

OUR MISSION TOGETHER

We are now drawing to the close of our membership class. Over the past 11 weeks we have attempted to lay out the beliefs and practices of BRCC. We have done this to allow each believer to make an informed decision as to whether God has called them to be part of BRCC, or if they are called to be part of another local church.

We want to conclude this series by looking at our mission together. If we are called to be part of this church together, then we have a mission to accomplish together. In this lesson we will look back at the vision and purpose of BRCC, and we will talk about the part each of us must play if that vision and purpose are to be fulfilled.

I. OUR VISION AT BRCC

As we stated in lesson 1, our church believes that we are called to know Jesus Christ and to make Him known to others. In order to do this we have developed a vision which provides the goals that every activity we initiate must seek to fulfill. This vision is that Bay Ridge Christian Church and all of her ministries are to be biblically based, Christ centered, and aimed at developing a caring community. We will look at each of these points briefly below, and mention specific ways that each of us must work to help this vision become reality at BRCC.

A. Bible based

Most Christians recognize the importance of the Scripture. Yet, in many churches the Scripture is eclipsed by tradition, current philosophies, or the desires of the church members. Although it is claimed that the Scripture is the final authority, when tough decisions need to be made, the Scripture is often compromised. What does it mean to be a biblically based church, and how can each of us help BRCC in this area?

1. What being a biblically based church means

To walk in the blessing of God, we must be a biblically based church. This means that all of our ministry must be based on the Scripture. If we truly believe that the Scripture is the Word of God and that it alone can transform the lives of people, we will make sure that all of our practices and beliefs have a firm biblical basis.

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Psalm 19:7-11 "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. ¹⁰ They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than

heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. ¹⁰ They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. ¹¹ By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.”

Acts 20:32 “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

For this reason, the teaching of the Scripture will always occupy a central place in the life of our church. Without careful exposition of the biblical text, the church will never be healthy, and we will be impotent before our culture.

2 Timothy 4:2-5 “Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. ³ For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. ⁵ But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.”

2. How you can help BRCC be a biblically based church

If our church is to be biblically based, each of us must do our part. Below are a few suggestions on how you can help fulfill this vision:

- A. Pray for those who teach the church, asking God to guide them in their study and to enable them to speak the Word of God clearly and boldly. Also, pray for the church to hear and respond to the Word.

Colossians 4:3-4 “And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.”

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- B. Be faithful in attending meetings and eagerly receive the Word of God.

Hebrews 10:25a “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing.”

1 Thessalonians 2:13 “And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.”

- C. Faithfully study the Scriptures on your own. This will allow you to verify what is being taught, and will cause you to grow in your personal knowledge of the Word.

Acts 17:11 “Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”

Psalms 1:2-3 “But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and

what Paul said was true.

Psalm 1:2-3 “But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.”

D. Diligently apply the Scripture to your life, so that you will be a doer and not just a hearer of the Word. This will bring great blessing to your life.

James 1:22-25 “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.”

Joshua 1:8 “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”

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B. Christ centered

Jesus is the central Person of biblical revelation and of human history. Therefore, it is appropriate that our church strives to keep Christ as the central focus of all we do. Yet, if this is to be more than a slogan, we need to ask, “What does it mean to be a Christ centered church, and how can each of us help BRCC in this area?”

1. What being a Christ centered church means

To be a Christ centered church, BRCC must keep a continual focus on the Person and work of Jesus Christ. This will impact every area of our life as a Church. Primarily, this means that although the church will strive to meet the needs of its members and the local community, the central focus must always be Christ Himself. The focus of our church must always be Christ, not the needs of people.

Colossians 2:6-10 “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. ⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”

Additionally, this means that while we affirm the importance of various roles for church leaders, the primary focus of the leader is to help people draw close to Christ. Thus, there will always be a strong emphasis on building an individual walk with Christ.

Ephesians 4:15-16 “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every

Ephesians 4:15-16 “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

2. How you can help BRCC be a Christ centered church

If our church is to be Christ centered, each of us must do our part. Below are a few suggestions on how you can help fulfill this vision:

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A. Maintain a close, vital relationship with Christ. If each individual life is centered on Christ, then it will be easy to keep Christ as the center of the church community.

B. Do not expect the leaders of the church to walk with God for you. Their role is to point you to Christ.

C. Caring Community

The church is not primarily an institution or center of learning – it is a community of believers. Thus, our church must be a caring community where we develop close relationships with one another. Yet, how is this done? What does it mean to be a caring community? How can each of us help BRCC in this area?

1. What being a caring community means

To be a caring community BRCC must encourage the development of close personal relationships between the members of the church. These relationships are absolutely critical to the process of true discipleship. In the Scripture we are commanded to encourage one another, spur one another on to love and good deeds, and to practically care for one another. Yet, these things can only happen as we build close relationships with one another.

Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Colossians 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”

To encourage the development of these relationships, the church will schedule fellowship dinners, periodic special events, and especially small group meetings. The participation of each member in these gatherings is critical if we are to build a strong sense of community in the church.

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2. How you can help BRCC be a caring community

If our church is to be a caring community, each of us must do our part. Below are a few suggestions on how you can help fulfill this vision:

- A. Be faithful in participating in the gatherings which encourage close relationships: small group meetings, fellowship dinners, Friday night fellowship gatherings, and church picnics. Anyone who does not faithfully participate in these activities will not develop close relationships and will not be able to fulfill the biblical commands to practically love and serve one another.
- B. Work to build close relationships with a few people outside of church gatherings. Invite someone over for dinner, go to a ball game or movie together, or spend a day in an activity with another individual or family. The type of relationships envisioned in the Scripture do not occur if we only see one another during meetings.
- C. Be willing to work through difficulties which inevitably arise in relationships. As iron sharpens iron, sparks will sometimes fly! If we are to develop close relationships we must have enough character to remain close even through difficulties.

II. OUR PURPOSE AT BRCC

As we stated in lesson 1, our church believes that we are called to three main purposes or functions: worship, discipleship, and outreach. We will look at each of these points briefly below, and mention specific ways that each of us must work to help this vision become reality at BRCC.

A. Worship

The church is called to be a community of worship. As the people of God, we declare God’s praises, and we give Him the glory due His name. Yet, what does it mean to be a community of worship, and how can each of us help BRCC in this area?

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1. What being a community of worship means

The Scripture presents the people of God as a people of worship. In fact, God is seeking people who will worship Him in spirit and in truth.

John 4:23-24 "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

The Scriptures are filled with references to worship. In fact, worship is to characterize our entire life, so that everything we do brings glory to God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

However, the Scripture also indicates that when we gather, worship is to be the primary focus. In worship, we magnify God, taking our eyes off ourselves and our needs, and focusing on God. Yet, as we do this, God meets our needs. Thus, worship will include teaching, prayer, singing, and ministering to one another, but all are done to help one another focus on God.

Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

1 Peter 4:10-11 "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."

2. How you can help BRCC be a community of worship

If our church is to be a community where God is worshipped, each of us must do our part. Below are a few suggestions on how you can help fulfill this vision:

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A. Pray for God to meet us each time we gather to worship Him. Ask God to pour His Spirit out on our meetings.

B. Worship God throughout the week. This includes consciously committing everything you do to God, and giving Him thanks and glory for every good thing He does in our life. It also includes spending time with God throughout the week, and worshipping as a family.

C. Be faithful in attending meetings and eagerly enter into every part of the worship meeting. If

C. Be faithful in attending meetings and eagerly enter into every part of the worship meeting. If there is some part of the meeting you do not enjoy as much as others, ask God to help you grow in that area, and strive to worship God in that part of the meeting as well.

B. Discipleship

As we noted in lesson 1, the church is also called to disciple its members. Jesus did not just commission us to evangelize – He called us to make disciples.

Matthew 28:19-20 “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,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

1. What making disciples means

Discipleship is the process of helping one another grow closer to Christ. This includes learning to walk with Christ (the spiritual disciplines) and becoming more like Him in our personal conduct (sanctification).

As we noted in Lesson 7, the task of church leaders is to equip believers to do the work of ministry. One key element in this is discipleship – helping believers learn to walk with God and grow in Christ-likeness.

Colossians 1:28 “We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.”

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However, true discipleship requires that each of us help one another grow. In the New Testament church, everyone was expected to encourage and admonish other believers so that each person could become like Christ.

Colossians 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”

Hebrews 10:24 “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.”

2. How you can help BRCC make disciples

As we just noted, if our church is to be a community where believers grow as disciples, each of us must do our part. Below are a few suggestions on how you can help fulfill this vision:

A. Participate in the avenues BRCC has created to help us grow as disciples. This includes the Sunday meeting, small groups, and our periodic gatherings. These will help you grow as a

- A. Participate in the avenues BRCC has created to help us grow as disciples. This includes the Sunday meeting, small groups, and our periodic gatherings. These will help you grow as a disciple of Christ.
- B. Build close relationships with other believers. Discipleship can not occur unless close relationships exist.
- C. Be willing to receive encouragement and correction from other believers. Each of us need encouragement in our walk, and everyone needs correction from time to time. Without these we simply will not grow as God intends for us to grow.

C. Outreach

As we noted in lesson 1, the church is also called to reach out to the community around us. This includes two main types of outreach: evangelism, which ministers the Gospel to meet the spiritual needs of those who do not know God; and social ministry, which ministers to the physical needs of the individuals and community around us.

Mark 16:15 "He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.'"

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James 1:27 "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

1. What reaching out means

Outreach is the process of ministering to the physical and spiritual needs of those outside of the kingdom of God. God has called His people to be a source of blessing to the entire earth.

Genesis 12:2-3 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

This call to be a blessing includes involvement in both social action (meeting physical needs) and evangelism (spiritual needs). To be effective witnesses and to fulfill our responsibility to be a blessing to the world, we must do both types of outreach.

To fulfill these responsibilities requires a variety of activities. BRCC supports missionaries and groups ministering to both the physical and spiritual needs of people. We also provide financial support and share the Gospel with people referred to our church by the Community Action Agency, a local government agency helping those with financial needs. Our church also has ministries such as Celebrate Recovery which meets the needs of people both inside and outside of our church. Finally, the proclamation of the Gospel is obviously a central facet of our teaching and worship at BRCC.

2. How you can help BRCC reach out to others

2. How you can help BRCC reach out to others

If the church is to be effective in its outreach, every member of BRCC must help. Below are a few suggestions on how you can help:

- A. Pray for our church and the various missionaries and ministries we support to be effective in reaching the lost. Ask God to use our efforts to display the love of Christ, and pray that our proclamation of the Gospel will be clear.

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Colossians 4:3-4 "And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should."

- B. Look for opportunities to personally meet the physical and spiritual needs of those around you. Everyone is to be personally involved in outreach; it is not just for those who have the gift of evangelism.

Colossians 4:5-6 "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

- C. Build relationships with your unsaved family members, neighbors, and co-workers. The most effective way to share the Gospel is by establishing a friendship first, and then answering questions as they arise.

1 Peter 3:15 "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

III. FULFILLING OUR MISSION TOGETHER AT BRCC

As we conclude this membership class, it is important for us to remember that if we are to accomplish what God has laid before us as a church, we must all work together. The call to be a biblically based, Christ centered, caring community requires all of us to live lives worthy of the Gospel and to work together to see God's will done. If our church is to remain focused on the call to worship, discipleship, and outreach, each of us must participate. This will not be easy. Yet, as we walk together, God's Spirit and His blessing will be given to us and we will experience the rich life which God intends for the community of the redeemed:

Psalms 133:1-3 "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! ² It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. ³ It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore."

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