

May 2008

Dear North Shore Fellowship,

In our mission to enjoy and embody Jesus Christ, ***we aim to keep the gospel of the kingdom and the person of Christ central.*** This means that our greatest desire for everyone is to help them experience the joy of Jesus' redemption and reign in their lives. When we are enjoying Jesus, the Spirit fuels our ability to embody him to one another and our neighbors. If we are not enjoying Jesus, mission becomes mechanistic and burdensome—only the really guilty or the really driven will do it.

Our desire is to guard against mission becoming mechanistic and burdensome by grounding all that we do in a rich and real enjoyment in Jesus. The busier we are in life, the more difficult that can be. The busier we are as a church, the more difficult that can be. Consequently, we encourage one another to slow down from overstuffed lives. And we aim to keep “being the church” **simple, relational, and growing organically** from a rich experience of the gospel. We want to become a fellowship energized by Christ's presence rather than drained by a host of church activities.

Our four avenues for mission within our body are: 1) large group worship and special events, 2) small groups, 3) families, 4) face-to-face relationships. Often I am asked by new members, “What can I do?” I tell them,

- 1) initiate with one another in **worship** so we can grow in love for Christ together,
- 2) talk about Christ with your **family** while including those without families into yours,
- 3) engage in caring for one another and a shared mission through a **fellowship group**, and
- 4) get **face-to-face** to share your life with friends from your fellowship and your neighbors.

This response is a fail proof method of eliciting blank stares. But I mean it! Hopefully it is also a fail proof method of keeping ***us simple and relational as we grow organically from the gospel.*** It's the essence of what it means to participate in the gospel together.

As we are enjoying and embodying Jesus to one another, we hope that ***fellowship groups will move together toward those around us who need to experience Christ's love.*** Being a missional church means that we who are enjoying Christ together also embody Him to one another and our neighbors. We *will not* implement programs that skip over that process. But *we will* do all we can to encourage and support ministry that organically grows from fellowship groups intent upon Jesus' kingdom coming to our neighborhoods.

On Memorial Day, we will have a special event designed for you to include your friends and neighbors—our second annual **Party in the Park!** Monday night May 26, we will have fun music, free food and drinks, and a relaxed atmosphere in Coolidge park beginning at 6:00 p.m. Please plan to come and invite a friend!

Grateful for you,

Gary