

Class Seven

VISION & MINISTRIES OF PARK STREET CHURCH

PSC VISION

Park Street Church wants to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, and we model ourselves after the early church described in the Book of Acts. In Acts 2:41–47, we read about the activities and commitments of the first Christians. First, these Christians were committed to the Apostles’ teaching as the foundation for their unity (v. 42). Second, they were committed to corporate worship as an expression of their unity, as they met together regularly to break bread (the Lord’s Supper), pray and praise God (vv. 42, 46). Third, they had a desire to be together in close fellowship, which is how their oneness and love was developed (vv. 44, 46–47). Fourth, they had a deep desire to meet each other’s needs, displaying their love for and interdependence upon one another (vs. 45). We can follow in the footsteps of these early Christians by being thoroughly grounded in God’s Word (where the Apostles’ teaching is preserved for us); being committed to corporate worship; longing to be together and gather regularly in one another’s homes; and becoming more interdependent upon one another and seeking to meet each other’s needs. As we practice and display this kind of unity and love, we hope that our story will be that of the early church: “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (vs. 47).

We are proud of the long history of our church and how we have faithfully proclaimed the gospel of grace for over two hundred years. However, we are always seeking to grow and improve. Currently, the church leadership has identified a list of five critical goals and one overarching methodological goal for our church during this season of our development.

Overarching Methodological Goal: To prepare God’s people for the work of ministry so that the body of Christ may be built up (**Ephesians 4**).

Critical goals

- (1) **Evangelism** is the individual and corporate sharing/witnessing of the good news of Jesus Christ under the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Opportunities for evangelism are provided through worship, friendship, service, acts of kindness, etc., but evangelism itself is the actual sharing of the good news (**Romans 10:12–15**).
- (2) **Corporate Worship** is basking in the presence of the triune God and praising/adoring Him for who He is, what He has done, and for what He has promised to do. Corporate worship is more than just singing songs; it is glorifying God with the best that our minds, arts and labors have to offer, and feeds a lifestyle of giving our very best to do all things to the glory of God (**Romans 12:1–2, 1 Corinthians 10:31**).

- (3) **Personal Devotion** is the private expression of worship through devotion and includes scripture reading/meditation/memory, journaling, spiritual disciplines, prayer, singing praise songs/hymns, etc. Personal devotion is essential for spiritual health and is necessary for equipping the Body of Christ in interpreting, appropriating and apply the Word of God, loving God and loving one another (**Psalm 1:2, 1 Timothy 4:6–8, Hebrews 5:11–14**).
- (4) **Community** in the biblical sense is the redeemed people of God coming together as the Body of Christ. It is people of all walks of life, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, genders, etc. seeking God together, loving one another, building each other up through the gifts of the Spirit, and displaying the goodness of God to the world (**John 13:34–35, 17, Acts 2:41–47**).
- (5) **Vocational Excellence** is the people of God doing everything to the glory of God where He has put them, whether in marriage, as parents, students, employees, or even in a particular geographic location. Vocational excellence is an act of worship as the people of God seek to honor God and to draw attention to Him as channels of His grace to others, in whatever situation He has chosen to place them (**1 Corinthians 10:31**).

Additionally, one of the ways that we are expressing this vision is as a commitment to the whole gospel for the whole person, to impact the whole city and reach the whole world.

SMALL GROUPS MINISTRY

It is a challenge to strive for unity and love in a large church like ours, but if the early church could do it (they numbered over 3,000!), then so can we. They accomplished it by meeting together in smaller numbers in each other's homes. The **Small Groups Ministry** is crucial to our church, because we cannot hope to reflect the kind of unity and love we ought by simply coming and going to the worship services. Small Groups provide a context for people to care for and be cared for, to serve and be served, and to grow as disciples of Christ. The Small Groups Ministry seeks to connect all members to groups that meet either at the church or in homes for Bible study, sharing and prayer. If you are not already part of a small group, we urge you to become involved in one—even if it takes more than one try. Information is available online or through the Small Groups Ministry.

GIVING OF YOUR RESOURCES: TITHES AND OFFERINGS

One way you may give of your resources is through financial gifts. As is the case with all churches, Park Street Church depends upon the faithful giving of the people of God to sustain the work to which we believe Christ has called us. Tithing was established by God to help his people acknowledge his ownership and provision of everything they had (**1 Chronicles 29:14; Malachi 3:6–12**). A tithe was 10% of a person's yearly increase and was set aside as an offering holy to the Lord (**Leviticus 27:30–34; Deuteronomy 14:22–23, 28**). In the New Testament tithing is affirmed by Jesus (**Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42**). Paul speaks about giving in **2 Corinthians 8:1–15** as he describes the example of the Macedonian church. These Christians gave sacrificially even though they were poor because of their trust in God's continued provision for

them (vv. 1–6). Paul encouraged the Corinthian church to follow their example and “excel in the grace of giving” (v. 7). Giving is not to be done under compulsion, but out of the overflow of a thankful heart for all God has done for us, and according to our means (vv. 8–15). Our giving is to be the instrument through which God provides for each member in the body of Christ: “at the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need” (v. 14).

PSC budgets and funds

Park Street Church receives tithes and offerings through two separate budgets: The Church Ministries and Operations Budget (60% of the overall budget)—used for the church’s ministries and programs, facilities maintenance, church administration, and personnel. The Missions Budget (40% of the overall budget)—used for missions personnel and outreach programs in Boston—including students, internationals and urban outreach—and around the world.

We also have additional funds for specific needs, such as the building fund. An important fund to know about is the Deacons’ Benevolence Fund, which is used for those in our congregation experiencing financial crisis or emergency need. Keep your eyes and ears out for fellow members in need, and do not hesitate to bring your own financial needs to elders or ministers for access to the Deacons Funds.

Allocating your tithes and offerings

As a member, you will be given an envelope number and envelopes will be sent to your home on a quarterly basis. We encourage you to use these envelopes. PSC will track your giving by your envelope number and mail you a quarterly report. On your envelopes, we encourage you to allocate your gifts amongst the above budgets and funds, as you feel led. For example, a simple way to divide your gifts is per the approved budgets, 60% Ministry & Operations, 40% Missions. All gifts in envelopes that are not allocated, as well as all loose gifts (not in envelopes), automatically go into the Ministry and Operations fund. We recommend the following steps: 1) Pray; 2) Determine what percentage of your income you would like to give to PSC (the Bible does not require that all tithes and offerings go to the local church; and 3) Determine the breakdown of your gifts to the above budgets and funds.

You may also use our website to schedule online giving via electronic check (preferred) or credit card (church must pay fees), or to learn about other ways you can give to the church through stocks or estate planning.

GIVING OF YOUR TIME: OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY

Since we are all ministers to one another, we encourage you to give of your time to your brothers and sisters in Christ so that you may be a means by which the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to our church.

Reread the “Windows Into Park Street” and prayerfully consider what your next steps should be. Just as the wedding ceremony celebrates the beginning of the covenant of marriage, so the membership joining ceremony marks a new phase of unity and involvement in the church.

Questions for **REVIEW, THOUGHT & DISCUSSION**

1. If someone new to PSC were to ask you what our Vision Statement is, what would you say?
2. Do you think we are living up to our Vision at PSC? Why or why not? What room do you see for improvement? How can you be a part of the solution?
3. Why is the Small Groups Ministry so crucial to our church? Are you part of a small group? Why or why not?
4. In what ways can you be a better steward of your time and resources as a member of PSC? If you are not serving in ministry already, in what area of ministry would you be interested in becoming involved?