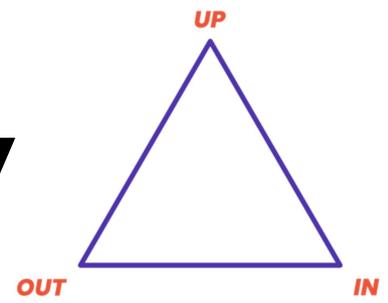


Missional Community

(Up-In-Out Triangle)



How does God want us to interact with others in Missional Communities as we follow Christ?

Scripture

In the Bible, the book called 'Acts' gives lots of descriptions of how the early Church lived as a family on mission (particularly chapters 2 and 4). Read the following Bible verses and note down anything that stands out to you.

Acts 2:42-47 (How the early followers of Jesus lived in community)

What do you notice about how the early Church lived?

What do you think a modern community would look like that held the same values?

Story

Here is a story from one of our church family called Joe and his experiences of Missional Community:

'I was covered in rat bites, dirty and smelly and they invited me into their home, sat me down and made me feel welcome. As soon as I walked in people were the same as I'd experienced when I first met them, I could feel the love and the community and the support. To walk into someone's home and be welcomed in such a way, you start to feel the love of Jesus and it's just the best thing ever ... my community is everything to me, it's my family.'

What strikes you about Joe's experience of Missional Community?

Is there a Missional Community that you consider yourself a part of? What aspects of that community do you engage in? Which bits do you not engage in and why?

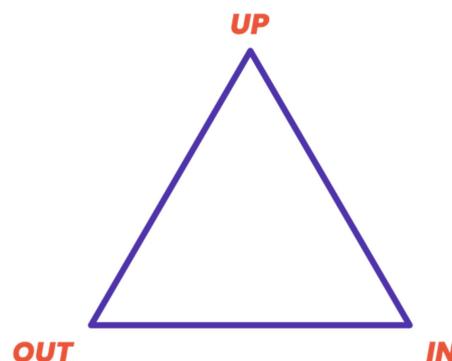
Shape

Christian community is not a part of the church or something that we do. It is who we are. We are an expression of Jesus' body on the earth only as we relate to each other - loving each other, following Jesus together, and serving the people around us. We like to use the term 'family on mission' because it expresses this really well. We live together as extended family, but we're also going somewhere, focused

beyond ourselves. The Greek word ***oikos*** is often used in the New Testament to describe communities of believers. It refers to a household or large extended family who would live with or near each other and work and learn together – a family on mission. Our western culture is focused on individuals and nuclear families and has largely lost the concept of *oikos*. As a church family, we want to relearn how to live in this way, as intentional extended family.

The Up-In-Out Triangle is a helpful shape to understand the different aspects of family on mission:

In: Radical Family. A Missional Community lives and experiences life together like a family. They see God as their Father and they gather around Jesus Christ the centre – this is what brings them together. They eat and meet together regularly in fun ways. There is always more room at the table and it is a mix of those who already believe and those who don't yet. A family shares time, resources, needs, hurts, successes, stories and love: they are committed to one another.



Up: Passionate Spirituality. Our communities worship God together with their whole lives and in songs. We speak the good news to one another and hear God through the Bible. We pray together and expect God to speak to us together and individually. Those who haven't yet made the decision to follow Jesus are invited into this as well, giving them the ability to explore faith in the context of community.

Out: Missional Zeal. A Missional Community is a family of missionary servants who make disciples who make disciples. They serve those around them as though they are serving Jesus. Communities do this in many different ways, some welcome asylum seekers, others reach out to the poor or the lonely/isolated or serve parents and children, each as they feel led. Such communities also speak out the good news of the kingdom (the gospel) and make new disciples (learners); helping people find faith, a new identity, and freedom to obey all Jesus' commands. Together they radically reorient their lives around the mission of making disciples of a particular people or place; aligning their diaries, resources and decisions around reaching people for Christ together.

Jesus lived a life with a perfect balance of Up-In-Out. As disciples we are all growing to be more like him.

So What?

In smaller groups, share the strengths and weaknesses you feel you personally have regarding Up, In and Out.

Also discuss the strengths and weaknesses you feel the whole community has regarding Up, In and Out.

Take an extended time to pray as a group, or as a whole, for the Missional Community to be strong in each area.

Grow Further

Memory Verse:

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Other Bible Passages:

- Matthew 18:19-20
- Romans 12:9-18
- Any of the 100+ verses that include the phrase 'one another'

Other resources:

Make Disciples video - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJWkQ9UP_m8