

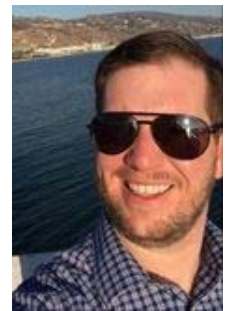


Moving from Service to Relationship

by Brandon Kelly, Director of Transformational Ministries

January 26, 2018—Vol. 12, No. 4

Over the past ten years, many of our churches have begun to make a shift from thinking primarily about the internal elements of their church to considering the external needs of the community in which they are located. Much of this shift has come from the ongoing conversation in the Church around missionality – being missionaries to your community, workplace, and neighborhood. As individuals and churches have started to reach out, the response we've heard from leaders is that it's not making a difference in their church. New people aren't showing up on Sunday mornings, there aren't any new baptisms taking place, and frustration is starting to well up.



Brandon Kelly, CGGC
Director of
Transformational
Ministries

One of the key reasons churches struggle with seeing fruit from missionality is that they haven't moved from service to relationship. Now, don't hear what I'm not saying, service is a great first step and a necessary part of bringing the Kingdom here on earth. We need to make sure kids have backpacks full of food to take home for the weekend, we need to pick up the trash laying in the street, and we certainly need to be feeding and caring for the homeless. However, unless we move from service to relationship, it's unlikely that the Gospel will make a transformative impact on the lives of those with whom we're interacting.

Here are some simple ways to begin building relationships while serving:

1. **Be consistent.** Whatever serving opportunity you use to engage with your community, do it in the same place, on the same day, at the same time. You want to keep seeing the same people over and over again so that familiarity is developed. It's also important that the community not feel like a project for the church. When you serve the same people over a long-term period, they begin to feel like you really care because you haven't given up.

2. **Be genuinely interested in who you're serving.** Get to know those you're serving by asking them lots of questions about who they are and what's important to them. While you might glean some insights to help share the Gospel or invite them into your church community, don't make this your goal – they'll see right through it. Instead, learn their names, their family, and their concerns. Offer to pray for them and the next time you see them, ask them specific questions about what they've shared with you.
3. **Be welcoming into your own life first.** When you extend an invitation to take the relationship further, start by inviting them into your life. Have them over for dinner, invite them to a game night, or schedule a picnic at the park. Again, this shows that you're interested in them as a person and not as a project that you're trying to get into the church building.

Relationship building in missional living is challenging and messy. It won't always go perfectly and you'll certainly be rejected on several occasions. However, if you want to see the Gospel come to life in those who are a part of your community, you'll have to move from service to relationship.