



1

We live in a broken world

- It wasn't meant to be this way
- It won't always be this way
- But for now, we hurt and that matters

2

A community in need of care

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| •Anxiety | • Infertility |
| •Cancer | • Bullying at work |
| •Depression | • Bereavement |
| •Domestic Abuse | • Dementia |
| •Financial stress | • Addictions |
| •Psychiatric disorders | • Pressures of pandemic |

3

A community that often cares well

- Meals for new mums
- Prayer at the end of services
- Pastoral visits
- Marriage and parenting courses
- Informal chats over coffee



A community that struggles to care

- "I'm not trained for this sort of thing – I may make it worse"
- "I'm not gifted – leave it to the professionals"
- "I'm too busy – I can't cope with the needs"
- "Let's look at a Bible passage that will show you what you need"
- "I don't want to encourage introspection – it's a distraction from mission"
- "Private things should remain private"
- "If people are well-fed from the Bible that should be enough"



DISCUSSION TIME

- What encourages you about the pastoral care of your church?
- What are the obstacles to good pastoral care that you see in your church?
- Where would you love to see growth in pastoral care?

(Please don't divulge any sensitive information!)



A community of exciting possibilities

- A community where you are known
- A community where you are loved – in word and deed
- A community where you are pointed to Christ
- A community where you are changing to be more like Christ
- A community where no-one is burned out with care because all are helping
- A community where these things are true of everyone
- Because it's a community with an unshakeable trust in the sufficiency of Christ



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A community that cares is committed to:

- Maturing together (common goal)
- by ...
- Serving together (common relationships)
- through ..
- Speaking God's word together (common foundation)



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#1 A community called to mature together

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13



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Maturing means heart and behaviour change

- Those who doubt having more certainty
- Those who drink heavily pursuing sobriety
- Those who fear increasingly putting their faith in Christ
- Those who hate themselves seeing themselves as God does
- Those who are angry embracing peace and reconciliation
- Those who are restless developing contentment
- Those who follow idols turning back to the one true God

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DISCUSSION TIME

Meet Sam – a regular member of your local church. Sam is 28, a parent to a toddler and holding down a full time job. With little time and lots of pressure in life, Sam tends to get easily stressed. At work that stress gets covered with a few drinks, at home it trickles out in frustration and arguments. Quiet times are a thing of the past – there seems little point in prayer.

How does Sam need help to mature?



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A more mature Sam

- Restoring the joy of salvation
- Encouraging communication with God (Bible and prayer)
- Learning healthy communication with others
- Learning to lament the things that are hard – and run to his rock
- Learning to persevere through the pressures
- Drinking less
- ++++

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#2 A community called to serve each other

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13

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Serving by one-anothering

- *serve one another
- *forgive one another
- *teach one another
- *admonish one another
- *spur one another on
- *offer hospitality to one another
- be devoted to one another
- honour one another
- love one another
- accept one another
- instruct one another
- greet one another
- agree with one another
- encourage one another
- speak to one another with psalms hymns and songs
- submit to one another
- bear with one another

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Serving by speaking

So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:14-16)

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DISCUSSION TIME

Remember Sam? In what ways would you want to share your life with Sam and encourage Sam to share life with you?

What words of truth (from God's word) would you want to speak?

"Truth in love" - are there any ways you might be tempted to separate truth from love and focus on just one aspect of this call?



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A more connected Sam

Chat about parenting? Listen to what is hard.

Lunchtime Bible study (over Zoom!)?

Pray over the phone once a week? Or WhatsApp prayer requests?

Read a book together? (One that edifies you both)

Babysit? (Read a story over Zoom while Sam prays)

Drop round a meal?

Journal / diary triggers for drinking? Accountability?



17

A more rooted Sam

You are chosen, called, secure

None of us is righteous – a need to repent is normal

God has started a good work and will complete it

When life is hard we have a rock and refuge

There is a Good Shepherd leading you through

Pursue your call to holiness



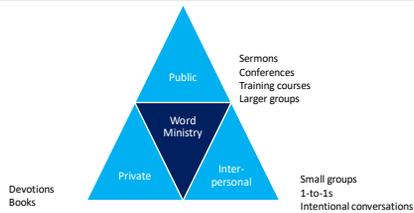
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#3 A community called to be rooted in the word

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13

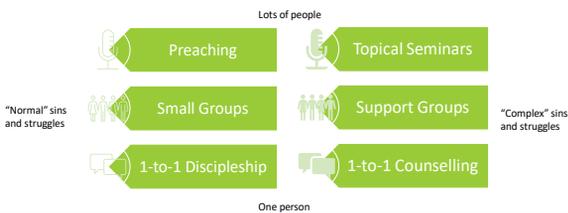
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The word explored in many ways



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The word explored in specific diets!



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A structure that helps Sam

Biblical counselling for the anger issues?

Maybe a support group for the drinking?

Parenting course?

A prayer partnership? Combined with a tennis partnership?

(All whilst working out what he can set aside – maybe work from home, maybe take some sick leave, maybe get babysitter in)

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Why use the word counselling?

It's who God is (Isaiah 9:6)

It's what God does (Job 12:13; Psalm 16:7)

It's what Christians do (Proverbs 15:22; 1 Timothy 5:14) – intentionally and sensitively talking about Jesus, in the hard contexts of life, in order to help people prayerfully persevere, thrive, worship and transform.

- Reclaim
- Redefine
- Rejoice

(Though other terms are fine too!)

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How do we become increasingly caring?

A culture of sharing lives

A culture of listening well to the detail of those lives

A culture of praying for people's needs

A culture of Bible-centred conversations (that encourage, challenge, promote perseverance and change)

A culture of sharing testimonies of God's word at work

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How do we becoming increasingly caring?

A **structure** that moves beyond sermons / small groups and 1-to-1s to include seminars / support groups and counselling (where necessary working with other churches or parachurch organisations to increase capacity)

A **structure** that encourages appropriate flow of information (corporate confidentiality)

A **structure** that involved training and equipping people and using **everyone's** unique gifts so no individual gets burdened (and that remains very open to partnership with secular specialists)



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REFLECTION TIME

What potential changes in culture or structure excite you?

What new contexts for studying God's word might be possible in your local church (or group of local churches)?



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