

WHAT we VALUE

February 2022



Christ-centred



Bible-based



Spirit-led



Mission-shaped



Connect Groups

At ACN, the primary avenue for discipleship is in a Connect Group.

We strongly encourage everyone to be involved because these groups are specifically designed to help us grow as disciples.

The normal pattern for a Connect Group time is to have three sections: connecting with each other, connecting with the Word and connecting with God through prayer. These can happen in any order.

We need time to relate to one another by connecting personally. Depending on the members, this can be done in a variety of ways.

As we get into the Word, we examine its truth and relevance in order to apply it to our lives. Scripture is explored, explained and discussed, and the goal is to minister to each other's lives through what is learned, not necessarily to finish all the material.

Prayer is a vital part of a Connect Group's time together. Leave plenty of time so your prayer is not rushed. This is not just an 'opening' or 'closing' prayer, but a time for everyone in the group to take specific requests to God, in a simple and conversational way. This is where the action is! The goal is to create a space where people feel enabled and comfortable to pray, and can see God at work.

'What we Value' — a brief intro . . .

As Vision 26 developed throughout the second half of 2021, we had a growing sense of what God was calling us to do.

As it became clearer, we articulated some key points as being of high value – that is -- our distinctives as ACN.

These were discussed and prayed about, and eventually named as:

- Christ-centred
- Bible-based
- Spirit-led
- and
- Mission-shaped

What we value gives us purpose, focus and a clear direction.

Values bring a shape to our living that determines what we do and how we do it.

Christ-centred

Introduction

If someone asks you, “How can I get to know God?”
What would you say? Where would you take the conversation?

The British poet Lord Byron once said,

“If God is not like Jesus Christ he ought to be.”

When thinking about God, the Bible tells us to look at Jesus.

The Bible is Christ-centred. He is at the centre from beginning to end.

Read Genesis 1:1-3; John 1:1-2; Revelation 22:12-21

Although many across current western civilisation wouldn’t want to admit it, even our calendar has Jesus at the centre!

Read Colossians 1:15-20

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. What is your favourite image or scene of Jesus from the gospels? Share with the group what is distinctive about it for you.
3. Does Colossians 1:16 leave room for anything that came to be from outside of Jesus?
4. What evidence would you expect to find in creation if all things are held together by Christ? Share any evidence you have seen/heard with the group

Your Notes

John Newton wrote

*“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer’s ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds, and drives away our fear.”*

Newton’s hymn continues

“When I see you as you are, I’ll praise you as I ought.”

How could we not be Christ-centred when we see how good he is?

We become more Christ-centred by focusing on Jesus and seeing the truth of who he is. When we see him as he is we will respond by loving him, worshipping, and delighting ourselves in him.

5. How have you experienced this?

John 15:5 - Jesus says, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

6. How can you best “remain in Christ”?

Being Christ-centred is one of the Values of ACN.

What does it mean for you to personally hold this Value?

Prayer

- Spend some time adoring Jesus.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will help you to be more Christ-centred.
- Ask that our whole church will grow to be more Christ-centred.

Your Notes

Bible-based

Introduction

What is your experience of being taught, rebuked, corrected and trained?
Share a good and/or bad experience of this.

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17

In 2 Timothy the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy, reminding him of the Scriptures he has been taught by his mother and grandmother from his earliest days.

1. What does it mean that Scripture is God-breathed?
2. What is Scripture able to do?

Scripture has been described as being like a plumb-line to measure, and test the ideas and theologies we encounter.

3. When do you allow God to teach, rebuke, correct and train you in righteousness?

Read Luke 24:13-27

4. What does Luke mean by “Moses and all the prophets”?

Wouldn't it have been awesome to have been at that “Connect Group” walking with Jesus and the two disciples?

5. What would you ask Jesus if you were there?

Your Notes

Jesus used the scriptures to reveal himself. When He met with the couple on the road to Emmaus He didn't just say, "Here I am, look at me and live eternally." He took them through the Bible, looking at the way the whole Bible points to him. The Bible is the truth of Jesus that he shared in person through the Old Testament Scriptures with the couple on the road to Emmaus.

Read Luke 24:32

6. What do the disciples mean by their hearts burning within them while Jesus opened the Scriptures to them?

When Jesus appeared to the 11+ disciples He again pointed them to the Scriptures. Read Luke 24:44-49

Read Hebrews 4:12

7. What is your experience of the word of God being alive and active?

From the 39 Articles (foundation document of the Anglican Church)

Article VI. Of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any (person), that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.

8. What do you think the danger might be in explicitly or implicitly adding to what is required for salvation? How could some churches end up doing this and how might we avoid it?

Being Bible-based is one of the Values of ACN.

What does it mean for you to personally hold this Value?

Prayer

- Ask God to open your minds to understand the Scriptures.
- Pray for one another that you may allow the Holy Spirit to teach, rebuke, correct and train you through His word.

Your Notes

Spirit-led

Introduction

What has been your experience of the Holy Spirit?

How have you changed in your understanding of the Holy Spirit in your time as a Christian?

Read Joel 2:18-29

1. How does Joel describe the regenerative work of the Lord?
How does this relate to the work of the Holy Spirit in people?
2. Where does this reading from Joel bear fruit in the New Testament?
Share some examples you can think of. (e.g. Acts of the Apostles)
3. What is your understanding of the difference between the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament?

Your Notes

Read Romans 8:1-17

4. What sorts of things do you need to do so that the Holy Spirit has authority in your life?
5. How does Paul contrast the two ways of living?
6. What does this passage say about how to avoid 'being in the realm of the flesh'?

Read John 20:19-23

7. Twice Jesus declares 'peace' to his disciples, and then 'sends' them out as he breathes on them and gives them the Spirit. What do you think is the link between being Spirit-led and being mission-shaped?

Being Spirit-led is one of the Values of ACN.

What does it mean for you to personally hold this Value?

Prayer

- Pray that we would each be open to being led by the Holy Spirit.
- Ask the Spirit to be active in the world around you and that you will take the opportunities prepared for you.

Your Notes

Mission-shaped

Introduction

How do you define 'mission'?

The term 'mission-shaped church' was coined by Anglican Bishop Graham Cray about 20 years ago following research and a report into the church across England. Why not do a little bit of research about that and share what you found with the group?

Read Matthew 28:16-20

1. What have you previously thought about the Great Commission and its call on you personally, and its call on the church?
2. How are you growing in understanding of the Great Commission and what it means for your life?
3. Church has traditionally been for members. How can we do what we do as 'church' and make it missional?

Your Notes

4. What does it mean to be evangelistic? What does it mean to be missional?
How are they the same? How are they different?

Read 1 Peter 3:13-18

5. How might you prepare to share your testimony with others?
6. Has there ever been a time in your witnessing for Christ that your 'gentleness and respect' have been lacking?

"If you aren't suffering, then you're not witnessing".

7. What is your response to that statement?

Being Mission-shaped is one of the Values of ACN.

What does it mean for you to personally hold this Value?

Reflect together on what you think might be the progression and relationship between our four Values.

Prayer

- Ask God to show you three people for whom you can be praying to come to Christ. Then ask Him to help you prepare for conversations to have with those people.
- Pray for our Church to be mission-shaped, and for each member of your group to be able to live a mission-shaped life
- Thank God for the values we have articulated as a Church and ask Him to renew us in them every day

Your Notes

