

# **GATECITY CHURCH**

## **CARRY THE ARK, PT. 1**

**AUGUST 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 – BILLY HUMPHREY & DUSTIN PENNINGTON**

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### **I. Introduction & Overview**

- A. We are starting a New Series called “Carry the Ark” that really speaks to the center and foundation of who we are as a church family.
- B. Over the next 6 weeks, we are going to continue in the momentum that we’ve experienced from the *Breakthrough* series as we’re going to rally our entire church family into prayer, so that we can see God continue to move in power.
- C. Who God has called us to be at *GateCity* is a little different from what virtually all of us are used to. None of us, including Billy & Dustin, can say *GateCity* is just like what we’re used to or what we grew up in because of the unique dynamics of how God has brought us together, who God has called us to be, and what God has called us to do.
- D. We want to talk through these details today to set the table for the next 6 weeks of where we’re going together as a spiritual family this fall.

### **II. How God Brought Us Together - Prophetic Direction**

- A. *GateCity* is the result of several different faith families being brought together by the Lord. We can all say that none of us ever planned to merge with other congregations, but the Lord had a different plan. His desire for His people to be in unity across denominations became clear to us as we began to follow His leadership.
- B. Dustin’s Story of how the Lord worked in his heart for intimacy and prayer way before there was a merge idea.
- C. Billy’s story of the encounter at the top of Hernhut where he knew the Lord was calling for the House of Prayer to become one with the local Church, but how?
- D. Dustin’s Story of the Weaver’s Loom joining *New Bridge Church* and the *House of Prayer*.

### **III. Our journey from July 2017 to August 2024**

- A. We understood that the Lord was indeed joining us, so we went through a season of discovery and officially merged in April 2018.



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- B. In January 2019, the Lord began to visit our leadership team in a profound way, pouring out His Spirit and emphasizing to us that we were to “live and lead” from His feet. We knew that what God dreamed for us wouldn’t be accomplished by human ingenuity, but by the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
- C. 2020 brought many challenges with Covid and incredible social unrest. We were grateful that we were able to sustain night and day worship and maintain our spiritual family.
- D. By the beginning of 2021, we had sent our two Co-Pastors, Gabe Palmer and Jeff Lyle to serve in two other churches, supporting and helping to launch them into their respective ministry assignments.
- E. In April of 2021, we retired the names *New Bridge Church* and *International House of Prayer Atlanta* and became *GateCity*. For the first time, as far as we know, a local church was now hosting a live worship and prayer meeting that continued 24 hours a day without ceasing.

#### **IV. Who God Has Called Us to Be**

- A. We firmly believe that His house is to be called a House of Prayer (Isaiah 56:6-7, Mat 21:13). We see this as a clear identity for the local Church. We don’t see the House of Prayer as a separate ministry or calling, but as a core identity for the people of God. The Church is a House of Prayer, and the House of Prayer is the Church. We believe the Church is to be presence-centered and prayer-based.
- B. To establish this, the Lord has given us a three-fold framework that describes the essential activity we practice. This Framework is *Altar - Table - Road*.
  - 1. Altar – The centerpiece of *GateCity* is our corporate “altar” of worship and prayer. Our sanctuary is open and active 24 hours a day, with live worship and prayer. We believe we are called to carry worship and prayer 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We will celebrate 19 years of unceasing worship and prayer in February, and we are grateful for God’s grace for that! We know this may be considered extravagant or extreme, and while we don’t believe every local church needs to carry 24 hour worship and prayer, we see this as part of our unique calling in the grace of God.
  - 2. Table – The “table” is the place of fellowship, teaching, discipleship, and community. Our table at *GateCity* is primarily expressed through our House Churches and small groups. Our *School of Discipleship* and *WellSpring* provide critical environments of connection and belonging for everyone to be strengthened in life-on-life contexts of community and relational connection.

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3. Road – The call to be witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth burns deeply in our hearts. We have five international mission bases in Mexico, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, and the Middle East. These locations all host ongoing prayer meetings, training schools, outreach to the hurting, and evangelism to the lost. In addition, we embrace local outreach and evangelism efforts in our own region through the Gwinnett Food Bank and Promise 686 (foster care). We are engaged in taking the Gospel on the road from our neighborhoods to the nations!

#### **V. What God Has Called Us to Do**

- A. Dustin's story about being a local neighborhood church or being a "beachhead for revival."
- B. Billy's story about Racism and dead Religion being torn down over the city and the Kingdom of God being released in power.
- C. *GateCity* is called to plant four more locations across the city of Atlanta to see night and day prayer cover the city and the presence and power of God released through a massive breakthrough of revival!
- D. We believe the two greatest days the planet has ever seen are directly in front of us: global revival and the return of the Lord. There will be many challenges and difficulties as we see these things and the culmination of the age.
- E. We want to take our stand in partnership with the Lord to see His Kingdom come in Atlanta, the Southeast, and the whole nation.