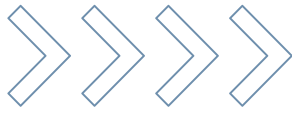


The 2 Types of Neighborhood Gatherings

(credit: Jeremy Stephens)

The Three Minimums in a Neighborhood Gathering:



A Neighborhood Gathering should incorporate worship, community, and mission. The centerpiece of a neighborhood gathering is calling. To whom are you sent?

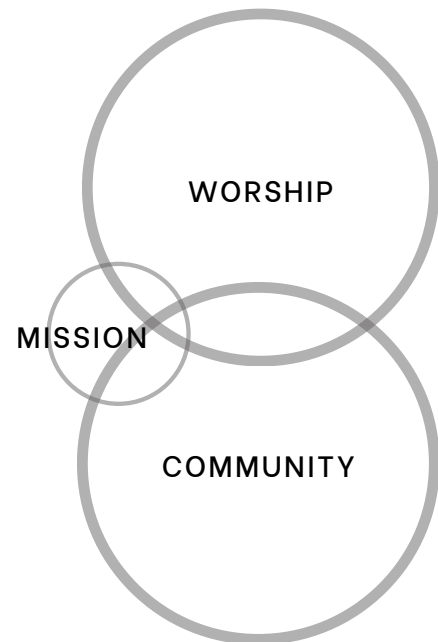


Any one neighborhood gathering Probably won't reach everyone. So A neighborhood gathering should define a people or a place, but ultimately the calling comes from God. As A neighborhood gathering walks toward their calling, they must clarify and contextualize how to express worship, community, and mission. This means Gatherings should embody missional creativity and varying methods to share the gospel.

Existing in Two Spaces

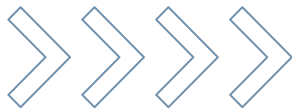
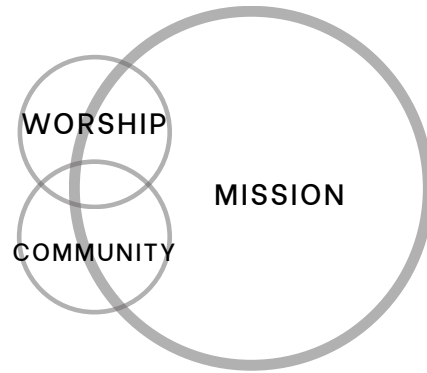
According to Ralph Winter, a missional space is one of adventure, risk, and apostolic impulse. A communal space is filled with belonging, safety and healing. Worship, Community, and Mission happen in both spaces but in distinctly different ways.

Neighborhood Gatherings need a space that's primarily for community (often seen as worship/community), where the mission looks smaller. For example, a prayer time for each other and the poor might not be the most open environment for nonbelieving friends. They are still welcome, but mission is not the primary purpose of that prayer time.



We also need a space that's primarily missional: where worship and community look smaller. Operating as the church in both spaces generates sustainable health.

For example, doing outreach in a strip club dressing room is powerful but not the right environment to focus on healing prayer for members. Obviously, there is intense bonding, but community is not the primary focus of that missional space. Both spaces are needed.



When neighborhood gatherings attempt to force all three ecclesial minimums (worship, community, mission) into a single space, there is often a diminishing of one or two minimums. These neighborhood gatherings will feel anemic.



Organizing Neighborhood Gatherings

(credit: Jeremy Stephens)

Two Types: Specific vs Distributive

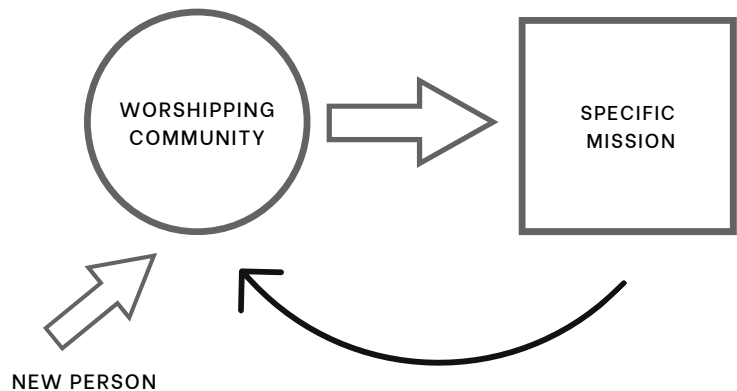
** This is an attempt to describe neighborhood gatherings, yet they are all dynamic and organic and don't fit entirely in any diagram.*

There are two ways to organize neighborhood gatherings in how they operate within the mission and communal spaces: a specific/focused model, and distributive/incubator model.

Specific Mission Neighborhood Gatherings

Specific neighborhood gatherings focus on one mission and engage that mission together.

- Everyone engages the same missional space or people group
- The neighborhood gathering is organized around a specific missional space
- The access to the community is to join the mission



Mission & Community

What is the rhythm of the missional and communal spaces?

The Missional space is clear. These neighborhood gatherings tend to be more effective at engaging a specific evil, problem, or demographic by leveraging all their attention, creativity, and problem-solving skills for deep impact in one area.

Ex. One Gathering has the specific mission of supporting young women's mental health. It's focused, and specific, and anyone who joins must join their specific mission.

The Community space tends to prepare for the mission through training, prayer, and planning. It's exciting, but this space sometimes can be overwhelmed by the needs of the mission itself, causing drift.



NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERING GROWTH

How do these neighborhood gatherings grow?

Activation of New Missional Christians

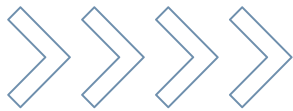
Recruit new missional Christians to join you in the specific mission. The more difficult the mission, the harder it is to find Christians willing to join you. The front door is small. For example, many folks want to affirm serving vulnerable women, but very few want to join in that suffering work.

Conversion from mission

Those you reach while on mission join the worshipping community and in turn join you in mission. Given the difficulty of the mission, specific mission neighborhood gatherings can expect lower conversion rates. The difficulty of the mission reduces how many will join your worshipping community as it takes time to build trust and see disciples birthed in Christ.

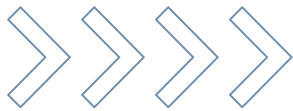
Scaling the mission

These neighborhood gatherings tend to multiply through identical reproduction or scaling of the Method and ethos of the neighborhood gathering.



BIGGEST CHALLENGES

- Burnout due to the deep needs of the mission.
- Discouragement from slower growth rates
- Failing to recruit and develop new missional Christians to join you in mission.



BIGGEST QUESTIONS

- Who are the specific people you're called to?
- What is your method to engage your Missional space?
- How will you recruit and equip missional Christians to join you in this specific mission and method?
- How will you have deep worship and community spaces while maintaining your focus?



INCUBATOR NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERING MODEL

The incubator neighborhood gathering model equips multiple mission field engagement.

- Everyone has different missional spaces they are engaging
- The neighborhood gathering is organized around equipping the community into any mission
- The access to the community is activation into any mission

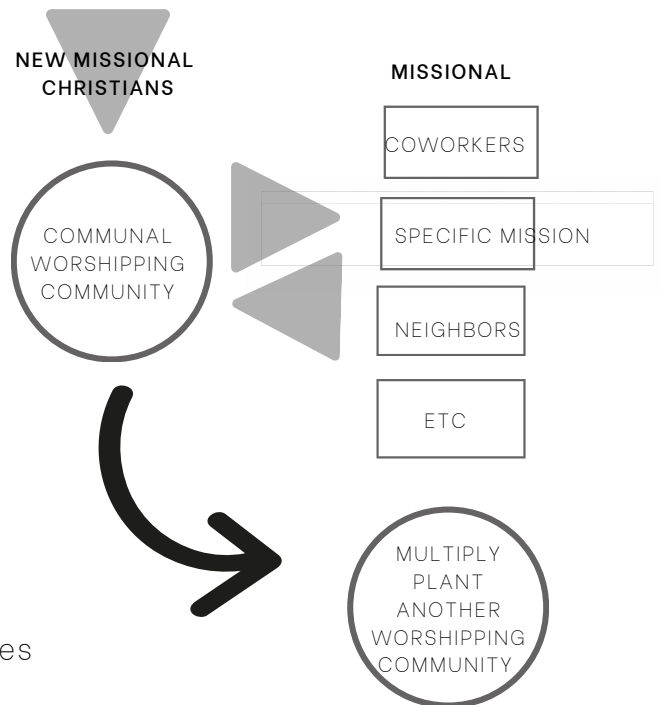
Communal and missional

What is the rhythm of the communal and missional spaces?

The missional space is organized around everyone identifying unique missional spaces and individuals engaging the missional spheres they feel called to reach, thus having a broader, yet shallower impact. Tends to require more accountability to avoid missional drift (Coworkers, Specific Mission, Neighbors, Etc).

Everyone has a different answer to “Who are your called to reach. It might span from neighbors, coworkers, family, homeless and sports groups.

The communal space centers on creating a wide door to activate Missional Christians and equip members to actively engage their missional spheres. This Space Tends to rest more on relational connection than strategic planning. (The community sharing can be deep and peer coaching can activate each other to try to reach someone but can lack the accountability of everyone doing the same work.)



NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERING GROWTH

How do these neighborhood gathering grow?

Activation of Missional Christians

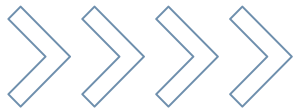
Recruiting missional Christians to join you in the specific mission. The more general (less specific) the mission field increases how many missional Christians can join you in mission. The front door is wide.

Conversion from mission

Those you reach while on mission join the communal space and in turn join you in mission. The easier the mission demographic increases the likelihood of how many will join your worshipping community.

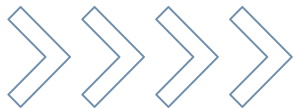
Incubating other neighborhood gatherings

Multiply through launching successful outreaches to become independent neighborhood gatherings. As the core community grows, there can be replication or identical multiplication.



BIGGEST CHALLENGES

- Accountable missional steps that equip people to reach a real person
- Equipping diverse mission fields
- Slipping into another gathering of believers who intend to do mission but never do



BIGGEST QUESTIONS

- How can you help each person identify specific missional spaces?
- How will you equip people to engage their Missional spaces with faithfulness?
- How will you recruit and equip missional Christians to be activated in mission and method?
- How will you prevent the communal space from only caring about each other, and forgetting the lost and poor?



EQUIP FOR MISSION

Regardless of your neighborhood gathering type, equipping for mission is critical.

THE LEADER'S ROLE

Each neighborhood gathering leader must play their role in...

- Giving members the “permission to try”
- Helping members persevere when mission is hard

IDENTIFY YOUR TYPE OF NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERING MISSION

Each individual needs to pinpoint what type of mission they are engaged in. This will influence how you prep and how they lean into being equipped for mission.

Specific Mission

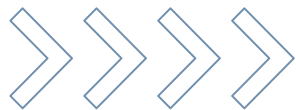
Specific group of people with a specific need.

Ex. strip club bouncers

Incubator Mission

Variety of fields with a variety of needs.

Ex. friends, co-workers, the homeless



Regardless of the people group or need, every missional Christian will build upon the foundational strategy of...

- Saturating your own life with Jesus.
- Intentional movement from Stranger to Acquaintance to Relationship.



UNIVERSAL MISSIONAL QUESTIONS

As an equipping space, a neighborhood gathering can always unpack, inspire, or train on how each person can saturate their life with Jesus or intentionally go deeper in relationship with the people they are reaching.

Who are you trying to love for the sake of the gospel? What are their names?

Do you know them as people? What do you know of their stories?

What are their real needs? Deep needs?

What ideas do you have to engage these people and deepen relationship?

What is the frequency or timeline for you to try your ideas?

If you don't have answers for any of the above questions, what can you do to discover solutions?

