

INTRODUCTION: *The Praising Place* Growth Track is designed to help you become a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ. From conversion to finding out more about the vision of *The Praising Place* to fulfilling your individual role & purpose which we hope will include becoming a member of the church, become active on our dream team, joining a "life cell" & maybe even becoming a life cell leader.

The Growth Track is comprised of four specifically designed sessions. Each session helps you take a step towards God's plan of fulfillment for your life.

Session 1 (First Sunday of every month) "Fundamentals of Faith" explores doctrinal & practical beliefs.

Session 2 (Second Sunday of every month) "Our Church Culture" helps you get better acquainted with the story, vision, values, & climate of *The Praising Place*.

Session 3 (Third Sunday of every month) Discover and understand how your personal and spiritual makeup reveals a path to your purpose. We believe God created every person with a specific plan for their life and has given them gifts that they can contribute which will help bring great fulfillment.

Session 4 (Fourth Sunday of every month) Find out more about serving on our Dream Team. [Acts 11:25-26, Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.](#)

I. First let me talk about growth. Before followers of Jesus were called "Christians", they were known as disciples. As disciples, we develop **spiritual maturity** through...

A. **Bible study:** [2 Tim. 3:16-17, All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. \(LB\) useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone."](#)

1. I must **accept** its authority. [2 Pet. 1:21, men were brought along by the Holy Ghost to write the infallible word of God.](#) We believe that the Holy Bible is the final authority in determining all doctrinal truths. In its original writing, it is inspired, infallible and inerrant.

2. **Receive** God's Word with an open heart. [Acts 2:41, Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. Jam. 1:21, receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.](#)

3. **Reading & Studying** [Acts 17:10-12, And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. 2 Tim. 2:15, Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth](#)

4. **Memorizing & meditating on** God's Word. Deut. 11:18-25, therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be. There shall no man be able to stand before you: *for* the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.

Josh. 1:8, This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success

5. **Respond to** God's word w/obedience. Jam. 1:22, **Be doers of the word not hearers only.** Just do it. I must absorb its truths by hearing. **Faith comes by hearing the word of God.** Romans 10:17. I must apply its principles. **John 13:17, If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them**

B. Prayer - Lk. 18:1, **And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.** Acts 2:42, **And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.** 1 Thess. 5:17, **pray w/out ceasing.**

1. In my daily prayer time, I am **Giving devotion** to God. 2 Chron. 31:20-21, **And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered. (GN), Hezekiah was successful, because everything he did ... he did in a spirit of complete devotion to his God**

2. **Growing & Getting** direction from God. Ps. 25:4-5, **Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.** Jesus exemplified a personal relationship with God through prayer that gave Him great strength. Every person who has ever been effective in service for God has developed this habit. The only way to be a healthy Christian is to spend time with God daily through prayer.

3. Use the model Jesus gave us. **One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray'(Luke 11:1). This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever."** Matthew 6:9-13

Connect with God **relationally**. **Our Father in heaven**

Worship **Him**. **Hallowed be your name**

Pray **His agenda** first. **Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven**

Depend on Him for **everything**. **Give us today our daily bread**

Keep your **heart right** with God & people. **Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors**

Take your stand against the enemy. **And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.**

Have faith in God's ability. **For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever**

C. Church is important. Heb. 10:25, Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (GN), *Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another.*"

1. There are other things that can happen apart or outside of worship services. This is a major part, role, & piece: Exodus 6:6-8, Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.

I will bring you out. **Salvation.**

I will free you from being slaves (bondage) & redeem you. **Redemption, Renewal, Restoration, & Refreshing.**

I will take you as my own people **Relationship.**

I will bring you in unto the land which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD. **Prophecy, Purpose, & Potential.**

2. Weekend services are about: **Redemption, Renewal, Restoration, & Refreshing.** Celebration. I was glad when they said to me, let us go into the house of the Lord (Psalm 122:1) **True worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him (Jn. 4:23-24).** Inspiration & Preparation .He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. Ephesians 4:11-12 (NIV)

II. To help with **Relationship & fulfill Prophecy, Purpose, & Potential. Growth track & "life cells"**

A. *Growth track* is about faith, culture, DISC test, & spiritual gifts assessment. Ps. 33:11, **But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.** Acts 13:36, **For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep.**

B. How can our church grow larger yet maintain close relationships? We can grow **LARGER and SMALLER** at the same time. We encourage every person to be a part of a **life cell**. Why are life cells so important? **Life cells provide 4 things:**

1. **A place to Connect.** ...yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him." 1 Corinthians 9:22 (LB). Fellowship with other believers, they devoted themselves to...fellowship Acts 2:42

a. God never intended for us to go through life alone, **not good for man to be alone.** Seclusion & isolation is considered a form of punishment (solitary confinement) POW's...

b. Throughout the Bible, we see the importance of being in community. In fact, authentic life-change happens in the context of relationships. Acts 2:46-47, **And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.** Acts 5:42, **And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.** 20:17-21, **And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**

c. Fellowship comes from the Greek word "Koinonia". It means more than going out to eat. It's more than just acquaintance or friends. It means the bonding of individuals & joint participation. **Ps. 133, how good & pleasant...dwell together...unity.** Be connected, interwoven. It means we share a common thread. The basis of this fellowship is Jesus.

d. Let me tell you **2 Corinthians 6:14, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers for what fellowship hath righteousness and unrighteousness and what communion hath light with darkness?"** Because there is a difference between the relationships the world takes part in and the fellowship the church enjoys. It doesn't mean we ignore, holier than thou, don't love & pray for them & don't interact. It shows there are 2 forces that are opposing forces, light and darkness, they are different and contrasting. Light and darkness have nothing in common they do not mix, mesh, or bond. Likewise the church and the world don't mix, mesh, or bond. The church and the world have nothing spiritual in common, polar opposites. There may be a physical bond like a brother and sister, but there is no spiritual bond. There is no spiritual basis for fellowship in the world only the physical one.

e. We are brothers & sisters not because of a physical bond, but a spiritual bond. In **1 Jn. 1:5-7** you find the 2 elements that make up that spiritual bond **"God is light and in Him is no darkness at all...but if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."** The bonds of fellowship are the light & the blood. We may be from different backgrounds, have different dreams & goals. Our interests may vary, but there is a bond we share, His blood has made us one. Our own ethnos.

f. There's not another institution that has level ground like the church. In the world of education you're either a student, teacher, professor, or dean. In the business world you're either a common laborer, foreman, overseer, or executive. In the military you're classified according to rank (private, corporal, sergeant, colonial, or general) There are certain privileges, places you can go or can't go all because of rank. In the church, **neither Jew nor Greek...** The church is the only organization in the world where a beggar can stand beside a king and there's no difference, Man/woman... black/white.... red/yellow... American/Iranian, N. Korean / S. Korean, British/Irish... Israeli/Arab...

2. A place to Grow. **Philippians 1:3-6, I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. 3:12-14, Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**

a. We get prepared to cope & contend. **Iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17)**

b. We get strength for life's struggles. **Ecc. 4:9-10. Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.**

c. We receive wisdom for making important decisions. **Prov. 15:22, Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.**

d. We find acceptance that helps us heal our brokenness. Over fifty times in the New Testament the phrase "one another" or "each other" is used. We're commanded to **love each other, pray for each other, encourage each other, admonish each other, greet each other, serve each other, teach each other, accept each other, honor each other, bear each other's burdens, forgive each other, submit to each other, be devoted to each other, and many other mutual tasks!** These are your "family responsibilities".

3. A place of Protection. **John 13:34-35, A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. 1 John 3:16, Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.** I need people I can do life with, relate to, share my needs & struggles with & to pray for me personally. Help keep me in line. Look into your eyes & know you're dealing w/something. Accountability.

a. Who are you doing these with? Isolation breeds self-deception. It's easy to fool ourselves into thinking we're mature if there is no one to challenge us. Real maturity shows up in relationships. None of us are immune to temptation. Given the right situation, you and I are capable of any sin. God knows this, so he has assigned us as individuals the responsibility of keeping each other on track. [Heb. 3:13, But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.](#)

b. "Mind your own business" is NOT a Christian idea when it comes to helping each other! We're commanded to be involved in each other's lives. If you know someone who is wavering spiritually right now, it's your responsibility to go after them and bring them back into the fellowship.

[Gal. 6:1-2, Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.](#)
[Rom. 15:1, We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.](#)

c. The idea is to provide the spiritual protection of Godly leaders who will be taught & trained to guard, protect, defend, and care for the spiritual welfare of his flock. [Heb. 13:17, Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. "Their work is to watch over your souls, and they know they are accountable to God" \(NLT\).](#) If you're detached & unplugged you are defenseless

4. A place to **share & reach out** (Outreach). I need people with whom I can share my story. In the Bible, they worshipped in the temple but ministry happened house to house.

a. **How do I connect to a "life cell"?** Find a group. (on line TBA) Contact the leader. We encourage our groups to meet once a week (at least every other week) for 1 hour (may have to make schedule changes & concessions). Meet all around our community: Library, rec center, gym, pond, track, park, restaurant, coffee shop. Regardless of your age, interest, or location, we are sure there is a group out there for you. Small groups are also where we pray, care for one another (keep them small so the leader can keep up with members & report when needed)

b. Our groups are as varied as we are; group leaders use their gifts and passions to create a group that allows others to join with them. There is a group for you. Begin any time & change anytime. Commit to 3 months (inform the leader).

c. You can host a group. We believe that everyone has areas of strength and gifting that could benefit others. The first step in becoming a small group leader is to attend the Small Group Leader Training. You'll discover that it's easier than you think.

d. **Ideas for groups:** exercise group, gardening, landscaping, baking, fishing, biking, book club, mechanic, hiking, game night, poetry, golf, music night, knitting,

C. Accept personal Responsibility & Ownership by joining our Dream Team. God has a place for you where your unique abilities and passions can touch the lives of others. We believe that your life will never make sense until you find, develop, and fulfill that purpose. [Eph. 2:10, For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.](#) Every member is a **Minister**. Every task is **Important**. Every member is a "10" in **Some area**.

1. **Investigate your** feelings: Your gift may tie in directly with your temperament and personality. The same God who gives spiritual gifts also made up our total being. Know your potential strengths and weaknesses.

2. **Identify** the opportunities: look for needs. Based upon your gifting find out where you can be useful.

3. **Invest** your gifts: **Freely you received freely give**

4. **Inspect your results:** Gifted people get results.

5. **Insist on feedback** from the Church family: If you think you have a spiritual gift and you try to exercise it, but no one else in your church thinks you have it, you probably do not. It needs to be confirmed. John announced Jesus. Jesus confirmed John (none greater). When members of the Body confirm one another's gifts, more can be accomplished because everyone begins to see where they fit and how their gifts work together.

6. **Initiate the process.**

D. The Praising Place Dream Team Covenant and Honor Code.

1. **I will protect the unity of my church:** By acting in love toward other members. By refusing to gossip or tear down one another. By following the leaders. Rom. 14:19, Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. 15:5, Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus. Eph. 4:29, Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 1 Pet. 1:22, Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

2. **I will share the responsibility of my church:** By praying for its growth. 1 Thess. 1:1-2, We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father. By inviting the unchurched to attend. Lk. 14:23, And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. By warmly welcoming those who visit. Rom. 15:7, Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

3. **I will serve the ministry of my church:** By discovering my gifts and talents. By developing a servant's heart. By displaying a spirit of excellence. Rom. 12:11, Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord. 1 Pet. 4:10, As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

4. **I will share my resources with my church through tithe & offerings.** 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

5. **I will support the testimony of my church and safeguard it's name, reputation, influence, and integrity.** Phil. 2:12-16, Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

As an essential part of the Dream Team family you have a responsibility to develop and exhibit mature Christian behavior. While serving you pledge to present a good appearance at all times in both attire and behavior & you should strive to demonstrate Biblical standards in all situations. As Christians, the way we present ourselves to others is of vital importance to the way others perceive Christ. Our conduct should never be an embarrassment to Christ, but should exemplify the best qualities of a mature believer by exemplifying the highest moral, ethical, and spiritual commitment, Dream Team members are to maintain a disciplined life of Bible reading, prayer, and fasting. You must also refrain from such things as: profanity, gambling, wine or other alcoholic beverages, dishonest gain, illegal drugs, pornography, sexual immorality, violent behavior, or any other actions which might cause Christ to grieve and others to stumble

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Name: _____

How long have you attended The Praising Place? _____

I have attended _____ sessions of Growth track

Are you a member of The Praising Place? _____

What is my personality type and leadership style?

_____ (D, I, S, C) _____ (People or Task Oriented)

What are two primary spiritual gifts or natural abilities I have?

Pick 3 Dream Team areas of interest to you (be passionate about each)

_____ Administration/Organization

_____ Children (preferred ages _____)

_____ Choir

_____ Christian Education (teach or assist)

_____ Clerical

_____ College and Careers

_____ Custodial

_____ Decoration

_____ Event Planning

_____ Facilities (Repair, & Maintenance)

_____ Greeter

_____ Hospitality (cooking, serving)

_____ Intercession

_____ Life Cell Leader

_____ Media (graphic arts & web)

_____ Musician

_____ Outreach

_____ Parking

_____ Performing Arts (dance, acting)

_____ Prayer (1st responders/spiritual life)

_____ Security

_____ Set up & take down

_____ Singing

_____ Sound

_____ Students (teens)

_____ Transportation

_____ TV/camera//Production

_____ Usher

_____ Young adults

_____ Visitation