

SHARPEN ONE ANOTHER

Introduction

*“To help people get to know Jesus and grow as his obedient followers”
(Riverside’s purpose statement)*

In Riverside, we are passionate about making disciples and enabling people to grow into maturity, so that we are able to be like Jesus in the workplace, school, university, local community, at home etc. **The Bible is our authority and Jesus commands us to make disciples.** (2 Tim 3:16-17; Matt 28:19-20)

Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them..... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

We want to encourage everyone to learn and to grow through accountable relationships. The goal is to become more like Jesus, (*‘transformed into his likeness.’ 2 Cor. 3:18*).

How can we Sharpen One Another?

- Normally, 2 or 3 people meeting together on a regular basis with the aim of spiritual growth. These people could be peers or at a similar stage of life.
- The aim is to find a connection within the church where you are accountable to someone who will help you to develop your faith, your personal walk with God, and your God-given potential.

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Getting started -The way forward

Find someone: (or ask for ideas)

- Someone you respect of the same sex, to meet with. It could be a peer or someone further along the journey, a new relationship or one already in place.
- Someone who would be willing to spend a regular time (an hour or so) with you. Every 2-6 weeks.
- Someone you feel ‘safe’ to talk and share with.
- Someone to whom you can be accountable, and who will walk with you on your journey. Someone you give ‘permission’ to speak into your life.

Set clear expectations:

- Clarify your time commitment, (i.e. an hour every 2 - 6 weeks), and when to re-evaluate (e.g. after six months).
- Be creative about when & where you meet.
- To break the ice, both share some of your story with each other (your background, how you became a Christian, etc.), especially if this is a new friendship.

Key elements

- Use the scriptures & the helpful questions in this leaflet as a basis.
- Prayer, listening, openness, friendship, encouragement.
- Eagerly desire to grow spiritually and personally.
- Confidentiality. There must be a freedom to share personal issues in trusted confidence.
- Write down your action points each time.

Keys to your Growth

- Accept responsibility for your own attitudes, motivation, and actions.
- Be prepared to change, to ask questions of yourself, to be obedient to scripture.
- Put some time in to evaluate where things are going and to work on the challenges.

HELPFUL QUESTIONS

Note: Work through no more than 1 or 2 sets of questions each time

Jesus (John 15:1-8; Php 3:8)

- How would you describe your relationship with God at the moment?
- Have you a desire to develop your relationship?
- How are you growing?

Prayer

- In what ways are you engaging in prayer:
 - On your own? (Matt 6:6)
 - With others? (Matt 18:19)
 - With the church? (Acts 2:42)
- What do you feel you are currently neglecting to pray for?
- How do you listen when you pray?
- What other elements are part of your prayer life? (e.g. praise, tongues, bible meditation etc)
- What extended times of prayer could you plan for this coming year?

Bible (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Tim 2:15)

- What have you found in your Bible reading to be helpful recently? Or how are you struggling with this?
- How do you currently bring Bible Reading / Study into your life?
- How do you interact with the Bible? (e.g. listen to it, read, study, meditate, memorise, speak out)
- What goals do you want to set?
- How is the “preached” word on Sundays affecting your life?

God’s Direction (Isaiah 30:21)

- What do you sense God is saying into your life at the moment?
- What big decisions or issues are you currently facing?
- What has God put on your heart regarding your future?
- How are you working towards that?

Who you are “in Christ”

God has said that as believers we are:

- Spiritually blessed (Eph 1:3)
- Chosen to be holy & blameless (Eph 1:4)
- Adopted & accepted as his children (Eph 1:5, Rom 8:15-16; 1Jn 3:1)
- Completely forgiven (Eph 1:7)
- Sealed with the Spirit (Eph 1:13-14)
- Seated with Christ & having authority over evil (Eph 2:6; 1:19-22)
- Gifted for good works (Eph 2:10, Rom 12:4-8; 1 Pet 4:10; 1Cor 12:7-11)

This is your identity in Christ. Go through them one at a time & discuss the reality of each in your life.

When we don’t live in these truths, we often struggle with the some of the following-

Do I worry about?

Uncertain future Losing my job
War Fear of illness Meeting People
Debts/money Losing friends Being Alone
Work Clothes My appearance
Relationships What people think of me
Death Political situations
Getting stuck in a rut Failure in job, marriage, college course etc
Being found out for things done in the past
Other

Do I struggle with any of the following?

Doubting God’s word
Knowing God as a reality
Feeling easily hurt
Feeling powerless in a situation
Feelings of inferiority keep me from serving God
Unable to believe God loves me
Unable to break from sinful habits
Can’t forgive myself
I don’t feel forgiven
Feeling of no or little value



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Relationships

(a) Attitudes (Matt 5:21-24; 43-48; 6:14-15; Col 3:12-14)

Is there anyone you hold a grudge against or are angry towards?
Is there anyone you refuse to forgive?
Is there anyone you hate or do not love?
Do you have a critical attitude towards any person or thing?
Is there anyone you dislike to hear praised or well spoken of?
Is there anyone you are justifying a wrong attitude towards?

Encourage & Build Up (1 Thess 4:18, 5:11, Heb 3:13; 10:25)

Do you tend to look for and point out people's strengths or peoples weaknesses?

Who are the people you should be personally encouraging? At work? At home? At church? In the community?

(b) Speech (Eph 4:29-31)

- A. Do you complain?
- B. Are you irritable or cranky?
- C. Do you swear?
- D. Do you gossip?
- E. Do you get angry, either in public or secretly?
- F. Are you impatient with others?
- G. Are you ever harsh and unkind?

(c) People

- Which relationships are working well (e.g. spouse, kids, family, house-mates, at work, at church, leisure, romance)?
- In which relationships do you have difficulties?
- How should that difficulty be addressed? (Forgive, apologise, repent, unconditionally accept, talk through & listen to, find a way to bless or give comfort, resolve conflicts – e.g. issues of sex, time, money, and boundaries – get outside help).

Money

(a) Excel in the grace of Giving (2 Cor 8:7; Deut 8:17-18; 1 Chron 29:10-16)

- Do you see everything you receive as belonging to God?
- How do you struggle with giving?
- What is your motivation for giving?
- Do you give regularly in a planned way, proportionally, generously & cheerfully? (1Cor 16:2; Lk 21:4, 2 Cor 9:6-11)
- Are you giving at least 10% of your income into your local church? (Gen 14:20; 28:22; Malachi 3:8-10; Matt 23:23)

(b) Debt (Rom 13:7-8; 2 Thess 3:10)

- Are you currently in debt?
 - Are your outgoings currently greater than your income? What are you going to do to balance these – do you need advice?
 - How do you plan to get out of debt?

(c) Integrity (Rom 13:7-8)

- Do you have complete integrity in your finances?
 - at work (expense claims, paying your staff, work resources)
 - at home (taxes / VAT etc)

(d) Lifestyle (1 Tim 6:6-10; 17-19; Phil 4:11-12)

- How do you involve God in your purchases?
- Are you content with what you have?

Work (Col 3:22-24)

- How do you honour God in your work?
- How do you express your faith through your work?
- Are there currently any moral dilemmas at work?
- Who are you struggling with at work?
- What are your current challenges at work?

Temptation (Titus 2:11-12; 1 Jn 2:15-17)

- What is "catching your eye" with the potential of filling your mind with impure thoughts? (e.g. TV programme, films, adverts, billboards, magazines, internet, men, women).
- Are all your relationships godly?
- Have you been tempted to have sex before or outside of marriage?
- If you are dating, have you drawn clear godly lines for your physical relationship.
- Are you struggling with any addictive behaviour? Such as:
 - Alcohol Drugs Gambling
 - Self-Harm Violence Smoking
 - Food Issues Pornography Other
- Do any activities consume too much of your time? (e.g. TV)
- Is there anything that you are doing that you shouldn't be doing?
- Have you answered honestly?

Leisure, Exercise & Health

(Lk2:52; 1Tim 4:8; Heb 4:9-11, Ps 127:1-2)

- How balanced is your life? (work / rest / play)
- How is your physical health / exercise? / diet?
- How is your emotional well-being?
- How do you use your free time (e.g. leisure and exercise)
- What are you giving time to that energises you?
- Do you have any replenishing friendships?

Serving

(Php 1:1, 21; Php2:3-5, 21; Jn 13:15-17; Gal 5:13; 1 Pet 4:10)

- What have you learnt about your gifting & how is that being expressed?
 - (a) in the church
 - (b) in the world
- Who's lives are you currently investing in & how?
- Do you see your fundamental identity

as a servant of Christ (& the church-Christ's body)?

- Do you have an open & willing heart when asked to do something or you see a need?
- How have you served the interests of others recently?
- Do any of the following interfere with you surrender and service to God. Ambition, pleasures, loved one, friendships, desire for recognition, money, your own plans?

Church (Heb 10:25; 13:17)

- Do you attend Sunday church services regularly?
- Are you committed to a small group / community group and attending regularly?
- Is church life and home life balanced?
- Do you hesitate to submit to leaders in the church or elsewhere?
- Do you rebel at requests given to you to help in the work of the gospel?
- Have you failed to pray regularly for your spiritual leaders / church pastors?

Personal Witness (Matt 5:13-16; 28:19-20 1 Pet 3:15-17; Acts 1:8)

- Who are the 3-5 people you are/ could "pastor" & pray for in your street / workplace?
- What acts of kindness could you demonstrate to each?
- How have you tried to share your faith in both word & deed recently?
- When was the last time you interacted socially with an unbeliever outside of the normal work environment (e.g. meal together or other activity)?
- What upcoming outreach events are you looking to invite someone to? Who? When?