

Why All-Church Axioms?

We love our church and want to help one another live with an ongoing sense of health, connection, and commitment to our mission. As we continue to see new people join our family, we want to put in writing some things that describe who we are. Our church has a significant amount of clarity and conviction about our mission and vision that is part of our church culture. Culture is something you experience with a group of people walking together in a particular place and time. As always, our heart is to help people grow spiritually.

We are calling these statements axioms. An axiom is a clear and concise idea or statement set forward and accepted by a community. So, we want these axioms to (1) introduce new people to our culture, and (2) serve as guideposts to keep us on track as we move forward together. We think this will encourage us to live out our key commitments as a family. This also gives us a healthy place to grow as we learn new things from new friends and make course corrections as needed down the road.

These will be “living” axioms, meaning they will likely morph or change over time. It might be helpful to think of these as our current operating system, which may need changes and updates in the future. This means that we may add some in the future, and we may edit or hone others.

You will be part of learning and spreading these around in the normal life of our church: our membership process, team huddles, small groups, ministry meetings, and more. They will be used as teaching and conversation tools to keep us focused.

In the end, these ought to help us live out our mission and vision:

Our mission is to make authentic followers of Jesus who live for the glory of God and the good of our world.

Our vision is to help everyday people wake up to deep, meaningful life in Christ.

9: WE SERVE AND GIVE SO THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE.

Jesus taught his followers about his mission, saying, “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). This verse has become an anchor verse for our church family that we return to time after time to remind ourselves both of Jesus’ costly sacrifice for us and of Jesus’ costly call upon our lives. Christ’s mission comes with a sense of urgency – because eternity is at stake for people all around us. Our church is an outpost for the Gospel in a city that needs to hear and experience what life with Jesus is all about.

We began as a grass roots, all-in, every person makes a difference church, and we want to keep that pioneering spirit. As we move into our new building, it may be easy for people to back away from serving with their gifts (*being* the church) and lean more on the paid staff to make church happen (*attending* the church). In order to maintain our passion, we must continue to call and equip people to a lifestyle of service.

This means we choose *contending over consuming*. The church serves like an army committed to the common cause of the gospel. Our cause is worthy of whole-hearted sacrifice and life-long investment. We will equip ourselves for Gospel ministry at every connection point. Everything we do should motivate an evangelistic focus and passion to see the mission advance. We desire to see others come to faith in Christ and spread the glory of God in our world. As Charles Spurgeon said, “It is not enough to maintain, we must advance.”

Here are a few of the practical ways this works out in our community:

- **We give generously, cheerfully, systematically, passionately, and sacrificially.** We believe that God owns everything, and we are his money managers. Giving is a normal part of church life, with Scripture providing clear guidance about how and what to give. We give as an act of faith and trust in God in response to his grace and goodness. As 2 Corinthians 9:7 says, “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.”
- **Church is an “all y’all thing.”** Our ecclesiology (or belief about church) says that a church is healthy when every member sees himself or herself as a vital part of the whole. Romans 12 depicts the church as a single body made up of many parts: “For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” Ephesians 4 takes this image further to show how the church grows through the efforts of each person doing work: “when each part is working properly, it makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”
- **We seek to know and grow our spiritual gifts.** God has given gifts to every believer which are to be used for the common good. While different people have different gifts, we each share inclusion in the same body and importance to the same mission. God gives us gifts for a purpose: “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them” (Romans 12:6). As we move toward maturity, we should grow in understanding of how God wants us to use our gifts, talents, personality, and experiences for his purposes in the church and world.
- **Sacrifice is normal.** Rather than thinking, “How does this church meet all of my needs?”, we ask, “How can I meet the needs of others?” Philippians 2 tells us to cultivate a Christ-like mindset: “in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”