

Real Life Vision 2021

MISSION

To equip people to be Real followers of Jesus.

There are many nominal Christians globally; we aim to lead people to Christ by preaching the Gospel and teaching them to follow the Lord through faithful preaching and discipleship.

CORE VALUES

Relationships (Community) - One of the means of grace given to the church is the fellowship of believers. Hebrews 3:12-15 says

“Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.”

The Lord uses very ordinary means, such as the fellowship of believers, to help Christians persevere to the end.

The word "church" in the Bible is the Greek word "ekklēsia" which means "an assembly of Christians gathered for worship in a religious meeting." Sunday is the primary meeting time where the saints of Real Life get together to worship God, developing relationships. These relationships should then be deepened through small groups and other church events.

Expository Preaching: Expository preaching is the foundation of each service. "Expository" means that the preacher's goal is to "expose" God's intended meaning of the text. When this kind of preaching happens, congregants are equipped to better love God with their minds. We desire that this type of preaching would also raise the people's affections for Jesus.

Authenticity: There is a lot of fluff in the contemporary church; we aim to be real and unpretentious: We will not act more spiritual than we are, and we will have a safe atmosphere of transparency.

Love - We love God and we love people. Our main focus in life is to glorify God, especially with our treatment of other people. **We are concerned** about the physical and spiritual needs of others. Our desire is to minister to all people, meeting their needs as God enables us. Having a Real love.

VISION - PRODUCTS/SERVICES

Worship Services

The Bible calls us to love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind; this means that our relationship with God should involve the mind and the emotions. In many churches, you get one or the other: either good solid, deep preaching & teaching with zero room for emotion, or you get hyper-emotionalism, but the mind is seldom engaged. At Real Life, our goal is to offer the balance of experiencing God and learning profound truths about God.

Experience/Emotion

- *Authentic, heartfelt worship.*

Music has a unique way of engaging the heart. One of the aims of singing and instrumentation in our services is to raise the congregation's affections for the triune God. We want to guard against a concert feel in worship; instead, the worship team should encourage the community to engage in singing and responding to our great God. This means that most of the music must be simple—and singable—for the congregation.

We want to guard against a pep-rally feel in worship where we always try to "pump people up." Instead, we desire for the sheer force of the words and melodies to stir up deep and authentic emotions. Emotions don't always have to be celebratory either (e.g., lament is a proper emotion at times). We want the organic stirring of feelings.

Finally, we want every generation represented in our congregation to be moved by music that speaks to them. Therefore— though the lion's share of our songs will be current— we want to have at least one historical hymn sung weekly in a way that resonates with that generation.

- ***Times of Response and Engagement:*** We want to leave time in our services for people to respond to the Word and what they sense the Holy Spirit telling them to do. Instead of rushing people in and out, we want to leave ample time for response.

- **Presence of the Holy Spirit:** We will never try and conjure fake moving of the Holy Spirit. As we seek God and make prayer a priority, I am convinced that He will move in authentic ways. We will do all things decently and in order, as laid out in 1 Corinthians 11-14.
- **Historical Liturgy:** Historical liturgy helps connect us to the global church. Liturgy, such as prayers of confession, is meant to stir our hearts and prepare them for the Word and Holy Communion.
- **Weekly Communion:** Weekly, we can objectively experience Christ— namely, through the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 10). Each week we can look back to what Christ has done, look at the present as we consider the state of our hearts, and look to the future as we anticipate the return of Jesus.
- **Prayer:** Prayer moves the heart. We need ample time in our services for prayer. I desire that prayer would extend beyond the pastors and that congregants would engage in weekly prayer times.

Atmosphere of Worship

Though we want the music and all other elements of our services to be done in excellence, performance is not the primary goal. Instead of the concert/performance feel that is so prominent in churches today, Real Life will be a place of a more laid back, community-style worship service. The goal is not to impress people with a product but instead to create an atmosphere where congregants can connect with God and one another and utilize their God-given gifts to serve the church. It is the goal that on any given Sunday that 80% of our members are involved in some part of the service.

Real Life will have a traditional—but classy—church aesthetic. We will not spend money on fog machines, light shows, etc., to create "mood;" instead, we will depend on prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Mind

While experience that engages the heart is a necessary part of church gatherings, it is also vital that the mind is utilized. We are to love God with all of our minds. We are to worship the Lord in Spirit and truth (John 4). For worship to be at its best, God's people must know profound theological truths about the God to whom they sing.

- **Expository Preaching:** Expository preaching is the foundation of each service. Expository means that the preacher's goal is to "expose" God's intended meaning of the text. When this kind of preaching happens, congregants are equipped to better love God with their minds. We desire that this type of preaching would also raise the people's affections for Jesus.
- **Doctrinally Sound Song:** One of the most significant ways to remember any truth is to put it to music. Simply put, we remember what we sing! Teaching doctrine, then, is not merely the job of the sermon but also the music. We will sing songs that are doctrinally clear and biblically sound to engage the mind and the heart. We will do a blend of music genres. More important than the style or popularity of the music is the commitment to doctrinal purity.
- **Culture of Reading (Bible and Christian literature):** We also want to create a culture of reading the Bible and Christian literature. One goal is to have a church bookstore, offering some of the best Christian books at a reasonable price.
- **Wednesday Night Discipleship:** I aim to make Wednesdays– for all ages– a time of going deeper into God's Word. At these meetings, we will cover essential doctrines and will provide discipleship training.

Kids/Youth

Our goal is to teach children the central doctrines of the Christian Church. We will use a catechism (questions and answers) to teach them the orthodox beliefs of Christianity. Youth (6th grade and up) will learn why they believe what they believe and study how to defend the faith (apologetics).

Small Groups

Small Groups play a crucial role in equipping people to be Real followers of Jesus. We will have home groups with highly trained leaders who support the church's vision, are doctrinally sound, and are mature leaders who are equipped to develop other leaders.

Outreach

We will gear Sunday mornings towards equipping believers for the work of the ministry. The goal, then, is to provide opportunities for those Christians to utilize their training with real ministry opportunities. Our goal is to have at least one monthly outreach event.

Intentional Discipleship

By the end of 2021, the goal is to have a one-on-one five-part Christian basics discipleship series. This series will then be recorded via video and uploaded to Right Now Media. We hope that every Real Life member would be equipped to take new Christians through this series.

Generosity

The Biblical concept of righteousness includes Biblical justice and sacrificial giving; consequently, our five-year goal is to give away 51% (to the marginalized, non-profit programs, and missions) of what comes into Real Life Community Church in tithes and offerings.

VISION - TEAM

We desire to build a team of authentic followers of Jesus who are passionate about the ministry's work for the glory of God. These members will:

- Love God above all things.
- Be full of the Spirit.
- Be devoted to prayer.
- Savor God's Word.
- Be marked by radical generosity
- Be committed to a long-term tenure with Real Life.

The atmosphere at Real Life will be one of unity. There will be a spirit of teamwork (instead of competition) and sacrifice that sees beyond individual ministries to the greater goal of the church's mission.

Elders

Within five years, the church will be lead spiritually, by a team of elders, with the lead pastor being the first amongst equals.

The lead pastor will serve as the elder of preaching and vision. Another will serve as the elder of Christian Education, another in Pastoral Care, and another in outreach. These men must meet the qualifications laid out in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-16).

This Elder Board will meet on a bi-weekly basis. They will work together to shepherd the members of Real Life. They will provide Biblical teaching, encouragement, ministry training, and pastoral discipline to the congregation. They will walk in unity and will shepherd the people consistently.

Elders will be mature in the faith, live a holy lifestyle, regularly attend Sunday and Wednesday church services, lead a small group, and give at least 10% of their income to support Real Life Community Church's ministry efforts.

We prefer that Elders have– or will be pursuing– formal, Biblical education. They will be well-versed in the Scriptures and will have a solid understanding of church history and theology. They will be stable in their doctrine, and they will live out those doctrines. Before joining the elder board, these men will complete online elder training. These leaders will be the pastors of the church. Other ministers/teachers can preach from time to time, **but the shepherding duties belong to these leaders alone.**

Deacons

The deacon board will be a group of men and women who meet the qualifications laid out in 1 Timothy 2. Deacons will be responsible for carrying out the business dealings and administration of Real Life Community Church. The deacon board is the administrative arm of the church. These faithful men and women will work with the pastors to oversee the church's finances. They will be responsible for business administration, Biblical justice inside and outside the church, and the church property.

Deacons will live a holy lifestyle, regularly attend Sunday and Wednesday church services, lead or attend a small group, and give at least 10% of their income to support Real Life Community Church's ministry efforts.

Directors

Each ministry will have a director that oversees the workings of that particular ministry. Each director will then encourage, equip, and empower volunteers to help serve in their respective ministries. Directors will see to it that their ministry helps fulfill the mission of Real Life Community Church.

Directors will live a holy lifestyle, regularly attend Sunday and Wednesday church services, lead or attend a small group, and give at least 10% of their income to support Real Life Community Church's ministry efforts.

Small group leaders will have to meet the same qualifications as directors.

Volunteers

One of the Biblical ministry goals is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:12). Believing that God provides every believer with some spiritual gift, it is our goal that 100% of our members will have some job within the church within five years.

** We desire that every member of Real Life would be a part of the "team" in one of these capacities.*

VISION - IMPACT

Success will be measured by:

1. Member's Confidence in Sharing the Gospel
2. Number of baptisms
3. Number of People who go through Discipleship Courses
4. Member Small Group Attendance
5. Member, Church Attendance
6. Hunger for the Word
7. Authentic, Truth-Fueled Worship Where People Engage in Singing
8. Closing of the Back Door
9. Disciples Making Disciples
10. Children/Youth Benchmarks