after each video is completed, you would say something like, "We will now spend some time in silent reflection on what we have just heard before we discuss it together."

Please know that you are not alone in this endeavor. Should any questions arise, please do not hesitate to contact Lisa Johnson, Director of Lay Leadership Development: [lisa@eco-pres.org](mailto:lisa@eco-pres.org).

Praying for you and your churches,  
**Lisa Johnson & Dana Allin**



# Session #1: Introduction

## Agenda, Discussion and Homework (Allow approximately one hour)

**Goal: To create space for God together, to listen to the Spirit's leading through teaching, reflection and sharing with one another, and to act on what we hear about growing a Christ-centered flourishing church.**

### 1. Prepare (5 minutes)

- Have each person offer a one-word check-in. (Think of one word that honestly describes how you feel right now. This is a way of connecting with each other and offering yourself to God.)
- Enter into a brief time of silence in order to still hearts, clear minds, and become attentive. Silence is a way of waiting, watching, and listening for the presence of God's Spirit in your midst. Meditate on Scripture:

*Acts 2:42-27 (NIV)*

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

### 2. Listen (15 minute video) – Flourishing Church

### 3. Reflect on what we heard (3 minutes)

**Reflect silently for a few moments on the key points of the video:**

- Flourishing churches are led by flourishing leaders who are themselves flourishing disciples.
- Flourishing disciples make flourishing leaders that grow flourishing churches.

**Reflect silently on these questions:**

- A. How would you describe a flourishing church?
- B. Name one way in which you would say your church is flourishing.





#### 4. Share what we heard (30 minutes)

Break into small groups of 3 people for discussion around the following questions: (15 minutes)

- A. How would you describe a flourishing church? List the qualities of a flourishing church.
- B. Name one way in which you would say your church is flourishing.
- C. Come back together as a large group (15 minutes) and do the following:

Have a representative from each group share.

- The first time around, share the qualities of a flourishing church.
- The second time around, share where you see your particular church flourishing. (Record the group's observations on a whiteboard or paper for future reference\*.)

\*You will have more opportunities to discern where God wants you to grow during the next five sessions.

#### 5. Decide to commit to the Becoming the Flourishing Church process. (3 minutes)

Suggested motion: "We the Session of \_\_\_\_\_(church name)\_\_\_\_\_ commit to complete the "Becoming a Flourishing Church" process with the following agreements:

- Be present for all six sessions.
- Be open to the moving of the Holy Spirit in new ways.
- Listen well and respectfully to one another.
- Come prepared to each session with your homework assignments completed.

#### 6. Pray together and commit your action steps to the Lord. (5 minutes)

- Thank God for the ways in which your church is flourishing.
- Pray for the areas in which your church is struggling.



# Homework Assignment Session #1



To be completed by next session on \_\_\_\_\_(date)  
Bring this completed worksheet to your next session.

## Where do I need to grow as a disciple of Jesus? Discerning through reflection and prayer

- 1. Gratitude:** reflect on what you are thankful to God for.
- 2. Invitation** for God to search me:

### **Meditate:**

*Psalm 139:23-24 (ESV)*

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test my thoughts.  
Point out anything you find in me that makes you sad,  
and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

**Pray** - God, show me what you want me to see as I examine my life as your follower...

### **3. Questions:**

- Where/how might I be struggling or experiencing frustration?
- Where have I been stuck/plateaued in my growth toward the likeness of Christ?
- If I were to sit down with a trusted friend and ask them, "What are my blind spots? What are my weaknesses as a disciple?", what would they say to me? (Examples: growing in my prayer life, being able to forgive, increasing my Biblical knowledge)

- 4. Talk with Jesus:** Offer to Jesus what you have discovered above (i.e. confession, seeking forgiveness, seeking counsel, giving thanks).

- 5. Pulling it all together:** Lord, what are you saying to me? What growth area are you showing me for my discipleship?

- 6. Focusing:** What one area would you like me to give my focused attention to in the next few months? What specifically would you like to be different in me after those 2-4 months?

**NOTE:** For further exploration of your health as a disciple, you may choose to take a Discipleship 360 Assessment by going to [www.flourishmovement.org](http://www.flourishmovement.org) and clicking on "Discipleship 360 Assessment". The link will allow you to invite 3-6 people to answer questions about you as a disciple and allow you to see your results.



# Session #2: Flourishing as a Disciple Part 1

## Agenda, Discussion and Homework (Allow approximately one hour)

*Goal: To create space for God together, to listen to the Spirit's leading through teaching, reflection and sharing with one another, and to act on what we hear about growing a Christ-centered flourishing church.*

### 1. Prepare (5 minutes)

- Have each person offer a one-word check-in. (Think of one word that honestly describes how you feel right now. This is a way of connecting with each other and offering yourself to God.)
- Enter into a brief time of silence in order to still hearts, clear minds, and become attentive. Silence is a way of waiting, watching, and listening for the presence of God's Spirit in your midst. Meditate on Scripture:

*Matthew 22:34-39 (NIV)*

*Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."*

### 2. Listen (15 minute video) – Flourishing as a Disciple

### 3. Reflect on what we heard (2 minutes)

Reflect silently for a few moments on the key points of the video:

- A. Flourishing disciples...grow in their love for the Lord through their:
  - Head - They know more of God through his Word.
  - Heart - They grow in intimacy with Jesus and in the likeness of Him.
  - Hands - They live their faith out in their daily lives.
- B. Developing a personal design for discipleship will help me to grow more into the image of Christ in areas in which I may be lacking.
- C. Four components of design for discipleship:
  - Engaging with God
  - Engaging with Truth
  - Engaging with others
  - Engaging in real life experiences



#### 4. Share what we heard (30 minutes)

Break into small groups of 3 people for discussion around the following questions:  
(15 minutes)

- A. In the video, Dana asked us to think about a person in our life that we consider a Flourishing disciple. Who did you think of and why?
- B. Share with your group the area of discipleship in which you think God wants you to grow.

#### 5. Decide how we will act differently based on what we heard. (15 minutes)

Take the next 15 minutes to begin working on your design for discipleship using the work sheet on the next page. Your homework before the next session is to finish this design.

#### 6. Pray as a group about becoming more mature disciples of Christ. (2 minutes)

Pray over the designs and your commitment to grow through using them.

Additional Resources located on the e-course.

Tim Fearer (Discipleship Initiative) - video on Connexions Design

360 Assessment link

Blank discipleship design template



# Homework Assignment Session #2



To be completed by next session on \_\_\_\_\_(date)  
Bring this completed worksheet to your next session.

## Developing a Plan to Flourish as a Disciple

From your reflection in preparation for this session, how does the Lord want you to grow as a disciple?

What activities will you need to do in the following categories in order to be transformed toward the above goal?

Activities should be SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Related to Vision, and Time Specific. (On page 13 there are sample activities to get you thinking, and then on pages 14 - 16 there are sample designs in final form. On page 17 there is a blank template for you to write on. This template is also available electronically on the "Becoming a Flourishing Church" e-course ([flourishmovement.org](http://flourishmovement.org)).

- 1. Activities to Engage with God** - How do you want to engage with God in this area? (daily prayer, examen, fasting, solitude, ect.)
- 2. Activities to engage with knowledge and truth** - How do you want to engage with scripture to aid in your growth? What other materials could be helpful in the development of your design?
- 3. Activities to engage with others** - How do you want to engage with God in this area? Who else can be brought along to help in your design? Is there a community that can pray for you, hold you accountable, and give you feedback?
- 4. Activities to engage with experiences** - What types of experiences can you have in order to foster growth? What are some isolated experiences that can help test and strengthen your growth upon which you can reflect?



# Sample Activities for Discipleship Designs

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Activities to Engage with God (Spiritual)</b></p> <p>petitionary prayer / listening prayer / prayer walking / spiritual readings of scripture (lectio divina, Wesleyan spiritual reading, Puritan scripture conversations) / scripture memorization / meditation /contemplation / dream interpretation / exercising-receiving spiritual gifts of communication (word of knowledge, prophetic speech, tongues, interpretation of tongues, visions) / confession / repentance / reciting creeds &amp; confessions / waiting on God / silence / solitude / fasting / Examen / praise / giving thanks / singing / giving / journaling / devotional practices / dancing before the Lord / listening to spiritual music / listening to scripture / listening to devotional writings or poetry / contemplating spiritual works of art / participation in Lord's Supper / healing prayer / anointing with oil / power encounter</p> | <p><b>Activities to with Experience (Experiential)</b></p> <p>challenging assignments / workshop / learning by doing / on-the-job-training / on-the-street ministry / short term assignment / short term mission / field trips / cross-cultural experiences / practicing skills / offering ministry / receiving ministry / partially-planned experiences / partially-equipped-for experiences / hardship / exposure to difficulty / exposure to new realities / travel / relief work / social work / praying for others (healing, "deliverance," etc.) imposed pressure / deadlines / sink-or-swim experiences / testing / activities requiring faith / association with what is foreign / internships / simulations / role play / entrusted with responsibility / going beyond what I think I can do / discomfort and pain / failure / persecution / playing to strengths / fruitfulness / success / celebration / using of head knowledge / simple obedience</p> |
| <p><b>Activities to Engage with Others (Relational)</b></p> <p>Intercessory prayer, / interviewing / observing role model / mentoring / coaching / consulting / work group / seeking counsel / spiritual direction / group participation / covenant group / sharing coffee / time with friends / time with family / networking / group reflection / group study / group prayer / group meal / giving testimony / giving encouragement / giving account / confrontation giving correction / serving together / recreation – play / meals together / hospitality / visitation / care / sharing / reconciliation / conflict resolution</p>   | <p><b>Activities to Engage with Knowledge and Truth (Instructional)</b></p> <p>Bible study / listening to sermons-teaching / Q&amp;A / consultations / seminars / classes / degree programs / books / articles / CDs / DVDs / YouTube clips / watching a film / researching / writing (articles, papers, plays, sketches, curricula, sermons, stories, poetry) / creating power point / creating videos / audio-visual / internet / quizzes / case studies / problem-based learning / round table discussion / taking notes / sharing notes / study groups / creating lessons, teaching, speeches / homework / debate / kinesthetic learning activities / demonstrations / analysis / evaluation / role play</p>   |

# Sample #1

Name: Sample Design #1

Date: 2/1/17

Topic of Focus: Strengthening Biblical Knowledge

Goal: By 5/31/17 (date) I will: 1) Possess a basic working knowledge of the names & order of the books/sections within the Bible.

2) Become familiar with the content and flow of the Book of Philippians.

| <b>Activities to Engage with God (Spiritual)</b>   | <b>Activities to with Experience (Experiential)</b>   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) 1x a day - Ask God to give me understanding and a command of the material I want to learn.</li><li>2) 1x a day - Ask God to speak to me and guide me as I read Philippians and prepare a section to share.</li></ol>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Prepare and present on a section from Philippians to the youth group at my church.</li><li>2) Write out from memory the books of the Bible in order of appearance in table of contents.</li></ol>  |
| <b>Activities to Engage with Others (Relational)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) At least 2x a week converse with parents about what I am reading in Philippians.</li><li>2) Every other week meet with Pastor Bob for an hour to discuss Philippians (usually Thurs / 2pm).</li><li>3) Ask my mom, dad, Pastor Bob to pray daily for my growth in knowledge of the Bible /Philippians.</li></ol> | <b>Activities to Engage with Knowledge and Truth (Instructional)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Regularly read through Philippians, making annotations and writing questions in a notebook.</li><li>2) Use reference book / on-line resources as needed.</li><li>3) Study, get familiar with, and memorize a chart of Bible books – using any variety of methods.</li></ol> |

# Sample #2

Name: Sample Design #2

Date: 1/11/17

Topic of Focus: Discipline of Fasting

Goal: By 4/16/17 - - Easter (date) I will: Practice the regular discipline of fasting as a means to know and more freely love and serve Christ.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Activities to Engage with God (Spiritual)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Daily ask God to help me reach goal.</li><li>2) Daily ask God to show me any obstacles preventing me from reaching my goal.</li><li>3) Daily ask God to speak and minister to me while exploring and establishing the discipline of fasting.</li></ol>  | <p><b>Activities to with Experience (Experiential)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Guided by my notes from interviews, prayer and reading, try a wake-up until dinner water fast and take notes / journal about my experience.</li><li>2) Try a full day fast (using what I have learned from resources and partial day fast) by March 20th.</li><li>3) Start some level of regular fasting by Lent.</li></ol> |
| <p><b>Activities to Engage with Others (Relational)</b></p> <p>Activities to engage with others (Relational)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Ask 3 faithful friends to pray for me each day to reach my outcome.</li><li>2) Interview two Christians who regularly fast and take notes for use as I explore by January 20th.</li><li>3) Invite a friend to explore fasting with me by January 15th.</li></ol> | <p><b>Activities to Engage with Knowledge and Truth (Instructional)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Make a list of and examine all passages in the New Testament on fasting by February 1st.</li><li>2) Read an article on fasting, taking notes for use as I explore by February 1st.</li></ol>   |



# Sample #3

Name: Sample Design #3

Date: 9/1/16

Topic of Focus: Leading Small Group

Goal: By 1/1/17 I will: Prepare to lead a small group.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Activities to Engage with God (Spiritual)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Daily ask God for help and wisdom as I learn to lead a small group.</li> <li>2) Daily ask God to show me insights about leading a group as I study His word.</li> </ol>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Activities to with Experience (Experiential)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Observe Bob and Sally's leadership of small group for one month.</li> <li>2) Attend, if appropriate, 2 other small groups.</li> <li>3) Assist in the leadership of small group for the month of October.</li> <li>4) Take primary leadership of small group for the month of November.</li> </ol> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Activities to Engage with Others (Relational)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ask my current small group leaders, Bob and Sally, to pray for me as I seek to learn how to lead a small group.</li> <li>2) Interview three small group leaders about their experiences in leading a small group.</li> <li>3) Meet every 2 weeks to talk to Bob and Sally to give me guidance in leading a small group.</li> </ol> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Activities to Engage with Knowledge and Truth (Instructional)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read the gospels daily during this time and journal about the characteristics of leadership as seen in Jesus.</li> <li>2) Read a chapter a week in "Leading Small Groups with Purpose".</li> </ol>   |

# Becoming a Flourishing Church Activity

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic of Focus:

Goal: By \_\_\_\_\_ (date) I will: \_\_\_\_\_

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|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Activities to Engage with God (Spiritual)</p>     | <p>Activities to with Experience (Experiential)</p>                  |
| <p>Activities to Engage with Others (Relational)</p> | <p>Activities to Engage with Knowledge and Truth (Instructional)</p> |



# Session #3: Flourishing as a Disciple Part 2

## Agenda, Discussion and Homework (Allow 45 minutes)

*Goal: To create space for God together, to listen to the Spirit's leading through teaching, reflection and sharing with one another, and to act on what we hear about growing a Christ-centered flourishing church.*

### 1. Prepare (5 minutes)

- Have each person offer a one-word check-in. (Think of one word that honestly describes how you feel right now as a way of connecting with each other and offering yourself to God.)
- Enter into a brief time of silence to still hearts, clear minds, and become attentive. Silence is a way of waiting, watching, and listening for the presence of God's Spirit in your midst. Meditate on Scripture:

John 15:1-8 (NIV)

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

### 2. Listen to each other (30 minutes)

- Break into triads and share your design for discipleship with each other. Also, pray for each person and his or her growth after he or she shares (10 minutes each).
- Please remember, this is a time to listen to each other and not to fix or advise, unless the person sharing asks for your input.

### 3. Decide together (stay in triads) how we will act differently based on what we heard. (5 minutes)

- How will we keep our design in front of us daily?
- Who can help us to stay committed to our design?

### 4. Pray together and commit your action step to the Lord.

#### (Come back together as large group - 5 minutes)

Have someone close in prayer and ask God to help each person grow more into God's likeness as the group commits to his or her individual designs.

### 5. Assign Homework

APEST self-evaluation (on page 19) sheet due by next session \_\_\_\_\_(date).



## Discovering your APEST Typology

Look at the following definitions of APEST ministry roles that are articulated in Ephesians 4. As you read through the descriptions, rank each role 1 through 5. Use number 1 for the area most like you and use number 5 for the role that is least like you.

If you want to investigate your gifting further, you may take a 360 degree APEST assessment. You can purchase a validated version at [www.APEST.org](http://www.APEST.org).

\_\_\_\_\_ **Apostolic** – I like to start and lead new projects or ministries. I like to look at the big picture of an organization or church and think about the underlying systems and values. I like to develop new leaders to do ministry or initiate projects that I personally may not be suited for. I like to be future focused and imagine big possibilities. I may unintentionally leave people behind or wound people in my apostolic role.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Prophetic** – I often bring people back to the ultimate purpose of God and our organization or church. I have a heart and passion for the poor, oppressed, and those that are overlooked. I am not happy with the status quo and simply meeting the needs of congregation members. I want to bring God's grace and mercy to those outside of the church in tangible ways. Sometimes my passion for those outside the church can rub people the wrong way.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Evangelistic** – I like to be enthusiastic and tell people about things I believe in. I like to recruit people to a common purpose. I desperately want those around me both inside and outside the church to know the love of Jesus. I also want those inside the church to know that their identity and security is in Christ. Because of my enthusiasm I can sometimes be seen as pushy or overly optimistic.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Shepherd** – I care deeply for people. I take the hurting of other people seriously and their concerns are on my mind frequently. I sometimes can care for people so much that I can absorb their pain deeply. I love to be with people one-on-one and develop long-term relationships to help them grow toward maturity in Christ. Sometimes, because of my caring nature, I can be trampled by others or even taken advantage of.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Teacher** – I like to understand and grow in deep knowledge of concepts. I like to explain concepts and deeper biblical truths to other people. I am energized when people understand concepts for themselves and find ways to apply those concepts and insights to different facets of their life. Sometimes I can get too caught up in irrelevant details or talk over the heads of people.





# Session #4: Flourishing as a Leader

## Agenda, Discussion and Homework (Allow 55 minutes)

*Goal: To create space for God together, to listen to the Spirit's leading through teaching, reflection and sharing with one another, and to act on what we hear about growing a Christ-centered flourishing church.*

### 1. Prepare (3 minutes)

- Have each person offer a one-word check-in. (Think of one word that honestly describes how you feel right now. This is a way of connecting with each other and offering yourself to God.)
- Enter into a brief time of **silence** in order to still hearts, clear minds, and become attentive. Silence is a way of waiting, watching, and listening for the presence of God's Spirit in your midst. Meditate on Scripture:

Ephesians 4:1-7 (NIV)

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

### 2. Listen (15 minute video) – Flourishing Church

As you listen, refer to the Ephesians passage on Page 23 and the Flourishing Church Diagram on Page 24

### 3. Reflect on what we heard (2 minutes)

Reflect silently for a few moments on the key points of the video:

- The roles are given to the whole church, not just clergy.
- All five roles are still active and necessary.
- Understand of the Five Roles: Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Shepherd and Teacher.

Reflect silently on these questions:

According to your APEST self-evaluation, what do you discern is your primary and secondary APEST giftings?



#### 4. Share what we heard (15 minutes)

A. As a whole group, have each person share their top two roles. Chart the responses on the table on page 25 by adding names as each person shares.



(Facilitator note: Ideally this table could be written on a whiteboard or flipchart so that whole group can see it. Alternatively, use the following page for your group to chart your responses.)

Example

| Apostle | Prophet  | Evangelist | Shepherd | Teacher |
|---------|----------|------------|----------|---------|
| Joe (1) |          |            | Joe (2)  |         |
|         | Jane (1) |            | Jane (2) |         |
|         |          |            | Jim (2)  | Jim (1) |

B. As you look at the chart what do you notice about the distribution of the gifts amongst your team? What roles are most prevalent? What roles are less prevalent? How do you think this affects the ministry of your team?

#### 5. Decide together how we will act differently based on what we've heard. (10 minutes)

Take 2 minutes to silently reflect on this question:

- What is one way I could live more fully into my #1 APEST gifting (on this team, in my church, in my life)?
- Have each person share one idea.

#### 6. Pray together and commit your action steps to the Lord. (3 minutes)

Pray for each leader to more fully live into their top APEST gifting.

#### Additional Resources:

Permanent Revolution, Alan Hirsch (ISBN: 978-0470907740 *Jossey Bass San Francisco 2012*)  
2015 National Gathering video, Alan Hirsch (available on the e-course)



# Homework Assignment Session #4



To be completed by next session on \_\_\_\_\_(date)

- Continue to work on you Discipleship Design and keep it in front of you daily.
- Observe where you see your APEST role guiding your thoughts and actions.

## Ephesians 4:1-16 (Adapted from the ESV)

*I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

*<sup>7</sup> But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

*<sup>8</sup> Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to his people." <sup>9</sup> (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

*<sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*

*<sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*





# TRADITIONAL VIEW



# Rediscovered Biblical View







# Session #5: Flourishing as a Church

## Agenda, Discussion and Homework (Allow approximately one hour)

*Goal: To create space for God together, to listen to the Spirit's leading through teaching, reflection and sharing with one another, and to act on what we hear about growing a Christ-centered flourishing church.*

### 1. Prepare (3 minutes)

- Have each person offer a one-word check-in. (Think of one word that honestly describes how you feel right now. This is a way of connecting with each other and offering yourself to God.)
- Enter into a brief time of **silence** in order to still hearts, clear minds, and become attentive. Silence is a way of waiting, watching, and listening for the presence of God's Spirit in your midst. Meditate on Scripture:

#### *Ephesians 4:11-16 (Adapted from the ESV)*

*And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

### 2. Listen (25 minute video) - Becoming a Flourishing Church

### 3. Reflect on what we heard (10 minutes)

Each person take the Healthy Church Competency Survey on page 30.

### 4. Share what we heard (25 minutes)

Break into small groups of 3 people for discussion around the following questions based on your answers from the test: (15 minutes)

- A. Share what you see as the main strength of your church and why.
- B. Share what you see as the main growth area for your church and why.
- C. (next page)



C. After sharing & discussion, what level of consensus can you come to about your church's top strengths and growth areas?

Come back together as a large group and have one spokesperson share your answer to Letter C. (10 minutes)



**Facilitator note:** It might be helpful to capture these responses on a white board or an flipchart.

### 5. Decide together how we will act differently based on what we heard. (10 minutes)

- You will do this together in Session #6 after the Church Health Survey results have been compiled and tabulated.
- Please turn in your Church Health Survey to the facilitator.
- Assign homework: continue to work daily on your Discipleship Design this month.

### 6. Pray together and commit your action step to the Lord. (2 minutes)

- Thank God for the ways in which your church is flourishing.
- Pray for the areas in which your church is struggling.



**Facilitator note:** Use the Excel spreadsheet after this session to compile your results found on the e-course in Session Five.



# Healthy Church Competency Descriptions

There are many wonderful instruments that are useful in considering how well a church is flourishing. For our purposes, we are going to adapt the “6 Movement Competencies” or qualities that have been identified by the 100 Movement (100M) Initiative. These movement competencies were originally identified in Alan Hirsch’s book, “The Forgotten Ways” as necessary components for exponential church growth.

We are using this specific tool for the following reasons. First, the leaders of the 100 Movement Initiative have identified ECO as an organization that has the potential to become a true Christian movement. It helps us, therefore, to use those metrics as we continue to work with 100M. Second, as we looked carefully at these qualities, we saw a parallel between their 6 competencies and the 5 shifts that ECO has previously identified.

- From “clergy-centered” to an “unleashed laity”
- From “safety and preservation” to “risk-taking and expansion”
- From “homogeneous leadership prepared for Christendom” to “preparing all of God’s people for a post-Christian culture”
- From “purely attractional model of ministry” to “missional AND attractional”
- From an “addition/subtraction mentality” to “multiplication mindset”

So, in using the movement competencies, we are not changing directions but enhancing where we are already going. Below is a brief description of the competencies.

## Competency #1 – Identity Declaring

In several pointed conversations, Jesus asks his followers to declare that He is Messiah- the sent one of God. He tells people that when they declare him as Lord, it will require a clear focus and commitment. Jesus tells them that they will need to choose Him even above their own families. This competency looks at the extent to which a congregation is able to have a singular commitment to Lord. It asks the church to look at its vision and mission to see if they clearly identify Jesus as Lord in word and in deed. To be truly identity declaring, the mission and vision of a church needs to be clear. The mission and vision also needs to be embraced by the congregation and it needs to be consistent with the values of God’s Kingdom for the greater community. This competency also looks at the extent to which the covenant partners sacrificially serve God’s purposes in the congregation and in the world.

## Competency #2 Risk Tribalizing

Scripture is full of stories of God calling people to risk for the sake of His mission. We see God calling Abram to leave the land with which he was familiar to go to an unknown place. When Jesus calls the disciples, he tells them to leave everything and follow him. These are not just individual stories, but reflect the theme that if we are going to be His disciples, we must pick up our cross daily and follow Him. This competency examines the extent to which a congregation, its covenant partners, and its leaders are willing to risk for the sake of the mission. It also examines if a congregation takes occasional or normative risks.



## Competency #3 – Disciple Making

The heart of Christ is that we “make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey everything he has commanded.” This competency looks at how well the church makes fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. It asks the extent to which a congregation is structured and devoted to the making of mature disciples. It also asks whether the covenant partners, especially the leaders, are intentionally investing in others to help them in their maturity as followers of Christ.

## Competency #4 Incarnational Messaging

The beauty of God’s mission to restore a relationship with us was that he didn’t require us to first come to Him, but sent Himself in the person of Jesus. We not only see important theology in the incarnation, but we see the strategy of God who was willing to meet us in the messiness of our context. Often churches try to evangelize by attracting people rather than trying to send its people into the world. This competency measures the willingness and consistency with which the church and its covenant partners authentically engage in their surrounding community for the gospel.

## Competency #5 Leader Releasing

In recent history, the church has been centered upon the leadership of the clergy and staff of the congregation. The resulting culture that has evolved is that the congregation pays the clergy and staff to do the ministry for them. Every true Christian movement, however, has had at its core an embracing of the totality of the ministry by all of God’s people. This competency looks at a couple of factors. First, it looks at the extent to which the clergy and staff view their role as encouraging, equipping and empowering the body to do its role. Competence in this area means that clergy and staff train and release the people into ministry, rather than do it themselves. This competency also measures the extent to which the congregation understands and embraces their role with the five-fold ministry presented in Ephesians 4.

## Competency #6 – Multiplication Organizing

This competency looks at if the church is organized in such a way that encourages the multiplying of leaders, groups and churches. Churches can often be structured for institutional survival and preservation rather than their multiplication. We know that every living thing multiplies. The church is a living organism and should be focused on the multiplication of disciples, groups and leaders. It should be organized to raise up leaders to not only serve the local church, but to be deployed in new contexts.



# Healthy Church Competency Survey

Use the following brief evaluation to determine the health of your church in the six movement competencies. Keep in mind that most churches will score low on most or all the competencies. A high score on most would mean that your congregation would already be an exponentially multiplying church.

Scale

|                        |               |            |                     |
|------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------------|
| Strongly Disagree<br>1 | Disagree<br>2 | Agree<br>3 | Strongly Agree<br>4 |
|------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------------|

## Competency #1 - Identity Declaring

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. We have a mission and vision that is outward focused and owned by the majority of our covenant partners. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. We allow Jesus' desire for our lives and congregation to win over our personal preferences.              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Our covenant partners sacrificially serve for the cause of Christ in our surrounding community.          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. As a whole, our covenant partners would be identified as "imitators of Christ".                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

## Competency #2 - Risk Tribalizing

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. We take risks as a church  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. We encourage and promote individuals and groups to be innovative for ministry.                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. We take on ministries that stretch us to rely on the Lord.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Our covenant partners spend as much, if not more, time serving outside the church structure as inside of it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Total: \_\_\_\_\_



# Healthy Church Competency Survey

## Competency #3 - Disciple Making

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. We have a clear, comprehensive, and agreed upon definition of a disciple.                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Our leaders actively and intentionally engage in relationships to disciple other people.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. We evaluate potential leaders based on their own personal discipleship.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. We encourage and expect that all of our covenant partners will actively disciple other people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

## Competency #4 - Incarnational Messaging

|  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Our covenant partners view evangelism as something they do outside the walls of the church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. The community would feel a deep loss if our congregation did not exist.                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. We know and respond to the needs of the community.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Our covenant partners have deep friendships with those who don't know Jesus.                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Total: \_\_\_\_\_





# Healthy Church Competency Survey

## Competency #5 - Leader Releasing

|  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Non-paid lay leaders lead most of the ministries of our church.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. We allow those with diverse APEST roles to share in leadership so that we have a balanced church ministry.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. The ministry of the church is not dependent upon the paid staff.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Our clergy and staff spend more of their time equipping people for ministry than doing ministry themselves. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

## Competency #6 - Multiplication Organizing

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. We are committing time, energy, and finances to the planting of new churches.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. We are successful at multiplying groups and leaders.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. We actively identify potential leaders and cultivate them to be involved in new churches or micro-expressions of church. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. We have a plan, even if basic, for how we will plant new churches.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Total: \_\_\_\_\_





# Session #6: Next Steps in Flourishing

## Agenda, Discussion and Homework (Allow approximately 1 hour)

*Goal: To create space for God together, to listen to the Spirit's leading through teaching, reflection and sharing with one another, and to act on what we hear about growing a Christ-centered flourishing church.*

### 1. Prepare (5 minutes)

- Have each person offer a one-word check-in. (Think of one word that honestly describes how you feel right now. This is a way of connecting with each other and offering yourself to God.)
- Enter into a brief time of silence in order to still hearts, clear minds, and become attentive. Silence is a way of waiting, watching, and listening for the presence of God's Spirit in your midst. Meditate on Scripture:

#### *Philippians 1:3-6 (MSG)*

*Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God. Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. I find myself praying for you with a glad heart. I am so pleased that you have continued on in this with us, believing and proclaiming God's Message, from the day you heard it right up to the present. There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.*

### 2. Listen (15 minute video) – Next Steps in Flourishing

### 3. Reflect on what we heard (3 minutes)



**Facilitator Note:** Make copies of the populated Excel spread sheet showing the results for the leaders to have in front of them

Reflect silently for a few moments on the compiled Church Health Survey results.

- What do you notice?
- Where does God stir your heart?
- Where do you sense He most wants your church to grow?



#### 4. Share what we heard (25 minutes)

Discuss the following as a large group:

- A. Where on the survey do you score the highest? What can you celebrate as a church?
- B. Where do you score the lowest? Does this accurately reflect your church?
- C. Of the lowest scores, where do you sense God wants your church to grow?



**Facilitator Note:** It would be helpful to capture these responses on white board or a flipchart.

#### 5. Decide together how we will act differently based on what we heard. (1 minute)

Read these instructions together

##### Homework:

Your final assignment of this series is to write a “Flourishing Plan” with the help of your ECO liaison. This plan will set out a goal to grow in one of the competencies, to prepare a timeline for growth and help you decide what you will do to work towards that goal.

We suggest that 2-3 people take the Church Health Survey results and the sense of the Spirit’s leading from today’s discussion to your ECO liaison and to work together on outlining a “Becoming a Flourishing Church” plan”. That plan will be presented for discussion and approval at your next meeting.

##### Three questions that will form your Flourishing Plan:

- What is your main area of desired growth and why?
- What is your specific goal?
- What do you want to be true of your church that is not true now?

#### 6. Pray as a group about becoming more mature disciples of Christ. (2 minutes)

Pray for those who will develop your church’s flourishing plan.





# Sample Plans for Flourishing Churches

The following Next Steps, are three sample plans taken from three different congregations. These are examples of what a church might come up with after they have gone through the “Becoming a Flourishing Church” material. The leadership of each church should determine their individual next steps after going through the material and talking with their ECO liaison. The ECO resource list on our website is also available to get ideas on how to grow in a specific area.

## 1. Where does your church need to grow in the coming year?

**Church #1** – We have assumed that if people come to church on Sundays and are involved in a learning community such as a small group, that they will be growing as disciples. However, we’ve discovered that most of our leaders are stalled in their spiritual growth. Therefore, we can assume that most likely many others in our congregation are also stalled in their growth. We need to be more intentional about making disciples and creating a disciple-making culture.

**Church #2** – We realize we have been living out of a purely attractional model of ministry where we have simply tried to get people to church. While we still want to be an “attractive” church, we want to put more energy into being missional. We want to begin to create missional communities that will seek to minister to their surrounding communities more authentically.

**Church #3** – This process helped us realize that we have been pretty comfortable with the clergy and staff doing most of the ministry. Our laity is content, by and large, to sit on the sidelines. We want to be more intentional about having our staff and clergy equip others for ministry. This goal will take new learning on the part of the staff as well as the congregation.

## What is your specific Goal? What do you want to be true of your church in a year that is not true now?

**Church #1** – We want to accomplish the following in the next year:

- We want to train all of our small group leaders in the methodology associated with ECO’s discipleship initiative.
- We want to see all of the people in small groups or Sunday school develop and live out a personal plan for their own discipleship growth.
- We want to develop a long-range plan to move into a more intentional disciple-making culture. This plan may mean we need to eliminate some strategies that aren’t working currently.

**Church #2** – We want to accomplish the following in the next year:

- We want to develop two missional communities and free the individuals involved from obligations within the church in order to pursue this vision.
- We want our congregation to understand the missional concepts that Jesus embodied. We would love to see at least 50% of our church take small steps toward missional engagement.



**Church #3** – We want to accomplish the following in the next year:

- We want to see our program staff spend at least 1/3 of their time devoted to developing other leaders.
- We want to see our Session become a healthier community with greater intentional spiritual engagement and engage in greater trust and synergy with one another.
- We want to develop 5 spiritually mature lay leaders to be commissioned to celebrate the sacraments in micro-expressions of church (according to 2.0502 of ECO's polity).

### 3. How will we grow in this area? (What is our timeline and what resources do we need?)

#### Church #1

- We will engage in ECO's discipleship initiative in order to change our culture to be more of a discipleship culture.
- We will take time in every Session meeting to check in with each other's current individual disciple plan.
- In four months, we will begin to train our small group teachers in the model of discipleship presented in *Becoming a Flourishing Church*.

#### Church #2

- We will engage with Alex Absalom and Dandelion to train us in the development of missional communities and the transformation of our culture.
- We will spend the next 6 months preaching missional concepts.
- We will share stories monthly in worship of those who have taken missional steps.

#### Church #3

- We will engage in the *Flourishing Leader* material through ECO (This is the ECO specific version of *Elder Leadership Institute*.)
- We will create a six month process to develop and train lay leaders to celebrate the sacraments utilizing resources from ECO and our own material.
- We will take time in every Session meeting to check in with each other's current individual discipleship plan.

