

# *Missional Churches are Sending Churches*

## *Leader's Guide*

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*From the Missional Bible Studies series of the Center for U.S. Missions*

**Purpose:** This Bible study is designed to discover the Biblical basis for missional churches intentionally sending people to serve in ministries in their communities.

**Background:** Missional churches bear at least five characteristics which differentiate them from conventional churches. While some of these traits are found in most churches, all are needed for missional churches:

- + Building the Kingdom of God
- + Developing authentic relationships
- + Sending people to do ministry in the community
- + Daily incarnational living – living as Christ at home, in school, at work, etc.
- + Rapid reproduction of the missional church through new mission starts.

The characteristic of focus in this study is “sending people to do ministry in the community.” This differs from most conventional churches, which spend a vast majority of their time gathering participants in their buildings and of their resources constructing buildings to hold people. Some churches have service events or short term mission trips, but do not make sending members a high priority. Missional churches work hard at building bridges to the community through intentionally sending members, resources and funds into the community.

### **Time of Gathering**

Discuss changes that have occurred in churches the past 10 to 20 years. What are the most significant changes? What inspired these changes? Why were these changes implemented?

**What:** Changes include the rise of contemporary or “celebration” worship; new use of technology in worship; new organizational structures; fewer people willing to serve on traditional boards or committees; consumer mentality in church shopping.

**Why:** These changes were inspired largely by what people wanted. They wanted worship using current instruments and sounds. They no longer wanted to commit to serving for three years on a board. These changes also occurred because society changed. It's difficult for most people to commit to long term service because of complex and full personal schedules.

**Transition:** One change we see today is a shift from “gathering” people into the churches to “sending” people out into the community. This is also a response to our day and age. The percentage of people who have no desire to step foot in a church is increasing, so the need to go out to these people is increasing. Christians have a greater desire to experience their faith. Sitting in a Bible class is less attractive than “doing ministry.” More Christians also want to serve in areas they find personally meaningful, which can at times be found in the community at large.

## God is a Sending God

Read the following the Bible passages. What do they say about God and “sending?”

1 John 4:9-10: God the Father sent Jesus into the world. This reveals God’s love for us as well as grants those who believe in Jesus real life. The point is that God is a sending God.

Galatians 4:4-6: God the Father sent Jesus into the world. Then God sent the Holy Spirit to us.

John 14:23-26: The Father sent the Son. The Father and the Son sent the Spirit (Counselor).

## Jesus practiced “Sending”

Compare and contrast the following two Bible passages: Mark 6:6b-13 and Luke 10:1-11

Similarities: In both passages Jesus is going from town to town; His followers could do miracles (Mark 6:7, Luke 10:9); bring only the bare essentials; earn the trust of villagers; and are trained by Jesus on how to respond depending on how people react.

Differences: In Mark, Jesus sends the 12 disciples; in Luke, Jesus sends 72 of his followers who did not include the original 12 disciples. This implies that any of Jesus’ followers can be sent by Him as He desires.

## Missional Churches are Sending Churches

Discuss the following examples of churches “sending” people to do ministry in the community.

St. Andrew Lutheran Church adopted a local public elementary school. Members were sent to serve as classroom volunteers, tutors and fund raisers.

Word of Life Lutheran Church decided that groups with fewer than 12 people would not meet in the church facility. Instead, these groups had to meet in homes, businesses and public areas.

When St. Paul’s Lutheran Church called an associate pastor, they sent the associate pastor and 15 families to start a second campus 20 miles from the original church campus.

## Objections to Sending

Read the following Bible passages. Identify the objections people had to being sent and how God responded to the objection.

1 Samuel 16:1-5: Objection: I will get killed. Response: God provided an honest and effective cover story.

Exodus 4:10-16: Objection: I can not speak well. Response: God sent Aaron with Moses and equipped both of them to speak well.

Acts 9:10-19: Objection: Saul could imprison me. Response: I said go, so go.

After answering the questions, discuss possible objections to churches intentionally sending people, resources and funds into their communities.

## Blessings of Sending

Read the passages. Discuss why Christians were being sent and the results of being sent.

Colossians 4:7-8: Tychicus was sent to explain what was happening to other followers of Christ and to encourage the believers.

Philippians 2:19: Timothy was sent so that the “sender,” Paul, could be encouraged by news from Philippi.

Acts 13:1-3: Barnabas and Saul (Paul) were sent to start new missions.

Philippians 2:25-30: Epaphroditus was originally sent to care for Paul. Now he is being sent back to encourage the “sending church” and ease Paul’s conscious for taking church’s leader.

After working through the questions, discuss how being sent by a church would bless those who receive the one sent, the person being sent and the sending church.

## “Why Send?”

Missional churches send members into the community for five primary reasons.

- + So people who have no interest in churches can be connected to Christ.  
Churches which are sending people into the community open opportunities for the members to talk about Jesus with people who do not know Him yet.
- + Build bridges between the congregation and the community.  
Congregations are called to make disciples of Jesus. By sending participants, the church builds a bridge to draw people from the community for discipleship.
- + Provide the opportunity for God to mature the faith of members who take the risk of serving in the community.  
According to Ephesians 4:11-16, one way God grows the faith of believers is through service to others in God’s name.
- + Train and equip members to live as people who are sent by God into the world.  
One reason God created churches is so that Christians could learn how to live in daily life. Just as we learn to pray in daily life by praying at church, so we also we serve through church so we can learn to be servants in daily life.
- + Start new congregations so God’s process of sending people will continue.  
Most new churches today are started by other churches. Continually sending out participants to serve in the community provides training for members who will in the future plant new churches. It also provides a healthy transition from being a conventional church to a church-planting church.

## “Time of Sending”

As a class, identify different opportunities for class members to be “sent” out in the name of Jesus this week. Each member should follow through with one opportunity. Report back about the experience in the coming weeks.

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Accompanying Participant’s Guide is also available from the Center for U.S. Missions.