

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

"CM MISSION: OUR SHARED AIM" | REVELATION 7: 9-12 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

- **What do you picture when you hear the word "church"?**

"A United, Attractive Church" Acts 2: 42-47

We see a united body of worshippers enjoying God, loving unconditionally, giving freely, and attracting their neighbors to Jesus.

- **Looking at the passage, what characterized life in the early church that would be attractive to outsiders?**
- **How does enjoying God lead to loving others unconditionally and believers giving freely of their time and money?**

"A Multiplying Global Church" Ephesians 4: 11-16

We see disciples making disciples in sustainable national churches around the world.

- **Why is it healthier for all people in the church to participate in ministry instead of just the leaders?**
- **Why is it important for churches to adjust to the local culture and not just follow a formula?**

"A God-Centered Worshipping Church" Revelation 7: 9-12

We see the Father enjoying the passionate worship of His people.

- **What are signs a church is more focused on its own success than glorifying God?**
- **How does knowing God delights in you impact how you worship Him?**

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Our vision from scripture shows a church that is united across differences and attractive with love and generosity. The church equips people to multiply disciples globally. The church is centered on God and worship flows from all its people. This is the future of the church; the question is are we willing to be a part of that vision.

- **What is something you can do to strengthen the unity of the church?**
- **How can you be more open to letting God use you in the life of someone else who needs Jesus?**
- **Are you worshipping God wholeheartedly, or are there ways you are holding back?**
- **Pray that God would use you to build up a healthier community of believers.**

3 Vision: The Future We See

9-20-26

Can You See It?

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those watching online.
- B. Slide1-7 AP: Love Languages. REAL. Harvest Fest. Xmas Boutique. Missions Pryr. At Risk. Food Pantry Drive.
- C. Slide8 Fraud Scam Prevention Seminar - audio & pdf now available on the Justice Ministries pg.
- D. Slide9 Prayer: Father, give us eyes to see the church ... You call us to **become**.

II. Slide10 Intro: Can You See It?

- A. “Seeing the **forest** for the **trees**.” Sometimes we become so focused on **the trees** that we can no longer see **the forest**. We see today’s problem, this week’s disappointment, or the obstacle directly in front of us - but we lose sight of the larger work God is doing.
 - 1. Biblical vision helps us step back and **see** that our present circumstances are not the whole story. God is **forming** His people, **building** His church, **making** disciples, and **drawing** the nations to worship Jesus.
 - 2. We must pay attention to **the tree** in front of us (the next step of obedience) without losing sight of **the forest** (the greater purpose toward which God is leading us).
 - a) **Spiritual vision** sees today’s tree in light of God’s larger forest.
- B. Vision can help us move from “*I understand our mission*” to “*I can picture the kind of church we are asking God to make us.*”
 - 1. Our Vision is grounded in Scripture. It is a prayerful picture of faithful, Spirit-empowered life together.
- C. I’ll start with **Our** 3-fold **Vision** and the **Alternative**.
 - 1. Slide11a We see a united body of worshipers enjoying God, loving unconditionally, giving freely, and attracting their neighbors to Jesus.

- a) **Slide11b** Instead of **a united body of worshipers**, we become **a divided crowd of consumers**, enduring God rather than **enjoying** Him, loving only when it is convenient, withholding what we have, and giving our neighbors reasons to avoid **Jesus rather than** pursue **Him**.

2. **Slide12a We see disciples making disciples** in sustainable national churches around the world.

- a) **Slide12b** Instead of **disciples making disciples**, we become **spectators producing spectators**. Creating *dependent, declining churches* that cannot sustain or multiply gospel ministry into the next generation.

3. **Slide13a We see the Father enjoying** the passionate worship of His people.

- a) **Slide13b** Instead of **seeking the Father's pleasure**, we seek our own. *Offering distracted, halfhearted worship designed around our preferences*, while our **lips** praise God **but** our **hearts** remain far from Him.

D. **Slide14a** Big idea: Biblical vision helps us see what **obedience** to Jesus could **produce** through the power of **the Spirit**.

E. Key sentence: We are asking God to **make us a people whose life together gives our neighbors** a compelling picture of **Jesus**.

- 1. Purpose: To help us picture the church we are praying to **become** - **and embrace your part** in that future.

F. **What do you see?**

G. **When you look at our church, what do you see?** You might see a newly refurbished building. A Sunday service. Familiar faces. Ministries. Needs. **or** Opportunities.

- 1. **Some see** what they **love** about the church. **Others see** what they wish would **change**. [**but** here is a **deeper** question ...]

H. **What might we become as we faithfully follow Jesus together?**

I. For the last 2 weeks, we have been considering **why** we are here.

- 1. **Our Motto** expresses **our biblical mandate**: To **live** the Great Commandment **and fulfill** the Great Commission.

2. **Our Mission** expresses **our shared aim**: To Love **God** completely. To Love **people** authentically. To Make **disciples** globally.
3. **Our Vision** now helps us **picture** what that **mission** could look like in the life of our church.

J. The **Mission** tells us what we *pursue*. The **Vision** gives us a picture of *the fruit* we pray **to see**.

1. **Biblical vision** begins with Scripture. We look at what God desires for His people, and **ask**: *Lord, would You increasingly make this true of us?*

K. **Today**, we will look at **3 pictures**:

1. **A united, attractive church**. 2. **A multiplying global church**. 3. **A God-centered worshiping church**. [as we consider each picture, **ask yourself ...**]
 a) **Slide14b Can I see it? - and - Will I participate in it?**

III. Slide15a **1. A UNITED, ATTRACTIVE CHURCH (Acts 2:42-47)**

- A. **We see a united body of worshipers** enjoying God, loving unconditionally, giving freely, and attracting their neighbors to Jesus.
- B. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' **teaching** and the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and the **prayers**. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.
- C. **Acts 2** describes the life of the early church following Pentecost.
1. **The gospel** had been proclaimed. **People** had responded in repentance and faith. **The Holy Spirit** was forming them into a new community.

D. Their *shared life* was marked by: *Devotion to the apostles' teaching. Fellowship. Breaking bread. Prayer. Generosity. Gladness. Praise. Daily relationships.*

1. This was more than a crowd attending an event. *It was a people learning to live together under the lordship of Jesus.*
2. We should not treat this passage as a *formula* guaranteeing identical results in every church. *But it gives us a compelling picture of a community shaped by the gospel.*

E. **Slide15b 1. Worshipers Enjoying God** [Q: What is the chief end of man? A. Man's chief end is to *glorify God, by enjoying Him forever.* (Westminster shorter Catechism *adapted/and to enjoy*)]

1. These believers praised God and shared their meals *with glad and sincere hearts.* They were experiencing the *joy* of belonging to God *and* to one another.
 - a) *We want to be a church that does more than teach people their duty toward God. We want to help people *discover the delight of knowing Him.**
 - b) *Enjoying God includes trusting Him through grief, worshiping Him through uncertainty, and resting in His faithfulness when life is difficult.*
 - c) *Christian joy does not deny sorrow, it finds hope in God within it.*
2. *Can you see a church where people come not merely because they feel obligated, but because they treasure God and His people.*

F. 2. People Loving Unconditionally

G. The believers *shared life* and *responded to one another's needs.*

H. When we say *loving unconditionally*, we mean that *our care* is *not* reserved for *people who already have their lives together.*

1. We welcome people with the *grace* Christ has shown us. That doesn't mean *approving every behavior or abandoning appropriate boundaries.* *Christian love includes truth, repentance, accountability, and protection from harm.*

a) We want people to be able to say: *Someone knows **my name**. Someone notices when I am **missing**. Someone cares about what I am **carrying**. I can ask for **help**. I can be **honest** **without** being treated as disposable.*

2. Can you see a church where people do not have to **pretend they are whole** before they **receive love**?

I. 3. Believers giving freely

J. In Acts 2, believers used **their resources** to meet **real needs**.

1. **It was a response to grace**. They began to see their possessions not merely as **personal security**, **but** as **resources available** for **the good of others**.

K. **We want to become a church where generosity reaches beyond our tithe/offering.**

1. We give: **Our time**. **Our attention**. **Our abilities**. **Our hospitality**.
Our encouragement. **Our financial resources**.

2. **Giving freely** means becoming **increasingly willing to release** what **God** has entrusted to us, **for** purposes that **honor Him**.

L. **Can you see** a church where the question changes from *“How much can I keep?”* to *“How can what I have - serve **God and others**?”*

M. 4. Neighbors being drawn to Jesus

N. Acts 2 concludes with **the Lord** adding to their number those who were being saved.

1. Notice who does the saving: **the Lord**. **The believers**: taught, prayed, shared, served, and praised. **God** brought people to salvation.

O. Our life together cannot replace **proclaiming** the gospel. People need to hear **who Jesus is**, **what He has done**, **and how to respond to Him**.

1. **But** our life together can give credibility to **that proclamation**.

2. When people see **genuine love**, **costly generosity**, **reconciliation**, and **hope**, they may begin to ask, *What makes these people different?*

a) Our answer is **not**, *“We are unusually good people.”* Our answer **is**,
“Jesus has been gracious to us, and He is changing us.”

- P. Transition: So we are not asking God to make us **a comfortable community** that keeps His blessings to itself. **The life we receive in Christ is meant to multiply.**

IV. Slide 16a **2. A MULTIPLYING GLOBAL CHURCH (Eph.4:11-16)**

- A. **We see disciples making disciples** in sustainable national churches around the world.
- B. 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 **to equip the saints** for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 **until** we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 **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. 15 **Rather**, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into **him** who is the head, into **Christ**, 16 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**.
- C. Paul describes Christ giving **leaders** to His church **to equip** believers for ministry.
1. This passage primarily describes the maturity of the church. **It shows us the kind of healthy church life - that should support our disciple-making mission.**
- D. Slide 16b **1. Disciples making disciples**
- E. A healthy church does not depend on a few people doing all the ministry.
1. **Pastors and leaders are called to equip** the congregation.
The congregation is called to participate.
 2. We want to see believers who are not merely **receiving** ministry, **but** learning to **minister to others**.
 - a) That means people who can: **Share the gospel. Read Scripture with someone. Pray with someone. Model repentance and faith. Encourage obedience. Help someone discover and use their gifts. Equip another person to do the same.**

F. Disciple-making **does not** require *knowing everything*, it requires **faithfully** sharing what we have received, **while** continuing to **grow ourselves**.

G. Can you see a church where *ordinary believers* recognize that **God** can use them to help someone **follow Jesus**?

H. **2. Healthy, Sustainable Churches**

I. Our vision reaches beyond **individual conversions**.

1. We want disciples gathered **into churches** where they can *worship, learn, serve, receive care, and grow together*.

2. “**Sustainable**” does not mean *independent* of **God** or *disconnected* from **other churches**. It means churches increasingly able to continue faithful ministry **within their own context**.

3. Another way of saying, **sustainable national churches**, is, **healthy, multiplying, locally led churches - around the world**.

4. **The goal** is **not** to create *permanent dependence* on outside personalities or resources. The goal is to strengthen local believers for lasting ministry.

J. Can you see churches continuing to make disciples long after **the visiting team** has returned home?

K. **3. Local believers equipped to lead**

L. **God** is already at work among the nations!

1. We do not arrive as though we are bringing **God** to a place where He has never been active. [*we go humbly: as servants, partners, and learners*]

2. We want to **recognize, encourage, and equip** local believers who understand their *language, culture, relationships, and community*.

M. **Their churches** **should not** look exactly like ours. Faithfulness to Scripture **does not** require **reproducing** every feature of **our** church culture.

1. **Our aim** is not to export our preferences.

2. **Our aim** is to help people follow **Jesus** faithfully **in their own setting**.

N. **4. Every believer participating**

O. Some will **go**. Some will **send**. Some will **give**. Some will **welcome**.
Some will **help train** and **equip**.

1. **All can pray**, and **all can participate** in disciple-making where they live.
2. Slide17 The global mission is not a separate interest for a few unusually adventurous Christians. It belongs to the whole church!

P. Transition: But why do we want disciples and churches to **multiply**?

1. Is it so our church becomes well known? So we can report impressive numbers? So our ministry appears successful? **No**, Scripture gives us a greater destination - **the mission** leads to **Worship**.

V. Slide18a **3. A GOD-CENTERED WORSHIPING CHURCH (Rev.7:9-12)**

A. **We see the Father enjoying** the passionate worship of His people.

B. 9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from **every nation**, from **all tribes** and **peoples** and **languages**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands (their triumphal entry!), 10 **and** crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 **And** all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and **worshiped** God, 12 saying, "**Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God** forever and ever! Amen."

C. John sees a great multitude from **every people group**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. Declaring that salvation belongs to God and to the Lamb, **and** Heaven responds with **Worship**.

1. **Here is the ultimate horizon** of our **Vision**: A redeemed people from **the nations** **worshiping God together**. [**God has promised it!**]
a) Our church's **vision** finds its place within **His larger purpose**.

D. Slide18b **1. God is the Goal**

- E. Growth can be good. Programs can be useful. Buildings can serve ministry. Reputation can open doors. **But** *none of these* is the final goal. **God is the goal.**
- F. We want people to **know** Him, **love** Him, **enjoy** Him, **obey** Him, and **glorify** Him.
1. **Therefore**, every expression of our vision must remain centered on **God**.
- G. Are we seeking a successful church for *our satisfaction*, or a faithful church for **His glory**?

H.2. The Father delights in His people

- I. Our vision says: **We see the Father enjoying the passionate worship of His people.**
- J. That statement helps us remember that worship is **Relational**.
1. God does not need our worship to complete Him. He is not dependent on our praise. **Yet** Scripture portrays Him as *delighting in His people*. Psalm 149:4 says that *the Lord takes pleasure in His people*.
 2. Through Christ, we are **welcomed**, not merely **tolerated**. **Our worship is a response to the grace of the Father**, who has made us **His own**.

K.3. Passionate worship is more than *emotional intensity*

- L. Passionate worship does not require everyone to have the same *personality* or *outward expression*.
1. **A raised hand** can express worship. **A quiet prayer** can express worship. **Tears** can express worship. **A joyful song** can express worship. **And Costly obedience** can express worship.
 2. The question is not simply, *“How expressive are we?”* The deeper question is, **How much** of our hearts and lives belongs to God?
 - a) **We want our singing and our living to tell the same story.**

M.4. Our present worship anticipates our future

- N. Being are united by **God’s salvation** and the **Lamb**.
1. Every time our church gathers **across differences** to **worship Jesus**, we offer *a small preview* of that **coming reality**.

2. **We are not** *the complete picture*. We are still **growing**, still **repenting**, still **learning to love**. - **But** by God's **grace**, **our life together** can point toward what **He** will one day bring to **completion**.

O. Key sentence: The ultimate success of our vision is **not that** people **celebrate** our church, **but** that people **celebrate** our **God**.

VI. CONCLUSION

A. **Vision** becomes **meaningful** when people take **responsibility** for their part.

B. **1. Help build the united church**

1. **Ask**: What can I do to strengthen our life together?

C. **2. Help build the multiplying church**

1. **Ask**: Whom can I help follow Jesus?

D. **3. Help build the worshiping church**

1. **Ask**: What would wholehearted devotion look like in my life?

a) Choose 1 **concrete** step - **not** merely a *feeling* of agreement.

E. Final challenge: Can you see it? Will you pray for it? Will you take your part in it?

F. **Prayer**: **Father**, again we ask, Give us **eyes** to see the church, **You** call us to **become**.

G. Keywords: Unity, disciples worship.

H. *Like a Polaroid Camera, what you **focus on** - will **develop**.*

I. **Extra's**: So we see our vision as...

1. We see a **united** body of worshipers (that are kind & caring toward one another) **enjoying** God (with utter delight), **loving** unconditionally (till we can't love anymore), **giving** freely (with the most generous hearts), and **attracting** their neighbors to Jesus (so they ask, "what is so different about you... I want it!").

2. We see **disciples making disciples** in sustainable national churches around the world. (on the **7** continents; in the **195** countries, **17** colonies / territories, and **11,000+** inhabited islands of the world).
3. We see the **Father enjoying the passionate worship** of His people (His children, Middle Schoolers, High Schoolers, Young adults, Singles, Marrieds, Families, empty nesters, and retirees).