

# KINGDOM CALLING

Home Group Series

June - July 2017



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*FGA MELBOURNE  
LEADER'S GUIDE*

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# OVERVIEW

**Series passage:** *“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you”* Matthew 6:33 (ESV).

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FOR THE CAUSE OF THE KING

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE "KINGDOM CALLING" SERIES

The Kingdom Calling series is a four-part series aimed to challenge our members to see God’s call and pursue Him in every arena of their lives. It calls us to develop a vision for what God’s Kingdom looks like in our personal everyday activities, within our family, in developing our own church culture and as we move out to bless Box Hill and the nations.

In Acts, the church was known as the “Called Out Ones” (*Ekklēsia*). Even though they lived among the world’s religions and political systems (under Roman rule) of their time, they understood God had called them out to be something different. They were citizens of God’s kingdom and only temporary residents of this world. They had a clear perspective and lived with eternity in mind.

Today, we are still called to have the same heart and live purposefully for the Kingdom of God. To be a place, a people, living in this time, yet operating under God’s rule. Through this series we answer the questions, what does this look like? How will you live out your Kingdom Calling?

In addition, for FGAM, we want to take the time to further develop the vision God has for us to be that “light on the hill” in Box Hill. What does God’s kingdom look like as it comes at this place and this time? How can each of us personally contribute to see this vision come to pass?

### Rationale and linkage to 2017 Anchor Verse

FGAM’s theme for 2017 is “Move In FAITH”. A description of this theme can be found in Appendix 1. The anchor verse for this year is taken from Acts 1:8 “...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (ESV).

The Kingdom Calling series will aim to revitalise our passion for the Kingdom of God and show how we are to be living a Spirit-empowered life for the Cause of the King!

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FOR THE CAUSE OF THE KING

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## MAIN POINTS

This series describes four aspects of our Kingdom Calling. To make it easier each of the aspects has working title, as shown in the following table. This series comprises four sessions which will run in June and July, 2017.

Video Title (Length)	Main Point	Session Passage
<b>Introduction</b>	Series overview/ promo.	Matthew 6:33
<b>Session 1: Kingdom Vision and Provision (6:00)</b>	Seek God for his kingdom vision and take steps to provide for it.	Matthew 13:44
<b>Session 2: Kingdom Culture (6:39)</b>	The fruit of right living is peace and joy.	Romans 14:17
<b>Session 3: Kingdom Partnership (7:09)</b>	The kingdom is not about going solo, but in building strong partnerships that complement and edify one another.	1 Corinthians 12:12-21
<b>Session 4: Kingdom Place (7:07)</b>	The kingdom of God exists in a time and place, where all can come and experience God's manifest presence.	1 Peter 2:5; 1 Chronicles 7:11-21
<b>Leader's Video (3:18)</b>	Tips for leading the series well.	
<b>FGAM Building Video (6:05)</b>	A guided tour of FGAM's first permanent sanctuary by Senior Pastor Chris Ong.	

For this series, we have provided two questions formal questions, with an option of a third question. This will help you to manage the time and allow more flexibility in the discussion and interaction. We also want to allow time to reflect on a special challenge included in each session, which focuses on the building and formation of our sanctuary (Kingdom Place) at 38 Lexton Road. In lieu of this we have produced a special short video which can be played at any of the HG sessions, when you want to discuss the building.

As a leader, it would be good to view the Building video before the series starts so you are familiar with the content. Then you will be able to best judge when it should be played. If it is not played in the first three weeks, the fourth week would be a good option.

*Keywords: Kingdom of God • Eternity • Provision • Vision • Kingdom Culture*

*F.A.I.T.H. emphasis: Active and Personally Involved*

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE**

The accompanying the "Kingdom Calling" MP4 videos (on a USB stick) are available from the church office. Also, video streaming, and copies of the Leader's Guide and Member's Notes are available for download at <http://fgam.org.au/media/homegroup-materials>. If you are unable to access the files or need assistance with printing notes, please let us know by contacting Megan Griffith (0422 284 404, [megan.griffith@fgam.org.au](mailto:megan.griffith@fgam.org.au)) or Ps. YC Goh (0425 799 576, [yc.goh@fgam.org.au](mailto:yc.goh@fgam.org.au)).

The Kingdom Calling series will be augmented by:

- The Kingdom Calling preaching series at FGA Sunday Services for 6 weeks, 22 May – 24 June 2017. Sermons will be available online in video (<http://fgam.org.au/media/video-sermons>) or audio (<http://fgam.org.au/media/audio-sermons>) format or via the FGAM App (available for free download for Android/Tablet or iPhone/iPad).
- Leaders Podcast on our year Move in Faith by Ps. Chris Ong is available at <http://fgam.org.au/media/leadership-podcast>.

### Recommended Reading

- Living in Christ's Presence by Dallas Willard, 2014, IV Press.

# Session 1: Kingdom Vision & Provision

## What is the vision for your life?

*Key passage: "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." Matthew 13:44 (ESV)*

### INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE SESSION

In Acts, the church was known as the "Called Out Ones". Even though they lived in a pagan culture and under Roman rule, they understood that they were called by God to be something different. To live a different way for the trends of their times. They were citizens of God's kingdom and temporary residents of this world. They found by living God's way, they demonstrated the ways and character of God to the world around them. They were a light to those seeking the truth.

Today, we are still called for the Kingdom of God — a place, a people, living in a time that operates under God's rule. Today we look at what characterizes the Kingdom of God and how we live out our Kingdom Calling.

The central theme of Christ's gospel message was the good news of the Kingdom of God. Parables were a way Jesus taught about the expansive rule of God. In this series, we will look at the different aspects of the Kingdom and how seeking God's kingdom in a current time and place has practical implications on the choices we make. Jesus taught in parables in order to raise interest and curiosity in eternal truths. The parables bring God's revelation knowledge to people who have trusting and searching hearts.

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*This session challenges us to seek God for his vision for our lives and to act on what is necessary to provide for it.*

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### A. VIDEO SUMMARY (Session 1 video, 6:00 minutes)

The video summary for Session 1 on Kingdom Vision and Provision includes:

- The need to develop a vision for our lives.
- The early church demonstrated the Kingdom of God.
- We are also called out by God at this time and place to bring God's kingdom.
- We need to catch an understanding of the great worth of the Kingdom of God.
- It is with joy we pursue the Kingdom.
- Having a vision for God's kingdom means that we need to take steps to provide for it.

### B. SCRIPTURE READING (Matthew 13:44, 10-12)

Background to the parable of the hidden treasure:

In Chapter 13, Jesus presents a series of parables to the disciples. He also explains the purpose of parables is to arouse curiosity in those who have seeking hearts. For those who are spiritually asleep, his parables will give no revelation and even serve to increase their disinterest in the things of God. We need to attune our hearts to listen to the message the Spirit speaks to us through Jesus' parables.

A simple definition of the Kingdom of God is of a system of government that is ruled by God that has effect in a time and place. This power and authority to rule has been given to Jesus Christ by the Father, who is enthroned in Heaven. Christ has delegated authority to the church.

[Note, in case it comes up in discussion: The term the Kingdom of Heaven is used interchangeably with the Kingdom of God. The term “Kingdom of heaven” is only found in the gospel of Matthew. The other gospel writers use “Kingdom of God” for the same passages (e.g. contrast Matthew 4:17 with Mark 1:15 or Matthew 5:3 with Luke 6:20).]

## C. MAIN POINT

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*Seek God for his kingdom vision and take steps to provide for it*

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Although the Kingdom of God was central to Jesus’ teaching, we are not able to find a simple definition for it in Scripture. Rather, we see Jesus speaking about the Kingdom using various parables and illustrations that challenge the issues hidden in our heart. His aim is to transform our thinking so we can view life from an eternal perspective, not just be stuck in the here and now.

Today’s passage pictures the Kingdom of God as a hidden treasure. The clear message is that God’s kingdom is hidden from sight and we need to seek for it. When we discover it’s true worth it will be easy to give up things we once considered valuable, because we want to own the better option (Phil. 3:7-8). Here, we are challenged not to let the good become the enemy of the best.

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus exhorts us to “strive first” for the Kingdom of God. This means having our vision for the Kingdom of God central to our lives, and creating provision for this to come to pass. Wishing for something to happen without planning and making allowances for it is simply wishful thinking, or even foolishness. We are challenged to be deliberate about seeking the vision of God for our lives and taking steps to provide for it.

This Gospel of the Kingdom is available and you can come right in and join in with it. Don’t let it be exchanged for the gospel of minimal entry requirements to get into heaven when you die. This is a powerless, cartoonish form of the Gospel that falls well short of the intended message. The King is calling you to go all in for his kingdom vision. How will you respond?

## D. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**1. Go around the Home Group and discuss what is your vision of the “Kingdom of God”. What is the Kingdom of God and how does it play out in your life? A good test of our view of the Kingdom is the prayers you have prayed recently. How do you think God would evaluate them in the light Matthew 6:33?**

*Answer Guide: Put simply, the Kingdom of God is God’s active rule in a people, place and time. It’s a kingdom where God is King. However, this one simple line, doesn’t do justice to the depth that is fully the Kingdom of God lived out. Going through the home group will enable you to bring out many, many facets of the Kingdom of God (what it’s like to live with God in charge). Please encourage diversity in the answers as most people get fixated on one or a few areas of the Kingdom of God. A broad answer will include: place (home, work, school, church, neighbourhood etc.), people (culture, fruit, love, peace, righteousness etc.) and time (an understanding of now but not yet).*

*Perhaps you can take a close look between the Kingdom of God versus God serving our Kingdom. Quite a lot of what we see in the Kingdom of God, is in reality, God doing things for us. That’s why it’s always good to pray “What do you want God?”. The kingdom of God will reflect his Heart, His mission, His character... that’s the shape our prayers should have, and the shape of our vision for the Kingdom of God.*

**2. If we have a vision for the Kingdom of God in our family/household of faith, how can we provide for that vision?**

*Answer Guide: Spend time talking about what it means to sow into the Kingdom of God. It's important to realize that this is not just finances (includes it for sure), but it is also time, energy, resources. How are we actively building up the Kingdom of God. While this question is phrased in a family context, you may have to adjust the question to suit the demographic and make up of your Home Group. Some will be single, some will not be married or have children and others will be in non-traditional homes. The question is the SAME. How will you provide for the vision in your CONTEXT.*

*Steer the discussion to encouraging good things that build the Kingdom of God in lives.*

**3. OPTIONAL: What are some of the challenges of committing to a vision? How can the fear of missing out (FOMO) affect the decision-making process?**

*Answer Guide: FOMO is prevalent in today's culture. People are afraid of commitment because they are afraid if they choose one way they will miss out on something better. The truth is, without commitment we will not be able to wholeheartedly pursue our call. We will be plagued by doubt and double-mindedness. The end result is we will be tossed around by uncertainty and lack the necessary wisdom to know the right direction (see James 1:5-8).*

*In essence we can build one of two kingdoms. Our daily choices will result in building either God's kingdom or our own (the kingdom of self). These are always in conflict with one another. If we choose to build the kingdom of God it frees us from fear, as our choice is made and our direction will be clear. The things we may "miss out on" will be more than made up by the bountiful provision of God (e.g. Mark 10:29-30). We need to trust his plans are better than our own, and his ability is beyond our own.*

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**Reflecting on Building God's House at FGAM (BGH):**

*FGA's building project is one of the tangible ways in which we are providing for the vision that God has given our church. It is not the be all and end all, and neither is it our primary goal. Instead, it's a means to an end. A place where people can come and find God, worship Him freely and be loved by Him. A place that will feed and nurture the Kingdom of God in the lives of all who go there.*

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## E. APPLICATION

We ask you to take time between now and the next session to look at your own vision for your life. How much of it is building your own kingdom or building the Kingdom of God? Pray and seek God for his input into your vision.

Next, put legs on you vision (demonstrate your commitment) by asking God what are the next steps? Share your thoughts with one of your leaders or a close friend and follow through on what God shows you.

If the process of developing a godly vision or being able to discern if it is of the Lord challenges you, talk to a leader or a Pastor. Having your vision clear is essential to being able to commit to it and know how to make provision for it.

## F. LOOKING FORWARD

In the next session, we will look at the culture of the Kingdom and what are some of the practical things we can do that brings the Kingdom of God into our daily lives.

# Session 2: Kingdom Culture

## What culture are you building?

**Key passage:** "For the Kingdom of God is not about food and drink but about righteousness [right living], peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Romans 14:17 (ESV)

### INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE SESSION

The Kingdom of God doesn't exist conceptually, but it is an actual reality demonstrated by the way we live our lives. The kingdom takes place somewhere, with a group of people and at a specific time. When the Kingdom of God is in action, it is marked by righteousness (right living), peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17).

Culture is a natural part of life. It exists in unique forms in each family, workplace, group of friends and even churches. Culture is founded on our history and shaped by the current actions, thoughts, and words of influential people. In this session, we look at Kingdom Culture. If we want to be the people of influence God desires us to be, we need to have a vision for what godly culture looks like in our social groups, church, family and personal life.

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*Jesus made the Kingdom of God accessible to us. The Kingdom doesn't exist conceptually, but it is factual, occurring in a time and place.*

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### A. VIDEO SUMMARY (Session 2 video, 6:39 minutes)

This second session video covers aspects of Kingdom Culture. The main points are

- The culture of the kingdom of God is highly complex and can't be easily defined.
- We know it is different from the world as it comes under the rule and influence of the King.
- Three markers of kingdom culture are:
  - Righteousness vs self-righteousness
  - Joy v's personal happiness
  - Shalom peace v's artificial peace
- The key point of the kingdom is we must experience it:
  - In our homes
  - In our church life
  - In all aspects of life.

### B. SCRIPTURE READING (Romans 14:1-17)

Background to the passage:

This passage was written to the church in Rome, which consisted of Jews and gentiles. The church was young and they were still in the process of becoming comfortable with one another because of the vastly different cultural backgrounds. Gentiles came from a highly ritualistic pagan culture and Jews would have been used to a strict legalistic environment. For example, they were forbidden to even eat with gentiles (e.g. Gal. 2:11-16). These fears and traditions have been abolished in Christ. However, because of the cultural differences, disputes were arising as to what types of foods were allowed and which days were sacred and set apart for God (Rom. 14:1-23). Paul was exhorting them not to be hung up on rituals and legalism about eating and drinking. Rather he was calling them to see that true kingdom culture was

about living right before God (righteousness), and a life characterised by peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. This was the kind of culture from which all can benefit.

## C. MAIN POINT

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*The kingdom of God is not theoretical. As we experience right living, it bears the fruit of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

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Culture is a natural part of life. It is unique to each family, workplace, group of friends and even the local church. It is something that binds us together and reveals our values. Culture is founded on our history and is shaped by our current actions, thoughts and words. As Christians we are challenged to look at who are our primary influencers? And what culture are we building?

Jesus lived and breathed kingdom culture, and he taught about in a way that asks us to join in. When we seek the kingdom of God we are seeking more and more of him, allowing his presence to permeate everything we are and all that we do. We allow him to act and overrule, guide and help us. Seeking God is fundamental to building a personal kingdom culture.

It doesn't stop there. As we follow the Spirit's leading and biblical teaching, we make choices to live rightly and bear the hallmarks of peace and joy. In turn, this influences the culture around us. Living rightly is not in the mechanics of the every-day e.g. eating healthily or exercising often. It is going beyond actions to live in a way that expresses a right heart. Building a kingdom culture is to put legs on our heart posture.

If we are self-seeking, closed and manipulating we won't experience the liberation that living in God's kingdom can bring. There will be no joy and little, if any, peace. The person who has the easiest, the happiest, the strongest life is actually the one who walks in yoke with Christ. This is living in kingdom culture. This is what makes us a true citizen of heaven.

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*Stepping into the kingdom of God is a gift, but living it is a choice.*

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## D. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### 1. What about the kingdom of God is different from the kingdom we are currently in?

*Answer Guide: This is very deliberately an open-ended question. It'll be good to have a broad discussion about what are some of the markers of a Kingdom Culture. If we have a different Master, we should inherently live very different lives with different values and behaviours.*

*What are some of these differences? Surely, as Christians we cannot be exactly like the world.*

*Following Jesus and being his disciple is about bringing the life of the kingdom of God into your life now and that's what makes a citizen of His kingdom. We spend our lives seeking the Kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33). By actively pursuing Jesus, we develop a lifestyle or culture that represents the Kingdom. This will demonstrate and reveal the nature of God to others.*

*When we live in a way that pleases God, we experience joy as a "pervasive sense of well-being that springs up in the cheer." It means irrespective of circumstances we can experience God's peace and the firm knowledge of his presence.*

## 2. What elements will build a kingdom culture in your home and in the church? (i.e. How will you create Kingdom Culture?)

*Answer Guide: Without even knowing it, we're always building some kind of culture, and we're always pressing the rules and values of that culture onto others. It is either the culture of the Kingdom of God or the culture of the kingdom of self.*

*If you're a spouse or a parent... you'll have countless opportunities each day to shape a Kingdom of God culture of love, forgiveness, intimacy and unity. But many times, we allow the kingdom of self to shape our words and actions in the home, and that can produce a culture of guilt, manipulation, fear and distance.*

*If you're a colleague, a student, a teammate, or in some other group setting... you'll have influence to develop a culture of encouragement, honesty and positivity. At the same time, you'll be tempted by selfish motives, which is fertile ground for a culture of sarcasm, jealousy, bitterness and ungodly rivalry.*

*If you're a neighbour, a leader, or a community volunteer... God will open doors for you to build a gospel-centered culture of hospitality, service and generosity rather than a culture that expects service and well organised governance.*

## 3. OPTIONAL: Read 1 Peter 2:10-12. What does it mean to be a temporary resident of this world?

*Answer Guide: It means that we live for a life beyond this time and place. Our whole life is not our earthly life, it lasts for eternity. The choices we make in this life will impact ourselves now and those around us, but also have eternal implications. By reminding ourselves we are temporary residents, we have a greater capacity to make choices that are wise and offer an eternal reward.*

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### **Reflecting on Building God's House at FGAM (BGH):**

*Places and spaces can have a profound impact on Culture. It can either segregate and distance or it can bring together and enable relationships. So much thought goes into the creation of a place so that it encourages the right culture. In developing the new FGA Building, we need to invest in things that will enable Kingdom Culture to grow. It's worth thinking about how we should be building that into our design.*

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## E. APPLICATION

Be honest with yourself and with God today: Are there ways in which you have settled for, and Christian-ized, selfish living? Accept his invitation to developing a culture that reflects God. One that will show the fruit of peace and joy.

Will we be too busy building our own kingdom of self to notice, or will we be like Jesus and invite those around us to taste the Kingdom of God's goodness? Be encouraged to answer this question before God today.

## F. LOOKING FORWARD

Next session we will look at the place for partnership in the body of Christ in building the Kingdom of God.

# Session 3: Kingdom Partnership

## How do we work together?

*Key passage: "The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ." 1 Corinthians 12:12 (NLT)*

### INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE SESSION

Building the kingdom of God requires is the collective effort of the body of Christ. We take time this session to acknowledge the many people and roles that are "hidden" but so important in the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Be stirred up as you seek to partner with God for the Cause of the Kingdom.

Each of us has an individual kingdom calling from God, but we also have a corporate kingdom calling as an expression of the body of Christ at our FGA location in Box Hill. For us this is captured in our vision statement "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord (Josh. 24:15)". Fulfilling our corporate calling as a Household of FAITH will only occur when we actively seek to work together and build a culture that honours and serves one another.

The core values of FGAM as expressed in the F.A.I.T.H acronym are provided in Appendix II.

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*Be sure of your role in the body and commit to serving it with the gifts and grace God has given you.*

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### A. VIDEO SUMMARY (Session 3 video, 7:05 minutes)

This third video session covers the Kingdom Partnership. Here are the key points:

- We don't bring the kingdom of God into the world by ourselves.
- The Lord is the King and his Kingdom is the greatest treasure we can experience.
- We all need the Lord.
- We need to make provision for the vision God has for FGA.
- The body of Christ is diverse, many different members, gifts, purposes, roles. It is not just about those who are up front and have public roles. Many essential roles are those behind the scenes.
- E.g. Ad-Ministration (administration) adds to the ministry's vision.
- Ultimately our church needs to reflect the diversity in the Household of FAITH.

### B. SCRIPTURE READING (1 Corinthians 12:12-21)

Background to the passage:

Taken from Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church, this passage hones in on God's vision for the complete body of Christ. We are not to morph into sameness, but rather we are to live out the individuality that God has carefully crafted in each one of us so that it builds up the body of Christ in a way only God can do. The central message is we are all different but equally necessary so we must honour and serve one another. Paul goes a step further to say that those parts which are hidden, weak or more vulnerable require even more honour. When we all contribute and function as we should, and value the contribution of others, we represent a healthy body, and thus a healthy church which will naturally display the goodness of the Kingdom of God.

## C. MAIN POINT

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*The kingdom is not about going solo, but about building strong partnerships that complement and honour one another. This ushers in the Kingdom of God.*

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Part of God's design and purpose is for the church to live as a flourishing community. We were called out by God to demonstrate what God is like in the way we live and treat one another. This community is meant to exist in a variety of forms: sibling, parent, spouse, neighbour, friend, teammate, co-worker, as well as in a church community. This web of ongoing relationships requires us to live for more than just ourselves.

Likewise, the Kingdom of God is expressed in the church as a relational reality. It is a place where Jesus reigns, and we express that reign in the body by using the different gifts and talents God has entrusted to us. The infrastructure required for our ministries to function well, such as media and maintenance, are some of our hidden parts. Or perhaps it is someone who faithfully comes each week to connect with people after service, looking out for those in need. Today we ask, how do we honour those who are hidden?

As we live the kingdom of God in community, one to another, we create a culture with potential to transform in world with which we interact. Authentic transformation is only possible if we all contribute and demonstrate the practices and life that Jesus led. To do this, we demonstrate humility and honour towards one another, and those in leadership commit to serving others well.

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*It takes all of us working together to demonstrate the diversity and fullness of the Kingdom of God.*

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## D. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### 1. What are some of the key attitudes we can show one another that build up the body of Christ?

*Answer Guide: Key cultures that are important to God as repeated through scripture include*

- *Speaking truthfully. Not lying to one another.*
- *Bringing justice when it is within our power to do so*
- *Not scheming or manipulating others*
- *Loving truth and things that lead to peace*
- *Having our actions that honour God before man*
- *Showing humility and honouring one another*
- *Serving one another (particularly servant leaders)*

### 2. What makes it hard for us to connect and work with others in the Kingdom of God?

*Answer Guide: There are some key areas of kingdom building we can reflect on. This list is not exhaustive.*

*Pleasure and Comfort:*

*While it's not sinful to enjoy comfort, we need to beware. Chasing momentary, physical pleasure in an attempt to build our own kingdom will always lead to slavery and bondage. God calls us to foster a spirit of generosity and hospitality, as he is generous and graciously invites us to participate in his kingdom.*

*Schedule and Organisation:*

*In Exodus 32, the Israelites built a golden calf in an act of heinous idolatry. Why? One of the reasons was because "Moses delayed to come down from the mountain" (32:1).*

While we aim to get things done we need to be careful that our task-orientation, organisational expectations and time management is not imposed onto others. While excellence is important in God's Kingdom, allowing the schedule of our lives to become a dominating idol can lead to offence, hurt and disunity.

Position and Power:

God has wisely created structures of leadership and has gifted people in different ways. We need to be careful that our status doesn't rise to such a level of selfish significance that we're blind to importance of the weaker, or more hidden gifts that people bring. These are precious Kingdom of God moments.

Affirmation and Approval:

We should strive to be respected and loved by others. But not to be overly concerned about what others think of us. This can quickly shape our actions and words and draw us away from seeking first the kingdom of God. Fear of man disempowers us and robs us from seeking first the Kingdom.

**3. OPTIONAL: What are the weak areas of our Household of FAITH that need to be specially honoured and encouraged? (See 1 Corinthians 12:22-25) How can we support and encourage them?**

*Answer Guide: There's really no specific answer for this question as each church and family is different. It's better to carefully consider those that are hidden and in need of help in your specific context. Maybe it is mum who is doing all the washing and cleaning, or maybe it's the kids ministry that is working in the background dealing with crying babies. Perhaps it's the struggling special needs family in the church. It's worth having a conversation that mobilises the Home Group to support those that are weaker in the church.*

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**Reflecting on Building God's House at FGAM (BGH):**

*The new church building will be a place that reflects the diversity of Ministries and Gifts within the Body of Christ. It will be a place where all different generations and parts of the Household of FAITH can thrive. This will mean that resources will go into areas that aren't necessarily your cup of tea. An understanding of all the different functions of our FGA household of FAITH is crucial in seeing Kingdom Partnership thrive in our church.*

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## E. APPLICATION

If you are serving the body of Christ in some capacity know that you are appreciated and acknowledged before the Lord. If you would like to serve speak to your leader or a pastor who can put you in a place you desire to serve. Let us pray together "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

## F. LOOKING FORWARD

Next, in the next session, we look at the place a building takes in fulfilling God's kingdom calling.

# Session 4: Kingdom Place

## The place for God's building

**Key passage:** *"You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 2:5 (ESV)*

### INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE SESSION

The Kingdom of God is always manifested in a people, a time and a place. With the coming of the Holy Spirit, the "place" of the kingdom has most certainly spread far and wide (Acts 1:8), and we now live in an era of the rise of the "virtual" and "digital" environment. What does it mean to have a Kingdom place and to be grounded in a location that you are called, where you plant your roots and grow? In this final session we close with an honest talk about the physicality of the Kingdom of God.

Note there are two videos for this session. The Session 4 video and the BGH Walkthrough video.

### A. SESSION VIDEOS (Session 4 video, 7:07 minutes; Building Walkthrough video 6:06)

This video session covers Kingdom Partnership. Here are the key points:

- Discussion on buildings home places and locations in relation to the Kingdom of God.
- King Solomon built a special place for God's presence
- It is how we conduct ourselves in that place with makes it special
- For a place to house the presence of God, the people of God must be under his rule.
- A place where we gather to seek God becomes a light to those around us.

### B. SCRIPTURE READING (2 Chronicles 7:11-22)

Background to the passage

This passage describes the dedication of the temple built by King Solomon. This temple plans and provisions were given by King David (1 Chron. 22), but it was his son Solomon who was tasked to build it. This was an incredibly elaborate construction requiring 30 000 labourers, 70 000 men to carry things, 80 000 men to quarry and craft stone in the mountains (no chiselling was permitted on the temple site), and 3600 men to supervise. The Bible's description of Solomon's Temple suggests that the inside ceiling was 60 m long, 30 m wide, and 15 m high. The highest point on the Temple was about 20 stories high. They spared no expense for the building's creation. David ordered vast quantities of cedar wood from King Hiram of Tyre (1 Kings 5:20-25), had huge blocks of the choicest stone quarried, and commanded that the building's foundation be laid with hewn stone. The debt for the temple was so large that Solomon had to hand over 10 cities to pay for it.

When the Temple was completed, Solomon inaugurated it with prayer and sacrifice, and even invited gentiles to come and pray there. He urged God to pay particular heed to their prayers: *"Thus all the peoples of the earth will know Your name and revere You, as does Your people Israel; and they will recognize that Your name is attached to this House that I have built"* (1 Kings 8:43). It was the be the House of Prayer for all nations (See also, Is. 56:7, Matt. 21:13, Mk. 11:17).

## C. MAIN POINT

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*The kingdom of God exists in a time and place. It is a place where people can come freely to experience God's manifest presence.*

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Places hold great importance for us as people. For so many of us, a place is more than just functional value. Think of your favourite place(s), maybe it's your home, your retreat, your coffee shop? What is its purpose and why does it hold such a special piece of your heart?

Places are important to God too, because it grounds us in reality. Think of our body as a place through today's verse, we are the "temple of the Holy Spirit" and "living stones in a spiritual house". If we have set aside our body as belonging to God, God's rule in our body becomes much more tangible and it begins to affect our morality, our conduct and even how we value our body. When we don't see that physicality as important, we begin to think we can do whatever we want physically with our body. In the same way, many, many other places can be made into Kingdom Places.

When a place is set apart for God (consecrated) it can carry the tangible manifested presence of God. However, this presence is only when (as seen in today's passage) God's people carry the Kingdom of God with them (His Rule). God's rule always needs a place to be located for it to manifest in reality!

What has happened in our age is that while we have moved away from physical places for God, but we have not moved away from physical places being important to us (read that carefully). So we have high value in property, buildings, favourite locations and even the most sacred of places (our body). But if it is no longer serving God we need to reclaim that. We need to prioritise the kingdom of God (seek it first), that means in all things and that includes people, time and place.

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*Let us make this place one that shines for God's glory.*

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## D. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### 1. Why are places important to the Kingdom of God?

*Answer Guide: This will be a good beginning litmus test question that will help you gauge the level of understanding and default position of your home group (regarding places, buildings and physicality). So much of modern Christianity has moved AWAY from a physical location, and more towards the "inner" parts (like the heart). It's broadly a good move, and it's definitely correct that God doesn't need a physical location to preside in (like a church a building).*

*However, we must be careful that we do not go too far as the Bible very clearly still talks about places, and they have many significant benefits in carrying the Kingdom of God. One of my (Ps. Chris) early mentors told me that if a person doesn't have a time and place for Quiet Time (devotion with God), it's highly likely that they aren't doing Quiet Time. I've found this to be so true!*

*Places are important to God because it grounds us in reality. Think of our body as a place, if we have set aside our body as belonging to God, God's rule in our body becomes much more tangible and it begins to affect our morality, our conduct and even how we value our body. When we don't see that physicality as important, we begin to think we can do whatever we want physically with our body... and the net result is the same as the person who doesn't set aside a time and place for his/her quiet time (i.e. They don't do it regularly or fervently).*

*What has happened in our age is that while we have moved away from physical places for God, we have not moved away from physical places being important to us (read that carefully). So we have high value in property, buildings, favourite locations and even the most sacred of places (our body). But it's not (no longer) serving God. It's time to reclaim that. We need to prioritise the kingdom of God (seek it*

first), that means in all things and that includes people, time and place. That's why places are important. Let's not give our best to places that don't glorify God.

## 2. What makes a place a Kingdom Place and how can you create Kingdom Places?

*Answer Guide: Our attitude, actions and our heart orientation are so crucial to the creation of a Kingdom Place. Read through 2 Chronicles 7:11-22 again and see that God wants a people who would humble themselves, pray and seek his face and turn from their wicked ways.*

*Perhaps, go through what Kingdom Places might exist in the lives of your Home Group members. Do they view their home as a Kingdom Place? Their car? Their body? Maybe even their workplace?*

*Once you've established concrete Kingdom Places in their lives, then talk about what they do to ensure that the place is actually set apart for God and his Kingdom? Many people have plaques or signs in their home dedicating it to the Lord, does that make the place a Kingdom Place? (it's kind of a good step in the right direction to publicly declare that a place, or you, belong to God ... however, it's hypocrisy if real life doesn't follow suit)*

*Here's a good suggestion of how we (as people) can make a place a Kingdom Place:*

- *Attitude to the place (it belongs to God not you)*
- *Actions (turn from wicked ways, prayer and seeking of God)*
- *Heart Orientation (humble themselves)*

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### **Reflecting on Building God's House at FGAM (BGH):**

*Building FGAM for the glory of God. Let us build 38 Lexton Road for the Kingdom of God. Let us also build our own homes as a kingdom place too.*

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## E. APPLICATION

Let us have a considered response to this session. Some may feel uncomfortable with the discussion physicality and building. Let's be honest, we express our love for God and citizenship of Heaven by the way we treat things that are important to God. Let is be led by the reign of Christ in every area, whether that be spiritual, relational or physical.

For our building at 38 Lexton Road to be completed we need physical resources. Let us continue to be prayerful until we can joyfully consecrate this place for the glory of God.

# APPENDIX I

## MOVE IN FAITH

### 2017 – THE YEAR FOR FGAM TO MOVE IN FAITH

Ask yourself, which is easier? Finding out about the Christian FAITH, or living it out? Figuring out what to do, or doing it? If you're like most people, it's always easier to know what to do. Putting it into action requires so much more on our part.

This year we look at the book of Acts (short for Acts of the Apostles). It is the account of how the church started and how it spread from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and then to all the world. What's amazing isn't the strategy they used, or the teachings in the book. For most of the book, it's ordinary (often simple) people who just testified about their own experience with God. They were "witnesses".

Being a witness (someone who testifies) requires a FAITH that is not dead. Jesus had a vision for his household of FAITH, and it was one that reached out, empowered by the Holy Spirit! He saw his church taking risks, doing adventurous things, moving in the supernatural ... changing the world. Thankfully, we have the Holy Spirit, who is our counsellor and helper. He makes our daily walk come alive!

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*For 2017, our theme is "MOVE IN FAITH" and as we spend the year focused on evangelism and being "Faithful to the Mission".*

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Each year our anchor scripture and our theme for the year is developed through both a personal time of prayer and reflection as Senior Pastor, as well as input from a wide range of godly counsel in our Senior Leadership Team.

For 2017, our theme will be "MOVE IN FAITH" and we will spend the year focused on Evangelism and being "Faithful to the Mission". This Kingdom Calling home group series seeks to look at how we build our lives for the cause of the King so that we see God's kingdom manifest in every area of our lives.

## APPENDIX II

# FIVE CORE VALUES OF FGAM

### Evangelistic • Apostolic • Pastoral • Teaching • Prophetic

The five core values of FGAM have been broken down into the 5-letter acronym for F.A.I.T.H.

#### FAITHFUL TO THE MISSION (F):

Faithful has been chosen as opposed to Excellence (which we used to have in our values statement). Excellence is not up there as part of our vision for how to serve because in order for things to be excellent, you have to devote all your resources to it and everything drops on the side to make that one thing excellent. A lot of people nowadays are pursuing excellence (six sigma, zero tolerance through a whole bunch of excellence processes) but the thing is ... a lot of guys die on the way to excellence. Excellence is a bit of commodity everyone is pushing for it in spurts and with very tightly defined boundaries.

Faithful is the new spectacular. As for me I just want to be a faithful pastor and if I can really be honest with you now, when I was younger, I wanted to be an excellent pastor but now I have seen so many guys fall and I just want to be the real thing I want to finish my days serving the Lord and be a faithful pastor to the mission that God has for me and I want to be a faithful husband, a faithful father and I tell you with today's lack of loyalty, faithful is the new spectacular. It is spectacular to find the guy who will serve the Lord with joy, it is spectacular to find the person with one wife the whole time and his family survived the whole thing. I was just thinking faithful to the mission for me and excellent also has this problem of our own achievement and if I have done excellent it is my own doing, faithfulness removes that away so I sow the seeds, I water it and God brings the excellence so we are not saying let's be terrible and I think faithfulness reaps excellence whereas I think you can short cut a lot of things and get excellence, in today's world there are a lot of shortcuts to get excellence and I am not keen on these so that is off for us and you are going to hear us talk about that a lot from us but I am giving you the short version.

#### ACTIVE AND PERSONALLY INVOLVED (A):

Active sits against conceptual. How are we going to serve the Lord, what does serving look like? What is the vision when you close your eyes – serving is being faithful is it serving everyday or serving the Lord but not being active because today we live in a generation that is big on intentions and ideas – let's solve world poverty and go for a rock concert and that's about it, we buy all these brands, promote love, climb the highest mountain for you on my T-shirt, they big on their ideas but they are not doing it. I have just finished a book called, "Love Does". For us it has to be active or the word that we discussed is incarnate it has to be involved us in the flesh and so if we are serving then not just pay money for someone to serve the Lord, we don't want that e.g. P&W team can't pay people to come and play for us or pay a missionary so we are doing the stuff but not active in it.

#### INTIMATE RELATIONALLY (I):

I is intimate. We are going to do our relationship intimately. We tossed between using the word intimate and the word love. Love is a more technically appropriate word to use, however, the problem with the word Love in this day and age is that I can say "I can love my coffee, I love my car, I love all kinds of things". It is really hard and for it to be the distinctive of FGA. For it means that Ps. Quentin is going to

get involved with your children life, finding out their grades/home life. It's like being an interfering parent all over the place almost like an Asian way to be a lot more intimate with the relationship. So how are we going to serve? We are going to serve intimately which involves getting to know people, understanding the differences between each of us and the kind of conflict that comes with a close knit relationship. Intimate sits against clean and neat. That is why there will be a lot not dead set written down yet will be some but not a lot to allow the intimacy to occur which is quite a Hebrew way.

#### **TEACHABLE IN DISCIPLESHIP (T):**

How are we going to serve? With a teachable spirit. That is the entire discipleship model we are also going to have the orientation of teaching – I catch myself how often how I get irritated with my kids for not learning things fast enough or I get irritated with some people that I teach the computers but I have to understand that people are learning – I have practiced a thousand times but my kids are learning to control their emotions, growing up and learning how to build their characters to tell the truth so a few times they will lie, throw tantrums but if we remember how we serve is in this whole model of teaching and being teachable as discipleship then we account for all those things – part of it was inspired by people that had inspired me. As for intimate, Roger has inspired me during the holiday we go together and for teachable Quentin and his team has really inspired me for that as Quentin takes these really young guys in their raw format and Quentin has the patience to teach them, disciple and groom them and then they graduated into our main ministry. A lot of our ministries are powered by people that come out of the pipeline of other ministries. That is a good model for us to have a teaching teachable discipling type model. Teachable sits against Expert. We are always a learner, there usually an expert service model so when you talk about serving- you always go and get the expert but what I want is to get the learners.

#### **HOLY AND SET APART FOR GOD (H):**

Holy (H) used to be something that was judged based on appearance or outside so e.g. he is a holy person, he does not smoke and drink, does not do this or that etc... holiness for us from the biblical meaning means set apart (in purpose). A good analogy for holy is water. Water can be used for all kind of things. You can wash your car, your dog can drink it, you can wash your dirty boots, you can bathe with your water, you can swim in it or boat ride on the water but then water in the temple of God becomes holy water. It looks exactly the same and I reckon the molecular composition is exactly the same as water used for watering your garden. God can use things solely for his purposes. Holy is there for us so that when we go off and do normal things we remember that its purposes are for God - so that God's name get glorified. If anyone looks at our activities, it looks like a dance competition and looks like water. Holy water. We make sure that people knows its purposes and our lives are like that too. That means as Christians, Raymond, you should look like an accountant except that you are a holy accountant because everything in your life exists for the purpose of God. That is the concept of Holy. So the holy for purpose sits opposed to looking holy. I think in our past we have a whole bunch of things that just look holy so people serve to look holy which is what we don't want.

**NOTES:**