

Crossroads Connections

Welcome

Welcome to Vineyard Crossroads Church. Whether you've just recently started coming to Crossroads, or you've just recently returned, we are so glad to be able to take this time to connect with you. The purpose of Connections is simply to get to know one another a little better, tell you the story of Crossroads, and let you know some of the ways you can connect with our church family. I know that sometimes it can be a bit awkward and challenging when you're trying to find a church home and trying to connect with a church family. Please know that we're not here to pressure you to join our church or talk you into making a commitment that you're not ready to make or not comfortable with. We simply desire to help serve you in anyway we can, answer any questions you may have about our church, or God, or Christianity in general, and help you connect in relationship with other folks in the church. Ultimately we desire to help people find true meaning and purpose in their lives as they engage in a lifelong pursuit of God in what we call the Jesus journey. Thank you for joining us today.

Pastor David Riefenberg (Reef)

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Our Story

The Vineyard Movement – The Vineyard began as a small group of people hungry for more of God and meeting in someone’s house in southern California in the early 1980s. John Wimber was the founder of what has become a movement of over one thousand churches around the world.

The Vineyard historically has emphasized bringing renewal to the existing Church and planting new Churches. Vineyard Crossroads Church was planted in May of 1997, and began doing Sunday evening services in June of 1997.

The Crossroads Story – I (David Riefenberg or “Reef”) was the youth pastor and worship leader of what is now called Vineyard El Paso at that time. For me, the vision of Crossroads started as a simple desire to reach out to the unchurched youth in our community. As a youth pastor, I soon realized that it was difficult to try and bring the unchurched into the church. Although it is home and a safe place for those who have met the healing touch of Jesus and the Father heart of God, it was simply a building and foreign place to the ones who had never been there. I sought to take the values that I learned in the Vineyard to the places that this generation lives. I began to ask the kids on the street what church would look like to them – what would they like to see if they were to actually “go to church”. I soon discovered that the things they were looking for weren’t that spiritual – nor were they all that ungodly. They wanted stuff like basketball, bands, food, a place to hang out, church services that were not too early, not too long, and language that they could understand.

About this time, the state of Texas was offering a grant to help reach out to the troubled youth in our community. We applied for the grant in the hopes of being able to start a coffee house. By the grace of God, we got it! Through the help and gifts of many people, and a few big miracles, we opened Crossroads Coffee House in an old warehouse (our present location) in May of 1997. We began to put into practice the things that all those “street kids” said they would like to see and they started coming.

During the three year period that Crossroads Coffee House was funded by the grant, we were able to reach several hundred young people with the message and the love of Jesus Christ and give them practical application in terms of how to live out the Christian faith.

Shortly after we opened the coffee house, we began doing Sunday evening services. This was the crucible for Crossroads. I knew that if God didn’t “show up”, then all we had was a bunch of kids who came to hang out. But God did show up. And one by one, this generation has been “coming home” – not just to the Crossroads – but to a saving faith in Jesus Christ – and a community of friends learning how to live out that faith.

Vineyard Crossroads Church was birthed out of a passion for the really lost, desperation for God, and mighty outpourings of God’s Spirit in our worship, prayer, outreaches, and weekly gatherings. We started reaching out to the youth and began as a small group of ragamuffin young people who had discovered faith in God, a love for Jesus, and a desire to change the world. Worship, baptisms, all night prayer meetings, and taking it to the streets became the heartbeat of Crossroads.

We began doing Sunday morning services in the fall of 2000.

Our Mission

Our Mission – *to win a generation to Jesus Christ*

Welcome Ragamuffins – What began as a bunch of ragamuffin kids in an alley is becoming a community of committed believers embracing the cause of Jesus Christ – the message and reality of the kingdom of God. This is a cause so wonderful, so awesome, and so huge, we believe it's worth living for and dying for. Our heart is and has always been to reach a generation with the good news of Jesus Christ and His kingdom. We particularly have a heart for the last, the lost, and the least – the marginalized in our society, the poor, the broken, and the unchurched.

Crossroads began as an outreach to the lost youth in our community. We remain committed to reaching the young people of our community, our city, and around the world. In addition, we seek to reach an entire generation of prodigals, regardless of age, race, or social standing, with the good news of the kingdom. Anyone who has either never known the saving grace that is the love of God, or who has left that grace only to find themselves naked, dirty, empty and hungry is invited to come home. We call ourselves "ragamuffins". Ragamuffins are the poor in spirit, the ones who don't matter; the ones no one else wants. That's who Jesus became, that's who we want to reach with the love of God.

The last, the lost, and the least – Our passion and mission at Vineyard Crossroads Church is to live out the good news of Jesus Christ and to take him at his word in seeking and saving the last, the lost, and the least. We believe that we are not on neutral ground; that spiritual battle is part of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Satan and his kingdom oppose the kingdom of God and those who seek to do the words and works of Jesus. We believe in the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit who helps us in our own weakness and enables us to do the works of God's kingdom. We believe that God delights in using ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

A community of hope in a despairing world – We seek to be a place of belonging, love, acceptance, forgiveness, and self-disclosure; an outpost of heaven, and a refuge for the lost, the forsaken, and the wounded; a place where diversity finds its truest expression in a shared passion for Jesus Christ. We desire to be a people of hope and healing; and a place of discovery, where people are invited to take the Jesus Journey – discovering their destiny, developing their talents, abilities, and spiritual gifts for meaningful service to God and others, and becoming fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Standing at the Crossroads – The word *Crossroads* in our church name is taken from an Old Testament passage of scripture. The prophet Jeremiah spoke to his generation a few thousand years ago and said, "This is what the Lord says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls...'" I believe that God's heart cry is still the same today. We are inviting a generation to come and stand at the crossroads. And we pray that in doing so they will find the One who didn't just stand at the crossroads and call out to them – He hung on a cross and died for them. That is our history, our heritage, our story.

I welcome you and invite you to come and participate – come be a part of the story. At Crossroads we call it the Jesus journey. To the journey...

Vineyard Values

Here are the 5 core values of the Vineyard:

Kingdom

Kingdom Theology & Practice

In the life, message, miracles, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God is here, evidenced by salvation of the lost, miracles of healing and deliverance, compassion for the poor and the marginalized, and so forth. And yet, the kingdom will not fully be here until the return of Christ when there will be no more sin, suffering, separation from God, or death. We live between the times. We desire to equip people for kingdom ministry and mission. We aim to move in the signs of the present fulfillment of the kingdom, invoking the Spirit's powerful presence, ministering through the Spirit's gifts, and seeing God heal and work wonders. Our understanding and participation in the kingdom enables us to embrace a theology of both power and suffering, believing that things like supernatural healing are possible and understanding why healing does not always happen. We seek to be responsive to the Holy Spirit in life and ministry, and to function in the natural realm based on God's leading in conjunction with sound, rational thinking.

Vineyard is committed to the theology & practice of the kingdom of God, rooted in the vision of the Hebrew prophets and fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth; we have been commissioned to proclaim the good news of the kingdom bearing witness to the already and not yet of the kingdom in words and deeds.

Vineyard is a movement distinctively centered in a renewed understanding of the centrality of the kingdom of God in biblical thought. The kingdom of God is the overarching and integrating theme of the Bible. From our beginnings Vineyard has been committed to the proclamation of the kingdom of God and to bearing witness to the deeds of the kingdom through healing (physical, emotional, and social) doing justice, and delivering those held captive by evil. Since the kingdom of God is the future reign of God breaking into the present through the life and ministry of Jesus, we are a forward leaning movement emphasizing the ever-reforming nature of the church engaging the world in love.

Mission

Culturally Relevant Mission

The church exists for the sake of those who are exiled from God. We are called to bring the gospel of the kingdom to every nook and cranny of creation, faithfully translating the message of Jesus in language and forms that are relevant to diverse peoples and cultures.

We seek to plant churches that are culturally relevant in a wide variety of settings locally and internationally. Each Vineyard church is encouraged to reach those in its community not already reached by existing churches. To this end, we promote a creative, entrepreneurial and innovative approach to ministry that is faithful to Jesus and expressive of his heart to reach those who are far away from God.

Compassion

Compassionate Ministry

We lean toward the lost, the poor, the outcast, and the outsider with the compassion of Jesus as sinners whose only standing before God is utterly dependent on the mercy of God; this mercy can only be truly received inasmuch as we are willing to give it away.

We believe that ministry in Jesus' name should be marked by compassion and mercy expressed in concrete ways through the local church. This is one of the distinguishing characteristics of a church expressing the love of Christ in a local community.

Community

Reconciling Community

Jesus is reconciling humans to God, to each other, and to the entire creation, breaking down divisions between Jew & Gentile, slave & free, male & female; we are committed to becoming healing communities engaged in the work of reconciliation wherever sin and evil hold sway.

We seek to be diverse communities of hope that realize the power of the cross to reconcile what has been separated by sin. This requires us to move beyond our personal preferences to engage those who are perceived to be unlike us and to actively break down barriers of race, culture, gender, social class and ethnicity.

Worship

Experiencing God

The triune God—Father, Son & Holy Spirit—is eager to be known and experienced by all; we value the passionate pursuit of God's presence in order to respond in obedience to his initiatives.

We believe that God is searching for lost humanity in order to draw us into loving, intimate relationship with him. We welcome God's personal presence and seek to foster an attentive and responsive awareness of his presence.

Recommended Reading about the Vineyard

- *"The Quest for the Radical Middle"* – by Bill Jackson. This book tells the history of the Vineyard up to the mid 1990's.
- *"Empowered Evangelicals"* – by Rich Nathan. This book explains our theology.
- *"Power Healing" and "Power Evangelism"* – by John Wimber. These books explain our philosophy of ministry.

Empowered Evangelicals

Though a bit 'churchy' sounding, the phrase empowered evangelical is a great description of what it means to be Vineyard, especially as it pertains to our priorities, values, and practices.

Empowered evangelical is a phrase that sums up the best of both worlds – or the two main expressions of Christianity:

1. Conservative evangelicals – who believe very much in the authority of the Bible, the deity of Jesus Christ, the reality of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, that the Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity, in the need for personal conversion, in the importance of evangelism, and in the importance of Christian community.
2. Charismatics or Pentecostals – who place a great emphasis on God's power – particularly the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and believe that the miracles of the Bible are also for today.

Empowered evangelical is the best of both worlds. To be evangelical is to be a person of the good news of Jesus Christ, an evangelist, one who tells others the good news. An empowered evangelical is one who holds the same priorities as an evangelical, but also believes and experiences the empowering of the Holy Spirit, expressed in things like healing the sick in the power of the Holy Spirit on a regular basis, prophecy, praying deliverance for those who are demonized, and a more low-key perspective regarding the gift of tongues than many charismatics or Pentecostals.

Empowered evangelicals are people who proclaim the good news of salvation that God has made known in Jesus Christ, combined with things like the practices of healing, prophecy, and intimate worship. We call this being supernaturally natural.

We hold as absolutes that the Bible is God's inspired Word, His authority, His will and direction for our lives, that Jesus is fully God and also became fully human, that He lived a sinless life, that He died on the cross for our sins, that He rose from the dead, that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ. As well we believe in the power of the Holy Spirit – that miracles, signs, and wonders are not just for Bible times, but for today, and that God wants us to experience this power in our lives for our own benefit and to make us more effective in reaching the sick, the lost, and the poor.

To be Vineyard is to have the best of both worlds. We want both the objective truth of God's Word and the subjective experience of God's Spirit in our lives. We seek to combine a sense of mission in fulfilling Christ's command to go and make disciples of all nations with the empowering presence of God's Spirit to enable us to get the job done.

Our Ministry Values at Crossroads

Jesus and the Holy Spirit – In terms of how we do Church, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are far more than mere figureheads or symbolism. The church belongs to Jesus and He leads us through the dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit among us. The Holy Spirit is the administrator of the church.

People of the Presence – The supernatural power of God can accomplish more than the combined human effort of sincere Christians. This affects our style and practice of church leadership and ministry, having visible forms of structure and organization that are functional and flexible enough for us to be led by the Spirit, and ministering with the dynamic supernatural presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Relationships – We believe that the highest goal in life is to learn how to love God, and learn how to love others. We want to be a place of belonging, practicing relationship on the basis of God's love for us, and building kingdom relationships with one another in the church and with lost people through relational evangelism. People really matter to God, so they should matter to us. We value being a community that is defined through relationships built on love, acceptance, forgiveness, and self-disclosure. We believe that the church should do relationships the way Jesus taught and modeled them: openness, honesty, being real and up-front about oneself, God, life, and others, and a commitment to integrity.

the individual – We highly value the personal worth and dignity of every individual – Christian or non-Christian. Every individual is important and invaluable to God, and therefore, should be to us. We practice this value in the way we minister to one another, love one another, and reach out to the sick, the lost, and the poor, always showing grace and mercy.

People need to be free to be themselves. Each person needs to be loved where they are.

We believe in the value and power of story. Every person has a story, and every story is important. Our stories find their deepest expression and fullest meaning when they intersect with the story of Jesus Christ and the cross.

We believe that every believer has a special place in the Body of Christ, and that is vital that everyone discover and fill their place. God build the church and places people where they need to be.

Failure and Risk taking – There must be room for failure. Where there is no failure, there is no growth. We value taking risks for the sake of the kingdom. Faith is spelled R-I-S-K. We have only one "standard" – and that is the standard of the cross. We judge one another from that standard – the ultimate expression of God's mercy and love for us.

Chocolate Milk Christianity – We believe that when a person makes a decision to become a Christian, it should affect every area of their life. A disciple is a life-long learner and follower of Jesus Christ. We call this process the Jesus journey. The goal of discipleship is to conform our lives to Christ – in heart, words, and action.

Being the Church “Out There” – We take seriously the Great Commission found in Matthew 28: 18-20. We believe that “church” tends to happen most often beyond the scheduled ministries of Crossroads and the four walls of our building. We encourage every believer to see what the Father is doing and live a missional lifestyle: bearing witness to the kingdom in both word and deed in our everyday lives.

God’s Word – or the Bible.

Because we are such an experientially oriented church we value continually grounding our lives, our ministry, and our church in the Word of God.

We believe that Scripture is God’s inspired Word to us, and is our highest authority for faith and life. We value taking what the Bible says and putting it into practice in our everyday lives. The most powerful way to encounter God in the Bible is to put into practice what the Bible says.

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God’s way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.

- 2Timothy 3:16-17

Our Priorities

Worship – Our first and highest priority is *worship*. We are called first, before anything else, to worship God – to love and enjoy Him forever. Vineyard worship was birthed out of a raw hunger and desperation for God and brokenness. In true worship our desperation, longing, and hunger for God deepens, which leads us to an increased awareness of our utter brokenness and the depths of the Father’s unconditional love. Worship is all about giving and receiving love – the love of the Father. As we worship God, Jesus takes His rightful place and rules among us, cleansing sin, healing sickness, driving out demons and defeating His enemies. Jesus does this in and through us by the Holy Spirit – God’s presence among us. Our worship is regular, non-religious, relevant, contemporary, tender, non-manipulative, non-hyped, and above all, sincere and intimate. True worship is both profoundly personal and completely communal at the same time. They really cannot be separated.

The Word – Intimacy with God in worship opens us up to his *Word* – our next priority – to receive not only prophetic words, but also sound Biblical teaching. The way we prioritize the Bible, or the Word of God, is primarily by preaching and teaching in our corporate gatherings. We seek not merely to be *informed* with Bible knowledge, but to be *formed* by God’s Word in our thinking, feeling, acting, and worldview. Our goal is to hear God through His Word, and then do and obey what He says. This is how we become like Him. We use the Word for teaching, for counseling, for discipleship, and for equipping and training to do the stuff – or the works of service described in the Bible. We want the preaching and teaching of the Word to be anointed, relevant, non-technical, and life-related, with specific practical application for our daily lives.

Fellowship – The priority of fellowship is all about the importance of relationships, *real* relationships with *real* people, operating relationally, sharing a common life. It means being family to one another in loving and caring relationships. How do we do fellowship? The Greek word in the Bible for ‘fellowship’ is *koinonia*, which means to share things in common, or sharing the common life. This means we seek to do church in a relational way, and be a place of belonging. We do this on one level in our Sunday services, and a deeper level in our small groups – where people can develop true friendships within a safe environment of love, acceptance and forgiveness. Perhaps the deepest level of fellowship is in marriage and family. We place a priority on marriage and family above Church fellowship, ministry and mission. (If our marriages and our children are not doing well, then the Church is not doing well!)

Ministry – *reaching the sick, the lost, and the poor*. Loving is the most basic form of ministry. Every believer is in fulltime ministry! We believe that everyone who is called to follow Jesus is called to minister to others. We have the honor of being in ministry with Jesus. Although receiving equipping and training is helpful for certain aspects of ministry, the general ministry of Jesus has only two qualifications: faith and compassion. We practice this priority in ministry to the sick (body, mind, and spirit), the lost, and the poor. We want to minister to the whole person – the real, everyday life stuff, as well as the spiritual stuff.

Training – *or equipping.* We do training because we value the presence and ministry of the kingdom in our midst. Training is essentially discipleship, being apprenticed by Jesus, learning directly from Him and through one another, how to do what He did, live as He lived, and love as He loved. The purpose of training is to do the words, the works, and the wonders of God’s Kingdom. We want to equip people in all aspects of life – not just the spiritual stuff. Training is a process, mostly experienced as we are committed to continual growth by being open to learning more effective and creative ways of doing things. Though from time to time we have specific training events or classes, mostly training happens in the context of ongoing relationships practiced in small groups where people can watch, experience, experiment, and grow in a safe and learning environment.

Sending – Having a priority of mission, or sending, or being sent, is visible evidence of God’s heart of love overflowing in giving his best. In Matthew 28 Jesus commissioned His disciples to mission – to go into all the world. Our priority of sending is seen: in the practice of relational evangelism, growing and multiplication of our small groups through reaching the lost and un-churched, being inclusive of visitors, guests, and the un-churched in our Sunday services, involvement in missions partnerships to other nations, our commitment to grow and multiply as a church through church-planting whereby we reach more lost people, and our overall mission and heartfelt desire to win a generation to Jesus Christ.

Our Current Plans and Goals for 2009

1. To see an average attendance of 200 people (including kids) on Sundays.
2. To add a second service on Sunday mornings.
3. To finish the renovations on our building – coffeehouse, kids church rooms, food pantry, and sanctuary.
4. We want to see our small group ministry continue to grow. Our goal is to have at least ten small groups in the next twelve to eighteen months.
5. We want to expand our servant evangelism ministry to 5 outreach teams – each with its own leader.
6. We want to fully utilize the front “coffee shop” area. We envision the coffeehouse being a neutral (“non-churchy”) place to serve and build community with the unchurched and the unsaved. We also envision the coffeehouse being able to begin to make enough money to fund other outreaches to our community. As well, we believe the coffeehouse will provide employment opportunities for baristas and perhaps other part-time employees. We want the coffeehouse to be a place of quality and excellence, and an atmosphere of genuine care.
7. To have a clearly defined ministry in place for raising up, equipping, and training leaders. This will include regularly scheduled leaders meetings – for fellowship, envisioning, training, and prayer, as well as a more intensive leadership development. We want to establish leaders over key ministries in the church that do not presently have someone to lead.
8. We want to begin a Spanish (or bilingual) service
9. To raise up a youth ministry leader
 - to work with the existing Jr. High (Journey) group
 - to begin a High School youth group
 - to gather the unchurched youth of northeast El Paso
 - to reach out to the teenage and single moms in our community
10. To raise up college age/ young adult ministry leader
11. To provide significant ministries to strengthen marriages and families.
12. To be a community known throughout the borderland for our love, compassion, mercy, and acts of kindness as we continue to build a more comprehensive compassion ministry to the poor in our city. We want to consistently offer prayerful acts of kindness and healing. In addition to our Wednesday night compassion ministry, we also desire to launch a literacy program for kids and families in our city. I envision launching a literacy/bilingual reading program for kids, an English as a second language class, and a Spanish as a second language class in the near future, giving opportunity at the end of these classes for Bible study and prayer in the language of those we are ministering to.
13. *Alpha ministry* – We would like to reach 50 unchurched people through the Alpha ministry this year. Alpha is a 10 week program that specifically targets the un-churched.
14. Discovering where God wants our church to be involved in his mission – beyond our city. This would include the border, Mexico, and around the world.
15. To seek a greater expression of the prophetic, worship, and the arts in our church community.
16. To send out our first church plant (Donny and Lorien Cannoy) in early 2010

Our Church

"You are a member of God's very own family...and you belong in God's household with every other Christian." Ephesians 2:19 (Living Bible).

What is church? – Church is not an event or a building. Church is not something you attend. Church is much more than a service on Sunday mornings. Church is people – people who have encountered God's love, and who long to discover a deep, passionate, authentic love for Jesus Christ, for His church, and for His cause.

In the broadest and simplest of terms, here's what it means to be part of Vineyard Crossroads Church:

- Commitment to Christ
- Commitment to His church
- Commitment to His cause

We love Jesus Christ – we are wholeheartedly committed to pursuing God, loving God, and seeking him in every possible way. We believe that a commitment to Christ is to be the first and foremost thing in our life.

We love Christ's church – Christ has also called us to be committed to His church, which is His body on earth. We believe this means learning to love his church universal, but also learning to walk in a committed relationship with a local church – or a local expression of that body. We seek to build authentic Christian community – a place of discovery, of friendship, relationship, and belonging.

We love Christ's cause – Jesus explained his cause clearly and simply in Mark chapter 1: *"The time has come," He said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"*

The nearness of God's kingdom is the best news this world could ever hear or encounter. We the church – or the community of Jesus Christ – are God's kingdom people. Together we are discovering what it means to become Good News to the world. The good news about Jesus and about his kingdom is a message of hope, mercy, belonging, transformation, justice, reconciliation, healing, and restoration. It is a message of life. We really love Christ's cause.

We are not perfect people. Indeed – we have a long way to go. But the God who we have encountered and who we serve loves us, and embraces us just as we are. He loves us just as we are – with all of our faults and hurts and weaknesses.

We gather to pursue God in the company of friends, and to become Good News to the world.

Images of Church –

- A family – a place of connection and belonging, a people of love, acceptance, and forgiveness.
- A hospital – a place of healing – healing of the whole person
- A school – a place of training – getting equipped to do the works of the kingdom that Jesus did, taught, and commanded his followers to do.
- A mission – an outpost of heaven. The church exists for the world – to serve others, to love others, to live and proclaim the good news to the world around us.
- An army – when we engage in kingdom activity – from loving the poor to healing the sick, we engage in spiritual warfare. Whoever heard of an army that conquered its enemy through weeping, and mourning, and prayer, and brokenness, and fasting?

Participation in the church – Making a commitment to Crossroads is an important step for you in your own Jesus Journey and for our church, because it helps all of us to recognize who's on the team, what's expected of the team members, how we're doing as a team, and where we're winning or losing in the pursuit of our mission. So you demonstrate your commitment to membership by participating - showing up to play!

Crossroads is very outward focused and missional. While we believe in the importance of strong and loving Christ-centered community, we also believe that the church exists for others. We are not a "members only" community.

We're here to serve and love the lost, the least, and the last. In fact, we want to serve and love a whole generation of the lost, the least, and the last into the kingdom! That requires a lot of work. Participation at Crossroads means that we commit to give of our time, energy, and money to love the lost, the least, and the last, to serve them, to bring God's healing touch to their lives, to win them to Christ, to bring them into the church, to help them grow in their Christian faith, to inconvenience ourselves on their behalf. Participation means serving.

A few thoughts about participation and membership at Vineyard Crossroads Church –

It has been said that "membership has its privileges". But being a member of Vineyard Crossroads Church does not make you better than someone who has not made this commitment. We're all at different places on the Jesus journey, and not everyone is ready to make a commitment to church membership. Remember, Crossroads is not "for members only". We exist for others. This is the privilege of membership: that, as committed members, we give of our time, energy, and money to love the lost, the least, and the last, to serve them, to bring God's healing touch to their lives, to win them to Christ, to bring them into the church, to help them grow in their Christian faith, to inconvenience ourselves on their behalf. The privilege of membership is the privilege of serving.

Going back to the idea of making a commitment to Christ, His church, and his cause for a minute, particularly in regards to the part about commitment to His church: We believe that a commitment to Christ is to be the first and foremost thing in our life. Christ has also called us to be committed to His church, which is His body on earth. We believe this means learning to love his church universal, but also learning to walk in a committed relationship with a local church – or a local expression of that body. We believe that a commitment to a local church involves a commitment or covenant between the pastoral leadership and the individual members. And so...

As your pastor I commit to:

- Love you
- Be an example to you
- Assist you in growth and healing
- Give you the anointed word in my teaching and preaching
- Provide opportunities for you to fulfill your God-given destiny
- Provide a safe place for your family to grow in Christ
- Risk speaking the truth in love to you if I see you moving off track spiritually
- Pray for you and make spiritual care and guidance available to you

As committed members I ask you to:

- Be available – to be used by God, to serve, to use your gifts for ministry at Vineyard Crossroads Church. Commit your time, energy, and money to the work of the Lord here at Vineyard Crossroads Church
- Be dependable – that we can count on you to do your part in carrying out the vision and goals of Crossroads. Be an active and functioning participant in the life of this fellowship. Support the vision of Crossroads and be willing to do your part. Do the “3Cs”: Come to church with an attitude of openness; join a small group as a means of staying connected and supporting and building the vision of the church, serve in at least one of the 3 key areas of ministry at Crossroads.
- Be accountable – be willing to let other members of Crossroads hold you accountable for the commitments you have made to God and his people. Be open to encouragement, as well as correction, to help you live in consistent obedience to Jesus Christ.

General membership expectations:

- Protect the unity of the church
 - by acting in love toward other members
 - by refusing to gossip
 - by following the leaders – (love and respect your pastor and leaders)
- Share the responsibility of the church
 - by praying for its health and growth
 - by inviting the un-churched to attend
 - by warmly welcoming visitors and guests
- Serve the ministry of the church
 - by discovering your gifts and talents
 - by getting equipped to serve the pastor and leaders
 - by developing a servant’s heart
 - by helping to equip others to the best of your gifts, talents, and abilities for life and ministry

What it does not mean to be a member:

- Being a member of Vineyard Crossroads Church does not mean that you are closing the door to ever going elsewhere.
- Membership is not a marriage, but neither is it like choosing a restaurant.
- Membership is not a prerequisite for training opportunities, and opportunities to serve.

How we do discipleship – “the 3 Cs”

Connect to God

Community with Others

Commit to Serve

Discipleship is central to the Christian faith. It was one of the primary tasks that Jesus gave Himself to when He was in the world. It is also what He commands His followers to do in what is commonly called “the great commission” in the Bible:

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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.” – Matthew 28:18-20

Since discipleship was so central to how Jesus did things, we believe it should be central to how we do church. Therefore, it’s important to have a clear process for discipleship – or spiritual transformation. Here’s what it looks like at Crossroads:

Connect to God

This is the starting point of the Jesus journey – the first step. Connection to God certainly includes coming to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, but it goes beyond simply “getting saved”. Connection to God also has to do with how we live out obedience to the great command: to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and to love our neighbor as ourselves. It means that we make it the highest goal in life to learn how to love God and others. Connection to God is about becoming passionate, devoted lovers of God, and actually experiencing his presence and power in our lives. We want people to not just hear about God’s love and presence and power, but to actually experience it firsthand.

The primary way we encourage people to connect to God is through participating in the weekly Sunday services. Simply put – come to church! Attend Sunday services regularly. Come with an open and expectant heart. Participate in the worship, receive the Word of God as it is preached and taught, and experience the Holy Spirit during times of ministry and prayer.

Having a regular personal devotional time is also essential for growing in one’s connection to God. Spending time each day in prayer and reading the Bible is vital to staying connected to God and maturing as a disciple of Jesus.

Community with Others

As we earnestly and intentionally begin to connect to God, a natural outflow of this is that we want to connect to God’s people (other Christians). Community with others is the second major step in the Jesus journey. This is such a fundamental part of spiritual growth and transformation – learning how to love other people; learning things like transparency, authenticity, self-disclosure, love, acceptance, forgiveness; and forming some life-sustaining friendships is essential to discipleship in Jesus Christ.

The primary way we encourage people to experience and grow in community with others is through participation in small groups. Small Groups truly are the heartbeat of our church! In Small Groups you will find a safe place to develop new relationships, a place to express your heart of worship, a place to apply God's Word to your life, and perhaps the most effective way to grow strong and mature in your faith in Jesus Christ. All paths on the Jesus journey lead to and from Small Groups!

The purpose of Small Groups:

- To provide effective and pastoral care for people
- To provide a safe place for fostering relationships of love, acceptance, forgiveness, and self-disclosure
- To build community and fellowship as we grow in Christ and grow together
- To provide training and equipping to do the works of the kingdom, giving "hands on" opportunities to learn how to do the stuff in a non-threatening environment
- To develop leaders and release them into ministry
- Evangelism
- Church growth through multiplication of Small Groups. As a small group grows in size through the addition of new people, it is important that we multiply the group. This insures that we maintain groups that are small enough in size to provide a safe, warm, and friendly environment, while at the same time allows us to train people, release them into ministry, and continue to grow in a healthy way.

Commit to Serve

As we grow in our love for God, experience true spiritual transformation, experience belonging and community with other Christians, and mature in our Christian faith, the next "step" in discipleship (or the Jesus journey) is to serve. Serving is not the first step in discipleship – or we might confuse it with trying to earn our salvation by doing good works. Serving should be a response to God's incredible love, a desire to give away what you've been given by serving God, other Christians, and the world.

Discovering your unique purpose, spiritual gifts, and abilities, and receiving equipping and training to put those things to use for service to God and his kingdom is an important part of committing to serve. (These things happen organically as you participate in the Sunday services and small groups; and through attending the various classes and trainings that are offered at Vineyard Crossroads Church.)

The primary way we encourage people to commit to serve is by serving in one of the 3 key areas of ministry at Crossroads: 1) Sunday services 2) small groups, and/or 3) Compassion Live – servant evangelism outreaches, ministry to the poor

A commitment to discipleship at Crossroads is a commitment to doing three things on a weekly basis:

- *Connect to God* by regularly attending the Sunday services
- *Community with Others* by weekly participation in a small group
- *Commit to Serve* by serving in one of the three key areas of ministry

How to begin serving at Crossroads

There are 3 key areas of ministry in the life of our church where people can get involved and put their time, talent, and treasure to work in serving God, loving others, and furthering the mission of Vineyard Crossroads Church. Some of these ministries require little or no training – simply ask who the “go to” person is, and we will put you in touch with them. Other areas will require some training. Much of the training we do in an informal, relational, hands on experience kind of way. Some ministries will require that you attend a training class. If you have a desire to get some training for a particular ministry, or you would like to serve somewhere but you’re not sure where, please call the church office or talk to Reef.

We believe that each area of ministry is vital to the mission of Crossroads to win a generation to Jesus Christ. We accomplish such a vast mission one step at a time, one act of kindness at a time, one act of serving at a time. One of the most profound experiences in God’s love a person can have is to serve – to give back as an expression of love for what God has given us.

1. Sunday services

- Greeters
- Banqueting Table (snack/refreshment team)
- Worship team
- Kid’s Church team
- Prayer/ministry teams
- Building clean-up and set-up

2. Small Groups

- Small groups that are committed to reaching the lost and the un-churched, ministering to one another, developing relationships of love, acceptance, forgiveness and self-disclosure, training and equipping people to do the stuff, raising up and releasing new small group leaders, and multiplication.
- *The primary goal of Small Groups is multiplication.* Small groups are the main place where we reach the lost, connect them to the church, minister God’s healing love, build meaningful and Christ-centered friendships, receive equipping and training, and release people into ministry and leadership. Small groups are invaluable to the health, growth, and life of our church.
- We encourage everyone to join or participate in a small group. This requires no training at all. Leading a small group does require attending a small group leader’s class.

3. Evangelism and Outreach

- Personal or relational evangelism
- Alpha
- Servant evangelism events and activities – planned, scheduled, and carried out on a regular basis – come any Wednesday; outreaches at 5PM and 6PM
- Ministry to the poor
- Short-term missions – serving God and showing his love to others beyond our city and our borders.

How to live out a commitment to Crossroads

The Radical Minimum Standard

The radical minimum standard is a term we use to describe what it means to live out our faith, our values, and our love, devotion, and commitment to Christ, his cause and His church. This is what love in action looks like at Vineyard Crossroads Church. This “standard” is how you do the 3 Cs in a way that is not merely mechanical – but rather dynamic discipleship in Christ.

I want you to know up front that you can come to Crossroads as long as you want to or need to without any expectations being placed on you. But when it comes to making a commitment to living out the vision and values of our church, we ask people to invest their passions, their service, their resources, and their relationships for the sake of the kingdom. This radical minimum standard is not only a standard for pastors and leaders, but for anyone who desires to commit to being a member.

The radical minimum standard has four basic parts:

1. live a holy life
2. be an active participant in ministry
3. be a generous giver (tithing)
4. live an evangelistic lifestyle

Live a holy life:

We recognize that every one of us – every person – is imperfect. There is a very high likelihood that we will all blow it at some time or another. So living a holy life means that we are honest about where we are at, and when we sin, we come clean and trust the church – the body of Christ – to restore us to fellowship. Living a godly, holy life requires honesty, transparency, vulnerability, trust, and placing yourself in relationship with others in an attitude and atmosphere of love, acceptance, and forgiveness. Perhaps the best way to pursue this is through participating in a small group.

There is a great deal of confusion in our culture regarding different issues of ethics and morality. This confusion has affected many people within the church. Because of this, I want to make you aware of some of the common areas of confusion. These are issues of lifestyle that I’ve found over the years as a pastor many people who come to church are not aware of as being wrong, or they are too ashamed or broken to ask for help and healing. The pursuit of holy living is not just outward conformity to a list of rules; really it is about the inward transformation that Christ works in us by the Holy Spirit. And yet, you need to be aware that willfully engaging in the following lifestyle issues will prevent you from living a holy life. There is always hope and healing. If you are participating in one or more of the issues listed below, and want healing or deliverance, please talk to the pastor or one of the leaders.

Substance abuse or addiction – this would include the use of illegal drugs, and/or addiction to legal medicines or alcohol. This would also include the use of, or addiction to pornography.

Sex outside of marriage – Sex outside of heterosexual marriage is always condemned by the Bible as either being sinful fornication, adultery, or sinful

engagement in homosexual sex. As Christians we are called to be more than moralists, legalists, or Pharisees. Rather, we place the emphasis on the hope of healing and redemption of all sinners including sexual sin. We understand that confession and repentance does not always instantly make the “problem” go away. Please know that our God is a God of forgiveness and grace, and that healing and deliverance is often a process. If you know you need to confess and repent of some sexual sin in your life, and would like to receive ongoing healing, counseling, and accountability, please talk to the pastor or one of the leaders.

Living together outside of marriage – Again, I recognize that biblical standards are radically different than our culture’s standards. Even though society may tolerate men and women living together outside of marriage, this arrangement is not consistent with the ways or thoughts of God. Since the Bible commands us to refrain from having sex outside of heterosexual marriage, it is also sinful for two individuals to “live together” outside of marriage if they are sexually involved with each other. I would also counsel against living together even if you know you are going to get married soon, and/or are attempting to “live together” but not have sex. Because of the great possibility of temptation, the negative witness to the larger non-Christian community, the confusion to those who are struggling with some sexual sin or sexual brokenness, and the debilitating legacy left to one’s children, I strongly urge you to move out from “living together” if you are presently doing so.

Be an active participant in ministry:

At a basic level, this means attend church regularly on Sundays, be actively involved in one of the Small Groups, and commit to serving in one of the three key areas of ministry at Crossroads.

Be a generous giver:

If Vineyard Crossroads Church is your church, we ask you to tithe or give 10 percent of your income. By generous giver, we mean giving 10 percent of your income, and beyond.

Live an evangelistic lifestyle:

This means use your gifts and unique personality to build meaningful relationships with those who do not know Jesus Christ and, through a genuine expression of love, help them come to faith in Christ and bring them into the church. We call this “relational evangelism”.

How we do communion and water baptism

Remember me – Jesus never asked his disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (known as ordinances or sacraments) as reminders of his death. These two ordinances are Baptism and The Lord’s Supper, or Communion.

Communion or the Lord’s Supper –

What is Communion? – (See 1Corinthians 11: 23-26)

- It is a simple act, not an elaborate ceremony. *“The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread...*
- It is a reminder. *“...and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’”*
- It is a symbol. *“In the same way...he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’”*
- It is a statement of faith. *“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”*

Only those who are believers, or Christians, should take communion. (You do not have to be a “member” of Vineyard Crossroads Church to receive communion – just a member of God’s family.) As well, it is important that we prepare our hearts to receive communion. The Bible teaches that we do this by: self-examination, confessing our sins to God, recommitting our lives to the Lord, and restoring any relationships that are broken through humbly asking for forgiveness if we have offended or sinned against another believer, and/or forgiving anyone who has offended or sinned against us.

The Bible does not teach how often believers should observe the Lord’s Supper. At Crossroads we celebrate Communion at least once a month, during special services, and on other special occasions.

Water Baptism –

Being baptized in water symbolizes Jesus’ own burial and resurrection from the dead. *“For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ.”* Colossians 2: 12. Baptism is also symbolic of a person’s new life as a Christian. *“By our baptism then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead...so also we may live a new life!”* Romans 6: 4.

Baptism doesn’t make you a Christian, it shows that you already believe, or are already a Christian. Baptism does not “save” you, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring in that it is an outward symbol of the commitment you have made in your heart.

The Bible teaches that anyone who has believed in Christ should be baptized.

Why should a Christian be baptized?

- Jesus Himself was baptized – (see Mark 1:9).
- To be obedient to what Jesus commanded – (see Matthew 28:19-20)
- It demonstrates that a person really is a believer – (see Acts 2:41 and 1John 2:3).

Baptism is not only an outward symbol of our commitment to Jesus Christ and our identification with Him, it also identifies us with His people, the Church. *“So you are all children [sons] of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have been made like him. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all Christians – you are one in Christ Jesus.”* Galatians 3:26-28.

If you have surrendered your life to Jesus Christ and would like to be baptized, please talk to Reef or one of the leaders. We do water baptisms several times throughout the year – either as part of our Sunday service or as part of a special celebration service.

How to begin a relationship with God

Salvation:

Going to church, being part of a church, agreeing with the practices, priorities, and values of a church, does not make you a Christian. The Bible teaches that there is only one way to “become a Christian” – through entering into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

God made us to love us and to have friendship with us. But that relationship was lost due to sin. Sin is a spiritual disease that has contaminated the entire human race and made us – in essence – lost, or separated from God. This is a severe problem and, if left unhealed, will result in eternal separation from God, dooming people to hell.

There is no human cure for sin. The problem is so severe that no amount of trying to be good or doing good things can save people. We cannot fix the problem by our own efforts. We need outside help.

Good news! God does not stop loving us even when we sin. The Bible says that He loves us with an everlasting love. God became one of us – He became human – in Jesus Christ, to demonstrate his great love for us and because He wants us to know Him. Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the entire human race. The Bible says that “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

Only through acknowledging our sins before God and, by faith, inviting Jesus into our hearts, can we be saved. Salvation is a gift that can never be earned – we receive it freely by faith. God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him. He took the initiative. Now he waits for each of us to individually accept what He has done for us. How do you do this? How does a person get saved?

- Admit that God has not been first place in your life and ask Him to forgive your sins.
- Believe that Jesus died to pay for your sins and that He rose again, and that He is alive today.
- Accept God’s free gift of salvation, don’t try to earn it.
- Invite Jesus Christ to come into your life, and be the Lord of your life.

To help you take these steps, here is an example of a simple prayer of commitment to God that you can pray:

“Dear Jesus, thank You for making me and loving me, even when I’ve ignored You and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life and I’m sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me. Thank You for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand it more. As much as I know how, I want to follow You from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept Your gift of salvation. Please help me to grow now as a Christian.”

The Bible says that “Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13).

How to experience the Holy Spirit

Who is the Holy Spirit? – The Bible talks a lot about the Holy Spirit. Jesus never described the Holy Spirit as “It”, but always as “He”. This tells us that the Spirit is not just some intangible force but someone who we can relate to.

The Bible also refers to the Spirit as: the breath of God, wind, fire, a dove, counselor, helper, bringer of truth, source of power, and giver of gifts. The Spirit “fills” people, “comes on” people, “speaks through” people, “convicts” people, and can even “move” people. What does this mean for people today? How should we relate to the Holy Spirit?

One way to think of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in our lives is as the experienced or “felt” presence of God. Jesus was the visible image of the invisible God (see Colossians 1:15 and John 14:9). The Spirit, on the other hand is the felt presence of the invisible God. We believe that the Holy Spirit is meant to be experienced.

The Holy Spirit helps us to experience God, to live out in obedience the things Jesus commands of his followers, and empowers us to do the works of the kingdom – loving the lost, serving the poor, healing the sick, driving out demons, and so forth.

The Bible encourages us as Christians to seek and expect an experience of God’s presence in our lives through the Holy Spirit. If you are a Christian and long for an experience of God’s presence through the Holy Spirit, here are a few suggestions.

How to experience the Spirit of God in your life – Here are a few practical suggestions:

- **Ask** – Ask God for an experience of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that he would not leave us as orphans, but that he would send the Holy Spirit (John 16). Begin asking God in prayer to let you experience the Holy Spirit in your life.
- **Participate** – The Bible says in Psalm 22:3 that God inhabits the praises of His people. Actively participate in worship. The Holy Spirit is especially present during times of worship at church. As you actively focus your heart and mind on God in worship (either corporate worship or by yourself) you will begin to experience this “felt” presence of God’s Spirit.
- **Receive** – Receive prayer ministry. In the New Testament, often the Holy Spirit would “come on” people when the apostles laid their hands on them. At our Sunday services, as well as in our small groups, we pray for each other by “laying on hands”. Quite often through this type of prayer, the Holy Spirit can be felt.
- **Daily Devotions** – Taking time to be alone with God each day for prayer and Bible reading is such a vital part of the Jesus journey – or being a disciple. This is also one of the primary ways God interacts with us through His Spirit, enabling us to sense His presence.
- **Classes** – Attend a class or a seminar about the Holy Spirit. Throughout the year, we offer various classes on the Holy Spirit, healing, worship, the gifts of the Spirit, and so forth. Alpha is an excellent class to attend for those wanting to know more about God, and how the Holy Spirit works in our lives.

How to practice personal evangelism

The relational approach – While I believe it is extremely important to participate in the various ministry opportunities of our church (small groups, ministry to the poor, scheduled outreaches, Sunday services, and so forth), perhaps the primary and most effective way that you can practice evangelism and ministry in general is to those people in your life that you already have relationship with – at work, at school, neighbors, your family. And while the most effective form of evangelism is relational evangelism, this is also perhaps the most difficult. It's hard to share the gospel with those in our lives who know us – there's risk involved, and the potential for rejection. But remember, the primary way that people come to faith in Christ or become involved in a church is through relationships that they have with Christians.

Be intentional – I suggest keeping a VIP list – a note card with a list of names (anywhere from one name to ten names) of people in your life – people that you have an existing relationship with – who, to your knowledge, are not Christians and/or not presently attending a church. Pray for these people every day. Ask God to give you opportunities to talk to them about your faith in Christ, or pray with them for some need in their life, or demonstrate the gospel through action – meeting a need in their life in a practical way. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as you interact with those whom you are praying for. Be obedient to God's leading and step out in faith when you sense God giving you and opportunity to share, or pray, or serve.

Tell the story – Know your story and know His (Jesus' story). Be able to explain to someone how it is that you came to faith in Christ and how this has impacted your life. Learn how to tell Jesus' story – why he came to earth, what his message was, why he died on the cross, why it's important for people to put their trust in him and invite them into their hearts, his incredible love and mercy for people, the hope and forgiveness that comes with salvation, and so forth.

Invite – Be a bringer and an includer. Always be looking for opportunities to invite people to your small group, to church, out to lunch, over for dinner – and use those opportunities to listen, and hear their heart, and discern their needs, and share your faith with them.

Take some risks – Be ready and willing to take risks. It's kind of scary when you actually step out and begin to talk with someone about your faith. There will be times when you feel like a failure, but the greatest experience a person can have is that of leading someone to a saving faith in Jesus Christ – there's nothing like it!

Trust God – Trust in and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, only Jesus can save people. It's a mystery how, by His Spirit, He draws people, convicts them, saves them, and transforms them. But be assured, seeking and saving the lost is of great importance to God – Jesus is always seeking and saving the lost. Seek Him in prayer, ask for the empowering presence of God's Spirit in your life, ask God to help you be effective in your evangelistic endeavors, and be led by His Spirit.

Have a soft heart – Keep your heart open and vulnerable before the Lord in regards to lost people. Let God continually break your heart for the lost, and fill you with his compassion for lost people. Having God's heart for the lost, and the presence and power of His Spirit in you, will be a constant source of encouragement and motivation as you pursue the greatest mission there is – helping people find faith and salvation in Jesus Christ.

Some Helpful Bible Verses for Personal Evangelism:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. – John 3:16-17

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him. – John 3:36

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. – Acts 4:12

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare." – 2Peter 3:9-10

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you – even Jesus. – Acts 3:19-20

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." – John 14:6

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. – Romans 3:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Romans 6:23

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. – Romans 5:8

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. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. – Romans 10:9-10

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. – Ephesians 2:8-9

By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you...For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and the to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time... - 1Corinthians 15:2-6

How to pray for the sick and the broken

The Healing Model – This is a 5 step prayer model that John Wimber developed through experience and studying Jesus' method of praying. This is not an easy formula for healing, but it does help give some flexible guidelines in praying for those who are sick or broken. We have found this model of prayer to be quite effective and helpful.

- **Step One – The Interview. This is the most important step!**

“How would you like me to pray for you?”

- Begin by asking, “Where does it hurt?” Ask why the person came forward for prayer. What does he or she want to see God do in his / her life?
- This calls for listing at two distinct levels:
 - 1) The Natural Level. What is the perceived need? Many people come forward for prayer for reasons other than the purpose for which the altar call was made.
 - 2) The Supernatural Level. What is God revealing to you? It is very important to be spiritually ready for the prayer time. (Come early; spend time in prayer and meditation in the Word.)

- **Step Two – The Diagnostic Decision. How is the Holy Spirit leading you to pray for the need?**

“God, what are you doing in this person's life?”

- Ask God to show you what He is doing in the person's life.
- Ask the Lord why the person has this condition.
- This step overlaps the previous step and it is crucial to ask the Lord to reveal root causes for the situation or the illness. We must not “treat” requests superficially; instead we are to provide an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to do His cleansing work.
- For both steps one and two – and throughout the ministry time – gifts of the Spirit such as discernment or a word of knowledge are extremely helpful.

- **Step Three – The Prayer Selection**

“Lord, how do you want me to pray here?”

- Determine what kind of prayer is needed.
- What does God want to do at this particular time?
- The key to healing prayer is being in agreement with God’s will at that moment.
- Ask the Lord to show you how to pray. Use the opportunity to pray in tongues. It may be best to pray “internally” so as not to frighten or offend the person who has come for prayer.
 - “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.” (Romans 8:26, 27)*
 - This builds faith
 - It helps us to be spiritually sensitive
 - It allows the Holy Spirit himself to pray through as well as for us!
- Listen for Words from God
 - Is He giving a word of command? – “Fever, be gone in the name of Jesus!”
 - Is He giving a word of pronouncement? – “Go in peace.”
 - Is He calling for a prayer of rebuke? (Mark 9:25, *When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.”*)
 - A prayer of agreement, agree with what God is doing.

- **Step Four: Prayer Engagement**

- Always keep in mind that our payers are effective!
 - “And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” (James 5:15-16)*
- The laying on of hands
 - “These signs will accompany those who have believed... they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” (Mark 16:17a, 18b)*
 - Remember to comfort, not frighten the person you pray with.

- Always ask permission to touch another person with either words or gestures. Be careful as to where you touch the other person.
 - Men should pray for men, and women for women except for extremely unusual circumstances. (No prayer would be available, the person will not pray with someone else, etc.) This eliminates many distractions.
- Prayer basics
- Always invite the Holy Spirit to be present.
 - If necessary, use breath mints.
 - Position yourself in front of the person you are praying for.
 - Pray with your eyes open. Be aware of what is happening around you. Watch the person and take note of their response to the prayer.
 - Remain calm and direct. Do not become overly emotional. Keep your voice calm and soothing, don't shout.
 - Try to maintain your normal tone and mannerisms. Remember that it isn't about you, it's all about the power of the Holy Spirit. You are not being "graded" on your performance, so be yourself.
 - Remember that patience is a virtue. Take all the time you need to wait on God. The prayer encounter may be one of the most important things you do today! No one will hurry you.
 - As you see the person respond to the power of the Spirit, take time to thank God for the work He is doing. Confirm to the person that God is at work in his or her life!
- You may see spiritual manifestations take place. Recognize them for what they are and don't be alarmed. You may see:
- Long and enthusiastic praise to God.
 - The person may lose balance and / or fall down.
 - The person may shake or tremble in the presence of God.
 - The person may seem intoxicated. Note: be sure they did not appear to be intoxicated before you began to pray.
 - The individual may have an emotional release and laugh or cry without control.
 - The person may seem to writhe or disfigure as if they are in pain.
 - In cases of demonic activity, demonic manifestations may be present.
 - The possibilities are limitless. If you have concern or questions, ask for assistance from other pray team or staff members. Don't be afraid to ask!
- About manifestations:
- Focus on the Holy Spirit, not on the physical expressions.

- Don't rely on manifestations as a sign of success.
 - Don't pray for specific manifestations
 - Remind the other person that they should not expect to see these manifestations every time they pray.
 - Emphasize that the work of the Holy Spirit is internal, not external. Our heart attitudes direct our actions, not vice versa. Also emphasize that these kinds of things are seen in the Bible (Acts). They should not be unduly alarmed.
 - Emphasize that these manifestations do not guarantee that the Holy Spirit has done whatever the person asked Him to.
 - The Holy Spirit is doing what is best and we may not fully understand it.
- Concluding the prayer. Sometimes the most important thing is knowing when you are finished.
 - Prayer is always over if the other person asks you to stop. This can happen both verbally and nonverbally.
 - The Holy Spirit leads you to stop, or you feel the Spirit "move on". A feeling of peace, calm, and comfort may settle in.
 - There doesn't seem to be anything else to pray for.
- **Step Five – Follow Up. What comes next?**
 - If the person believes they were healed or delivered:
 - If the person is not already connected to a church family, encourage them to do so.
 - Encourage spiritual development.
 - Remind them that divine healing will stand up to validation.
 - If the person does not feel that the issue has been resolved:
 - Affirm that God loves them and is at work in his or her life.
 - Remind them that they can return for prayer as often as they want. There is no limit!
 - Affirm that we should "pray without ceasing"

This is not intended to be a step-by-step method for healing. As you work within it, there is a great deal of flexibility to allow the Holy Spirit to move and the prayer partner to exercise their gifts. The Holy Spirit is always free to "move outside of the box" and choose any approach to minister to a particular individual. We must always be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit as we minister, realizing that this requires a deep, personal communion with the Lord in the life of the prayer partner.

What's next?

How do I get more involved or more connected? –

We're all coming from different places in life, and we're all at different places in our journey of faith. You may be trying to figure out the whole God thing, or why church is so important, you may be in need of some healing in an area of your life, or perhaps you feel stuck in your relationship with God. Maybe you want to find out more about why God put you on this earth, or you sense a need to make a deeper connection with God or other Christians, or perhaps you're ready to jump in and start serving in some ministry in the church. Perhaps you sense a need to get some training so that you can better accomplish the things God has put in your heart to do, or maybe you have a strong desire to really make a difference in the world. Now I can't promise you that we have it all together here at Vineyard Crossroads Church, but I can tell you that we believe that people are what matter most to God. *You* matter to God. Your family and your friends matter to God. Our desire is to help people connect with Jesus in both biblical and experiential ways, and – as a church community – connect with the world around us in a way that brings the mercy and love of God, and the good news of Jesus Christ.

We love the story of God's saving love, and believe this story is ongoing. We invite you to come and be part of the story as we discover it, live it, and call it forth in each other here at Crossroads.

Meet with one of the leaders –

If you need help figuring out what the next step is in your own Jesus journey, or your next step in connecting with our church family, or you have any questions, please let us know how we can serve you. I would really like to encourage you to meet with me (Reef) if you haven't already done so. This will give us an opportunity to meet one on one, talk about your story and where you're at, and see what the next step is in your Jesus journey. (If you are already in a small group, you can meet with your small group leader to talk about these things.)

I encourage you to make a commitment to regularly attend the Sunday services. The Jesus journey is a life time journey, and I believe that regular participation with your church family in connecting to God is essential.

If you are not presently in a small group, I encourage you to join one. This is a great next step in the journey and in participation of the Crossroads mission.

If you want to make a commitment to serve in a ministry, let's schedule a time to meet and get you going!

To the journey...

