

FLOURISHING IN THE FAMILY IDENTITY (From Westside: A Jesus Church)

GOOD FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

Consider these vital characteristics of family in God's kingdom. Use the questions under each characteristic to evaluate it as a strength or weakness in your community. Pray and strategize over ways to make weaker characteristics strong. Remember these take time and intention to develop!

Hospitality

"Are we open and friendly people?"

"Is our home environment comfortable and inviting?"

Significant Time

"Do we spend enough time together?"

"Is the time we spend together worthwhile for everyone?"

Faithfulness

"Is our time together a priority for everyone involved?"

"Are we willing to sacrifice when necessary to be together?"

Inclusiveness

"Is everyone connected to someone in the group?"

"Does everyone know that their participation is important?"

Vulnerability

"Are we modeling a humble exposure of our own brokenness?" "Do we depend on each other for help and encouragement?"

Restoration

"Do we step into relationships and situations that are broken or awkward?" "Are there any elephants in the room?"

Shared Life

"Are our relationships growing beyond our formal meetings?"

"Do we serve and support each other as individuals and families?"

GOOD FAMILY PRACTICES

Consider your own families. What practices made/make your experience of family life-giving? Which of these practices might help your community flourish as a family? Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Share meals - The height of hospitality, this is what families do!
- Celebrate - Holidays, birthdays, community milestones
- Play - Plan game nights, bring equipment to a park or school, join a sports league
- Unstructured Time - Give space before or after formal meeting times for open connecting
- Impromptu connections - Encourage everyone to invite each other to their own activities
- Affirmations - Ask people to affirm qualities and strengths they have seen in each other
- Stories - Spend a season hearing each others life stories and pray over the storytellers
- Worship - Occasionally sing and pray together in worship
- Prayer - This binds us together at the deepest level
- Traditions - Establish practices the everyone knows about and looks forward to regularly
- Excursions - Be together in different contexts for extended periods of time out of the norm