

SUMMER HOME CHURCH/SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

- Review some of the core Bible Passages. After reading, ask what jumps out at me? What do I (or we) need to apply? Why? What are we ignoring?
- A church where Jesus has opened the door, is one listening to the Spirit. In what ways do we resist listening to the Holy Spirit?
- Of the eight vitalized/alive church points, which one stands out to you, and why? Which one is the most difficult for you?
- Our churches need to focus more on revitalization coming out of Covid. What signs of hope do you see?
- Pastors and church leaders are tasked with mirroring the Good Shepherd (who shows both grace and truth in the Seven letters to the churches in Revelation). How could an over-emphasis on gentleness cause us to ignore the Spirit?
- Where are you convicted? Where are you encouraged in this message?

JULY 4, 2021

PILGRIM CHURCH *Better Together* IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

HOW TO BE A VIBRANT CHURCH

EIGHT KEYS TO AN OPEN DOOR CHURCH

Last week we named church-killers, this week we look at what makes church alive. "With every person we encounter, the only question that should be on our mind is, How can I, right here and right now, affirm the unsurpassable worth of this person for whom Christ died" (G.A.Boyd)? Jesus tells the church in Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7-19) that he has opened a door before them. What does it mean to be a vibrant church? What does the church of the open door look like?

OPENING STORY

MAIN TEXTS: *Revelation 2:8-11, 3:7-13*

OTHER SCRIPTURES REFERENCED: *Hebrews 10:25; John 15:4; cf. 1 John 4:8,16; Matthew 18:1-7; Matt. 9:10-11; 11:19; Mark 2:15-16; Luke 7:34; 15:1; Luke 23:34; Deut. 10:17-19; 2 Chron. 19:7; Mark 12:14; John 3:16; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:10-11; Eph. 6:9; cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 Peter 1:17; 2 Peter 3:9; Luke 10:27-37, others.*

JOHN'S LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

Smyrna 2:8-11

Philadelphia 3:7-13

Refrain...

Sources: Bible, Autopsy of a Deceased Church, I Was In the Spirit on the Lord's Day, Reading Revelation Responsibly, First Hand Experience.

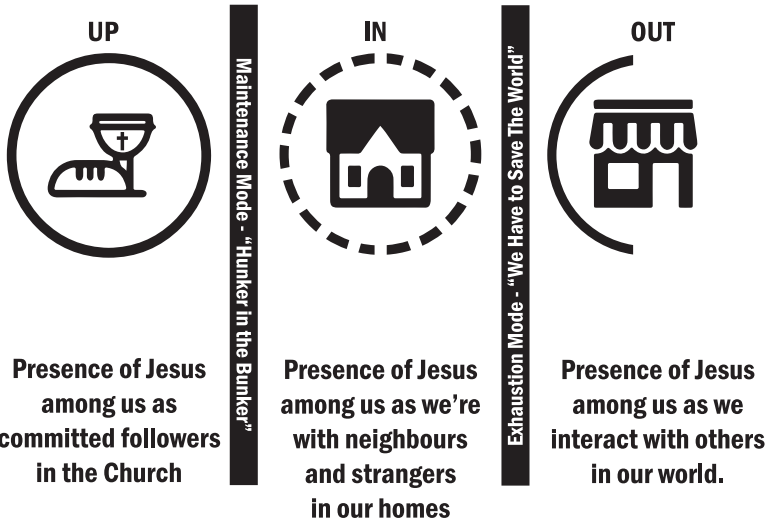
EIGHT KEYS TO THE OPEN-DOOR CHURCH

WELCOME THE _____

TURN OUTWARD

GATHER-SCATTER - proclamation in large gatherings - hospitality in home churches and being invited in. (Centering around Jesus only macro-magnification, decentering on micro mission)

THREE CIRCLES



BEING/DOING DANCE JOY AND LAMENT - KIM - Ch 3.

"It is the most fundamental reason why each of us exists. Scripture calls it "abiding in Christ" (John 15:4; cf. 1 John 4:16). God's desire is for us to participate in his own eternal love and life and therefore in his own eternal joy and peace by dwelling in the Son." – G.A. Boyd

ENCOURAGE QUESTIONING WITH FREEDOM - deconstructing the systems around us, but then restoration and post-deconstruction journeying.

NEXT GENERATIONS - Kids and family ministry - Do not sacrifice the young on the altar of the preferences of the aged. We welcome all - BUT we recognize that we must always be reaching down to the next generation.

LOVE THOSE WHO ARE NOT CONVICTED ABOUT THE SAME SINS AND WRONGS YOU ARE.

- "The central mark of a maturing Christian, and of a maturing congregation, is that they increasingly love others as Christ loves them."
- "It was not without reason that Jesus acquired the scandalous reputation of fellowshipping with the dregs of society (Matt. 9:10–11; 11:19; Mark 2:15–16; Luke 7:34; 15:1). He loved and fellowshipped with prostitutes, tax collectors, and drunkards. He loved, gave attention to, and helped the "unimportant" people as well as the "important" people. Indeed, he even loved those who crucified him to the point of praying for their forgiveness (Luke 23:34). This is how we are to love, for this is how we are loved! God's love is impartial and universal, and so must ours be (Deut. 10:17–19; 2 Chron. 19:7; Mark 12:14; John 3:16; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:10–11; Eph. 6:9; cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 Peter 1:17; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 4:8). Anyone in need whom we happen to come upon is our "neighbor" whom we are called to love (Luke 10:27–37). Nothing is closer to the heart of God than this kind of love. Indeed, love is the very heart of God. Hence, loving as God loves—manifesting the truth that we are in union with Christ and in fellowship with the triune community—must be the singular concern of the Christian. Whomever we encounter, whatever situation he or she may be in, whatever his or her lifestyle might be, however much we may approve or disapprove of the person's appearance, words, or deeds, our one and only concern must be to affirm his or her unsurpassable worth with our words and deeds. This is the concern that must be above all other concerns. It is the concern we must wear and live in. With every person we encounter, the only question that should be on our mind is, How can I, right here and right now, affirm the unsurpassable worth of this person for whom Christ died?"
- "John sums up the matter bluntly. "Those who say, 'I love God,' and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars" (1 John 4:20). To truly love God includes loving others with the same love God has for us and the same love God has for them. This is part of what it means to be a participant in the divine nature..."

GET IDENTITY IN JESUS INSTEAD OF JUDGEMENT

<https://reknew.org/2014/12/judgment-and-idolatry/>

INVESTING MONEY AND ENERGY IS ALSO OUTWARD AD/OUTREACH/COMPASSION/MISSION

TAKE OUTS