

THE RIVERWOOD WAY

Rather than give you a dry mission statement that we ignore, or present a bunch of values that we barely remember ourselves, we'd like to share with you our "way." This is our language. This is our code. It isn't something we have set out to memorize, rather it is the culture we aim to live, not just on Sunday mornings, but 7 days a week in our everyday lives. So while this is about Riverwood, Riverwood is simply the people that choose to be together for the sake of the gospel. And here is how we aim to live.

The Riverwood Way...

...is all about Jesus.

We believe the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament point to Jesus, the four Gospels present Jesus, and the New Testament epistles proclaim Jesus. Therefore, we will point to Jesus through our serving, present Jesus in our teaching, and proclaim Jesus through our worship.

...invites.

Matthew 28:18-20 tells us to "go make disciples." But we can't truly make anyone do anything. It is God who leads people to desire Him and gives them the motivation to do His will (Philippians 2:13). So to us, making disciples means inviting people to follow Jesus.¹

Inviting people to follow Jesus can take different forms. We invite people to serve with us, to hang out with us, to be part of a small group with us, or even to partner with Riverwood. We are a community of invitation.

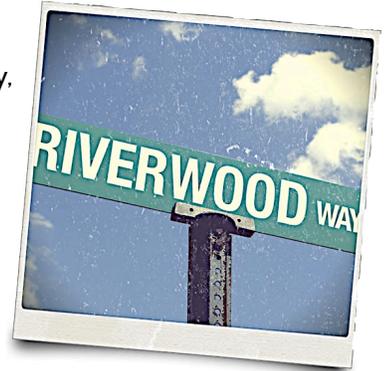
...is Gather, Grow, Give, Go

Our path to helping people follow Jesus is simple: We invite people to gather together to worship Jesus, to grow spiritually through a small group and personal spiritual disciplines, to give of their FIST (finances, influence, skills, and time) for the sake of Jesus' Kingdom, and to go into their neighborhoods, workplaces, gyms, other communities, and the ends of the earth with the amazing news of the gospel.²



...is Simple

We will seek to keep ministry, communication, and our calendar simple. However, to achieve simplicity takes lots of work, and can often be quite complex behind the scenes. But it's worth it! We believe simplicity makes us more effective and gives us margin that God can then use.



...is Not Better, Just Different

Riverwood is not "better" than the other churches³ in the area. We're just different.

In a similar vein, Jesus did not come to earth simply to give us a better life, but to give us a radically different life (2 Corinthians. 5:17). When you meet Jesus, everything changes – your identity, your spiritual state, your Master, your goals... everything.

...is Not to Compete, but to Complete

Riverwood doesn't exist to compete with other churches, but rather to complete the mission God has given ALL of his followers – to make disciples (i.e. followers of Jesus). If someone else finds Christ through another local church, or sees their faith renewed and they choose to worship with a different church family – even if we gave time to that person or invested in them – that is worth celebrating!

...leads with Grace

Because God created humanity in His image (Genesis 1:26-27), all people matter. And because God has shown

extravagant grace towards us (Ephesians 2:8), we will lead with grace towards all people. Love will be one of our marks. Also out of this grace, we will be known as a generous community, always seeking to give to others our FIST – finances, influence, skills, and time.

...leans on Truth

While we lead with grace, we will always lean on truth – it is our foundation. And we believe the most important truth is found in the 66 Books of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

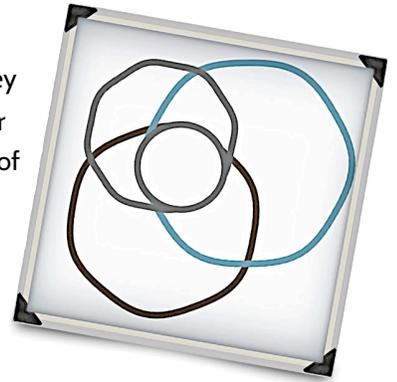
...extends Trust

Just as the Apostle Paul entrusted his friend Timothy (2 Timothy 2:2) and Jesus entrusted his ministry to his disciples, we will extend trust to people by giving them opportunities to serve. Leaders will seek to reproduce themselves by investing in others and allowing them the joy of leading. And we will seek to extend trust at ALL levels of ministry.



Ultimately when we extend trust to people, we are revealing our faith in God, trusting Him to do His ministry through the other person. But God's church is so precious we won't just extend trust to every person who comes along

– we will steward that trust, giving them assignments they can succeed in, and test their character. To use the words of Jim Collins, we will try to put the right people in the right seats on the bus.



...Celebrates!

When God is doing great things in people and through people, we want to celebrate it! So we will celebrate when:

- someone places their faith in Christ
- a person chooses to be baptized to make their faith in Christ public
- someone joins a Growth Group for the first time
- someone begins practicing spiritual disciplines
- new leaders are being invested in and/or given opportunities to lead
- someone shares their faith in Christ through word and deed
- a new church is planted

...is Fun!

Life is too short for it to be boring. We think following Jesus should be one of the funnest and most fulfilling things a person can ever experience!

Riverwood Definitions

¹Jesus-follower: A person who loves like Jesus loved, lives like Jesus lived, and leaves behind what Jesus left behind.)

²The Gospel: The ongoing story of God redeeming broken & imperfect people, & restoring them into the complete & perfect image of Christ through the life, death, & resurrection of Jesus.

³The Church: The redeemed people of God living on mission together under the headship of Jesus to live out the implications of the Gospel.