

**DISCUSSION GUIDE: “The Church, God’s Plan” (various texts)
November 4, 2017**

In this message Brad outlined four scriptural convictions about the local church and CrossPointe’s plans to plant another church in 2018 led by Will Hawk. Next Sunday, we’ll hear from Will about his vision for this new work. For those interested in hearing more about the church plant, there will be an informational lunch meeting immediately following the service on Sunday, November 19.

1. Read Ephesians 3:10 and 1 Timothy 3:14-15. Paul describes the church as the display of the manifold wisdom of God and a pillar holding up the truth of the gospel. Clearly, Paul sees the church as central to God’s plan.

—Discuss this imagery we see in 1 Timothy 3:14-15. How can a church practically be a pillar of the truth? What does that look like in the life of a local church?

—We often contrast evangelism and discipleship as if they are competing forces in the life of a church. Is this idea biblical? Can a church really be good at one and not at the other? Do you see how they might go hand in hand?

2. In Acts 13:1-3 we see the church at Antioch send out Paul and Barnabas to plant churches and take the gospel abroad. The Antioch church was growing and thriving and a place with lots of gifted people, yet they understood that the church did not exist for itself, but for the spread of the gospel.

—Discuss how this text might apply to CrossPointe. What are some challenges and risks for churches like CrossPointe who are considering multiplying? Take time to pray for God’s wisdom for the leadership and the church collectively!

3. Read Ephesians 2:19-22 together. This text clearly states that the church is founded on Christ and the teaching of the apostles, which was the Old Testament and eventually what became the New Testament.

—Some churches in our culture spend thousands of dollars on all sorts of gimmicks to try and get people into their building. And this can often work if drawing a crowd is the goal. But, discuss how this often watered-down seeker-sensitive approach might actually not be as fruitful as is sometimes assumed.

—What are Christians and churches possibly unwittingly communicating about the sufficiency of Christ and his gospel if they don’t make the teaching of the Word central to the life of the church?

4. Church planting has become very popular over the past ten or fifteen years. There can be an kind of romanticism about it. Yet, it is very hard work. And, if it is a gospel-centered church being planted, it will be fiercely opposed by spiritual forces of wickedness.

—Take time in your group to pray for God's blessing and grace to CrossPointe's leadership and Will Hawk and his family.

—Take time to pray for other churches in our city who are striving to do gospel work.