

The Riverwood Way

Rather than give you a dry mission statement we ignore, or present a bunch of values we barely remember ourselves, we'd like to share with you our "way." This is our language. This is our code. It isn't something we set out to memorize, rather it is the culture we aim to live, not just on Sundays, but everyday. So while this is about Riverwood, Riverwood is simply the people who choose to be together for the sake of the gospel. And here is how we aim to live:

The Riverwood Way...

...is all about Jesus.

We believe the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament point to Jesus, the four Gospels present Jesus, and the New Testament epistles proclaim Jesus. Therefore, we will point to Him through our serving, present Him in our teaching, and proclaim Him through our worship.

...invites.

Matthew 28:18 tells us to "go make disciples." But we can't truly make anyone do anything. It is God who leads people to desire Him and gives them motivation to do His will (Philippians 2:13). So to us, "making disciples" means inviting people to follow Jesus.¹

This can take different forms. We invite people to serve with us, to hang out with us, to be part of a small group with us, or even partner with Riverwood. We aim to be a community of invitation.

...is Gather, Grow, Give, Go.

Our path to helping people follow Jesus is simple: We invite people to **gather** together to worship Jesus, to **grow** spiritually through a small group and personal spiritual disciplines, to **give** of their FIST (Finances, Influence, Skills, and Time) for the sake of Jesus' Kingdom, and to go into their gym, school, workplace, neighborhood, community, and the ends of the earth with the amazing news of the gospel.²

...is Simple.

We seek to keep ministry, communication, and our calendar simple. Busyness doesn't equal godliness! However, simplicity takes lots of work, and can often be complex behind the scenes. But it's worth it! We believe simplicity makes us more effective and gives us margin God can use.

...is Not Better, Just Different

Riverwood is not "better" than the other churches³ in the area. We're just different.

In a similar vein, Jesus did not come to earth simply to give us a better life, but to give us a radically different life (2 Corinthians. 5:17). When you meet Jesus, every-thing changes – your identity, your spiritual state, your Master, your goals... everything.

...is Not to Compete, but to Complete

Riverwood doesn't exist to compete with other churches. Rather, we exist to complete the mission God has given ALL of His followers. And what is that mission? To "make disciples" (i.e. followers of Jesus).

This means if someone finds Jesus through another local church, gets baptized at an area church, or sees their faith renewed through the ministry of a different church family – that is worth celebrating!

...leads with Grace

Because God created humanity in His image (Genesis 1:26-27), all people matter. And because God has shown extravagant grace towards us (Ephesians 2:8), we will lead with grace towards all people. Love will be one of our marks. Also out of this grace, we will be known as a generous community, seeking to give to others our FIST (Finances, Influence, Skills, and Time).

...leans on Truth

While we lead with grace, we always lean on truth – it is our foundation. We believe the most important truth is found in the 66 Books of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

...extends Trust

Just as the Apostle Paul entrusted his friend Timothy (2 Timothy 2:2) and Jesus entrusted his ministry to his disciples, we will extend trust to people by giving them opportunities to serve. Leaders seek to reproduce themselves by investing in others and allowing them the joy of leading. And we seek to extend trust at ALL levels of ministry.

Ultimately, when we extend trust to people, we are revealing our faith in God, trusting Him to do His ministry through the other person. But God's

church is so precious we won't just extend trust to every person who comes along – we will steward that trust, giving assignments they can succeed in, and test their character. To use the words of Jim Collins, we aim to put the right people in the right seats on the bus.

...Celebrates!

When God is doing great things in people and through people, we want to celebrate it! So we celebrate when:

- someone places their faith in Christ
- a person chooses to be baptized to make their faith in Christ public
- someone joins a Growth Group for the first time
- someone begins practicing spiritual disciplines
- new leaders are being invested in and/or given opportunities to lead
- someone shares their faith in Christ
- a new church is planted

...is Fun!

Life is too short for it to be boring. We think following Jesus should be the most fulfilling thing a person can ever experience!

Riverwood *Definitions*

¹ **Jesus-follower:** *A person who loves like Jesus loved and lives like Jesus lived.*

² **The Gospel:** *The ongoing story of God redeeming broken & imperfect people, & restoring them into the complete & perfect image of Christ through the life, death, & resurrection of Jesus.*

³ **The Church:** *The redeemed people of God living on mission together under the headship of Jesus to live out the implications of the Gospel.*

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