

# Daily Devotion



## Our Vision, Mission & Values

Monday, 6 – Sunday, 13 January 2025

# Welcome to Ipswich International Church (IIC)

As many have joined us recently, it's important to introduce ourselves—our vision, mission, and values—so that you can determine if this is the “bus” heading toward your destination. Much like choosing the correct bus at a terminal, knowing the direction a church is moving helps you decide if it aligns with your journey and calling.

We are Ipswich International Church (IIC), part of the Elim Pentecostal movement. We operate as One Church, Multiple Locations, in partnership with Elim Church Colchester and our Romanian-speaking fellowship.

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## Our History and Heritage

Founded in September 1929 as Elim Pentecostal Church Ipswich, we are now in our 96th year. Around 25 years ago, we adopted the name Ipswich International Church to reflect our heart for mission: to reach every people group in our town.

Our rich heritage is built on walking in love, faith, and the Pentecostal power of the Gospel. Inspired by Romans 1:16, *“We are not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes,”* we remain steadfast in proclaiming the transformative power of Jesus Christ.

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## Our Vision, Mission, and Values

As we gather in devotion this week, let's reflect on the key aspects of who we are as a church:

1. We Are a Community of Disciples

We are committed to following Jesus and living as His disciples, both individually and collectively. Discipleship is at the heart of everything we do, as we grow together in faith and actively share the Good News with others.

2. We Are Family-Friendly

IIC is a place where families of all shapes and sizes can thrive. We provide a welcoming and nurturing environment for children,

parents, and extended families to grow in their faith and serve together.

3. **We Are Intimate and Intercessory**  
Prayer is central to our identity. We are passionate about developing an intimate relationship with God through worship and intercession, standing in the gap for our church, community, and world.
4. **We Are Passionately Mission-Minded**  
Our mission extends beyond our walls. We are called to reach our local community and beyond, sharing the love of Christ in practical and transformative ways. This reflects our commitment to being a church that impacts both Ipswich and the nations.
5. **One Congregation, Many Cells**  
While we gather as one body, we embrace the power of smaller, relational groups (cells) to foster deeper connections, discipleship, and mission. These cells are the lifeblood of our church, enabling us to grow together and serve more effectively.
6. **We Are Contagiously Generous**  
Generosity defines us—not just in finances, but in time, energy, and love. We strive to be a people who give freely and joyfully, reflecting the heart of God to those around us.

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## Joining the Journey

Whether you are new to IIC or have been with us for some time, we invite you to journey with us as we pursue God's purpose for our church. Together, as a family on mission, we can grow in faith, serve one another, and impact our communities for Christ.

Welcome aboard. Let's walk this path together.

**Adewale Adefuye**

Ipswich, 2 January 2025

# New Year Letter from the Lead Minister



Wed, 01.01.2025

## A New January, A Fresh Opportunity

As we step into the new year with hearts full of gratitude, we remind ourselves of the Father's unwavering faithfulness. January is not only a time to reflect on the past but also an opportunity to look ahead with anticipation for all that God has in store for us. Traditionally, we would start the year with a 21-day Daniel Fast, however, we perceive it is time for a fresh approach. After much reflection, we are excited to introduce a new rhythm of fasting for 2025—one that moves beyond a seasonal event and becomes a lifestyle.

### A Lifestyle of Fasting: Building on the Early Church's Example

In Scripture, fasting was not a one-time event, but a regular practice intertwined with worship, prayer, and community life. Consider the early church's example:

- **Acts 13:2:** While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' (BSB)
- **Acts 14:23:** Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church, praying and fasting as they entrusted them to the Lord, in whom they had believed. (BSB)

Both passages pair fasting with worship and prayer—showing us how fasting strengthens our connection with God and His mission.

### A New Rhythm of Fasting

In 2025, we want to adopt a more regular rhythm of fasting, both individually and corporately. We will begin the year with a focused **seven-day fast in January**, followed by **three days of fasting each month**. This practice will allow us to seek God's direction more consistently and build a deeper spiritual foundation throughout the year.

For the January fast, we are proposing the **fourth week** (January 20–26), for two main reasons:

1. **Preparation and Clarity:** This timing allows us an opportunity to teach about fasting and address any questions or misconceptions beforehand.
2. **Unity with Burlington Baptist Church (BBC):** We are excited to align our fast with BBC, who have also reconsidered their 21-day Daniel Fast rhythm. This partnership will strengthen our relationship with them and culminate in a joint service to celebrate our shared mission.

### **The Theme for the January Fast: “Strengthen Our Foundations”**

As we sought the Lord for a theme for our January Fast, Isaiah 54:2 stood out to us. The verse reads:

*“Enlarge the site of your tent, stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, do not hold back. Lengthen your ropes and drive your stakes in deep.”*  
(BSB)

It was deeply encouraging to learn that Burlington Baptist Church had received the same scripture independently just days earlier. The verse speaks of expansion—of strengthening our foundations to prepare for the work God has called us to. Just as a building’s capacity depends on the strength of its foundation, so too must we strengthen our spiritual foundations to fulfil God’s greater plans for us. So, our theme for the January Fast is **“Strengthen Our Foundations.”**

What do you think of embracing fasting as a lifestyle—a regular rhythm of seeking God through prayer, worship, and fasting? **Email or text me your thoughts on this new direction and how we can walk together in this season of spiritual growth.** Let’s step into 2025 full of faith, ready to strengthen our foundations for all that God has prepared for us. Together, we will grow, expand, and see His kingdom come in new ways!

With faith and gratitude

Adéwálé Adéfuyè

## Growing as Effective Disciples



John 8:30-36, BSB

<sup>30</sup> As Jesus spoke these things, many believed in Him. <sup>31</sup> So He said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples. <sup>32</sup> Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." <sup>33</sup> "We are Abraham's descendants," they answered. "We have never been slaves to anyone. How can You say we will be set free?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, "Truly, truly, I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son belongs to it forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.



The Greek term, "mathétés" translated 'disciple' in the Greco-Roman world, describes a follower who learned from a teacher's teachings and way of life. While common in philosophical schools, New Testament discipleship uniquely calls for not just learning but a transformative life reflecting Christ's values and mission.



1. What does it mean that many "believed in Him"? 2. Can one believe in Christ and not follow Him? In other words, can one be a Believer and not a disciple? 3. What does this section reveal about the relationship between belief, discipleship, and transformation? 4. What does Jesus mean by saying, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples"? How does this definition challenge common notions of discipleship? 5. If you are a Believer, have you committed yourself to being a Disciple? 6. Are there other paths to freedom than through the truth? 7. Can the life of a Disciple be lived in isolation of other Disciples?



1. Acknowledge that freedom from the bondage of sin is available in Christ. Thank Jesus for the freedom He gives from the bondage of sin. 2. Pray for a deeper understanding of the truth in God's word that sets you free. 3. Pray to grow beyond mere belief to abiding in Jesus' word, leading to true discipleship. 4. Ask God to help you remain steadfast in His teachings and grow as a faithful follower of Christ.



He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

(Ephesians 4:16, NLT)



We Declare

We may not have it all together, but together we have it all.

## We are Family Friendly



Acts 2:42-47, BSB

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need. <sup>46</sup> With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.



God is the loving Father of His people, creating a family relationship between Him and Believers. He believes in families and so do we at IIC. He is God of generations, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God's design for families reflects His heart for connection, community, and the continuation of His promises across all ages and stages of life.



1. What does this passage reveal about the importance of community in the early church? **2. How did the believers' devotion to fellowship and breaking bread reflect their commitment to each other and to God?** 3. What is the significance of the believers meeting in the temple courts daily and breaking bread in their homes? **4. In what ways do I see the principles of Acts 2:42-47 reflected in my own life and church community?** 5. What specific steps can I take to contribute to a community that embodies the spirit of this passage? **6. How might living out these principles change the way I interact with others, both within and outside the church?**



1. Thank God for the gift of fellowship and the opportunity to be part of a spiritual family. **2. Praise Him for the examples of faith and love found in the early church and how they continue to inspire believers today.** 3. Pray for Believers to be open to help from God to practice hospitality and share life with one another.



## We are Intimate & Intercessory



Acts 2:42-47, BSB

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need. <sup>46</sup> With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.



The importance of prayer in God's kingdom cannot be overstated. Jesus reminds us in Luke 18:1 that we "ought always to pray and not lose heart." Similarly, Peter, speaking on behalf of the apostles, emphasised their commitment to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Even the disciples, recognising its significance, asked Jesus to teach them how to pray.



The early church devoted themselves to prayer. **1. Should this kind of devotion have ended with the early church, or is it still relevant today?** **2.** Do we, both individually and collectively, need a similar level of devotion to prayer in our lives? **3. How did the believers' devotion to prayer reflect their commitment to one another and to God?** **4.** What lessons can we learn from the early church's example about the importance of devoting ourselves to prayer? **5. How is this kind of devotion reflected in my own life and within my church community?** **6.** What practical steps can I take to help build a community that embodies the spirit of prayer?



**(1)** Prayer is a deliberate design by God for fellowship and interaction with Him. Thank Him for creating this means of connection and communication. **(2)** Pray for the discipline to make prayer a consistent part of your daily life. Ask for a deeper desire to communicate with Him regularly. **(3)** Prayerfully consider how you can participate in the prayer life of IIC.

## We are Passionately Mission-Minded



Matthew 28:18–20 (BSB)

<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Read also Mark 16:14–19 and Acts 8:4-5



The Great Commission, Jesus' mandate to go into all the world and share the Gospel," raises an important question: Is this command still relevant today, or has it ceased to apply?



(1) If the Great Commission remains valid, how seriously should it be embraced as a guiding principle for believers today? (2) Reflect honestly on your personal commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission. Are you actively participating in sharing the Gospel? (3) What practical steps can you take to align your life more closely with this mandate? Identify ways to incorporate evangelism into your daily life, whether through conversations, acts of service, or supporting missionary work. (4) What role does the church community play in fulfilling the Great Commission? Consider how the church can collectively respond to this calling. (5) What challenges might prevent you from taking the Great Commission seriously, and how can you overcome them? Reflect on barriers such as fear, apathy, or lack of resources, and seek God's guidance to address these obstacles. (6) How can we encourage one another to remain faithful to this calling? Explore ways to inspire and equip others in the church to embrace their role in spreading the Gospel.



1. Pray for Boldness: Just as the early Christians courageously shared their faith despite persecution, ask the Father to help you be bold and confident in proclaiming the Gospel. Seek His guidance on overcoming fear and hesitation in sharing your faith. 2. Pray to Recognise Opportunities: Reflect on Jesus' words: "Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are ripe for harvest" (John 4:35). Pray for discernment to recognise opportunities to share the Gospel—whether through your words, actions, or by living a Christlike life that draws others to Him.

## One Congregation Many Cells



Acts 2:42 (BSB)

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Hebrews 10:24–25 (BSB)

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to spur one another on to love and good deeds. <sup>25</sup> Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Colossians 4:15 (BSB)

<sup>15</sup> Greet the brothers in Laodicea, as well as Nympha and the church that meets at her house.

Romans 16:5 (BSB)

<sup>5</sup> Greet also the church that meets at their house. Greet my beloved Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.



Just as the human body is made up of countless cells working together in unity, the Church—the body of Christ—is comprised of smaller groups of believers who gather to support, nurture, and grow together. Just as cells gather to form tissues and organs, these small groups came together to form the larger body of Christ.



1. **Commitment to Community:** Pray for a heart that values and seeks genuine community within the church, asking God to help you prioritise small group participation. 2. **Building Relationships:** Pray for meaningful connections with others in your small group, asking God to help you build relationships rooted in love, trust, and mutual support. 3. **Growing in Faith:** Ask God to use the small group as a place where your faith can grow through studying His Word, sharing testimonies, and engaging in prayer. 4. **Serving Others:** Pray for a willingness to contribute your gifts, talents, and time to serve others in the group and support their spiritual journeys. 5. **Unity and Harmony:** Ask God to bless the group with unity and harmony, removing any barriers to connection and creating a spirit of love and cooperation. 6. **Openness to Learning:** Pray for humility and a teachable heart, so you can learn from others' experiences and insights as they share their journeys of faith. 7. **Opportunities for Outreach:** Pray that the small group becomes a source of outreach and ministry, impacting the broader community for Christ. 8. **God's Presence in the Group:** Acknowledge God's presence in the group, asking Him to lead every conversation, activity, and decision.

## We are Contagiously Generous



2 Corinthians 8:1–7 (BSB)

<sup>1</sup> Now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the churches of Macedonia. <sup>2</sup> In the terrible ordeal they suffered, their abundant joy and deep poverty overflowed into rich generosity. <sup>3</sup> For I testify that they gave according to their ability and even beyond it. Of their own accord, <sup>4</sup> they earnestly pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. <sup>5</sup> And not only did they do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us, because it was the will of God. <sup>6</sup> So we urged Titus to help complete your act of grace, just as he had started it. <sup>7</sup> But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness, and in the love we inspired in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

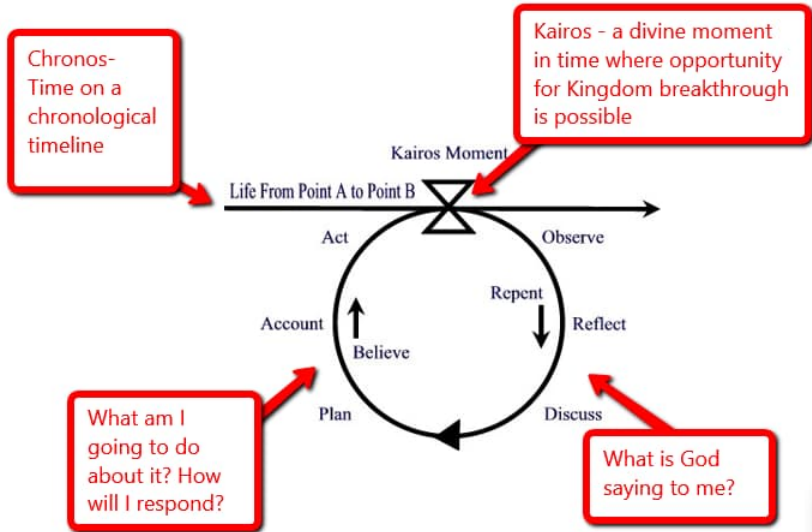


1. What can we learn from the Macedonian churches' example of generosity, even during severe trials and extreme poverty? How does their joy in giving challenge our own attitudes towards generosity? 2. How does Paul describe generosity as an act of grace (verse 1)? In what ways can we rely on God's grace to cultivate a generous spirit? 3. Why did the Macedonian believers first give themselves to the Lord before giving their financial gifts (verse 5)? How might this principle of dedicating ourselves to God influence our approach to stewardship and giving? 4. What does it mean to "excel in this grace of giving" (verse 7)? Are there areas in our lives where we might need to grow in generosity, whether through financial support, time, or talents? 5. How does this passage challenge your current approach to giving? Are there opportunities in your life where God is calling you to give more freely and joyfully?



1. Seek God's help to fully dedicate yourself to Him, ensuring that your giving is an overflow of your relationship with Him. 2. Pray for IIC to reflect the unity and generosity of the early believers, working together to support those in need. 3. Ask God to cultivate a spirit of joy in your heart, even when giving requires sacrifice, trusting that He will provide all your needs. 4. Pray for eyes to see opportunities to bless others with your resources, time, and abilities, and for a willing heart to respond.

# Pause. Reflect. Process



It's time to pause, reflect, process and act on your week's Kairos moment(s).

This week, \_\_\_\_\_

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We Are a  
Community of  
Disciples



## Discipleship: Jesus' Model

Jesus demonstrated through His life and ministry that the growth and development of the Church rely on making disciples. His approach was intentional, engaging with people at varying levels—such as the 12 disciples, the 70 followers, and the 120 believers. Among these, He dedicated the majority of His time to the 12, forming a close relationship that empowered them to shape and transform the world by replicating the same process.

This began with an invitation into relationship. In Matthew 4:19, Jesus says, *“Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”* This invitation was not only relational but transformational, calling the disciples into covenant relationship and challenging them to live out the Kingdom life.

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### Invitation and Challenge

Jesus' invitation, *“Come, follow me,”* meant doing life alongside Him—observing firsthand how He navigated situations and maintained intimacy with the Father. This relational aspect allowed the disciples to learn from Jesus' example and embrace His way of life.

At the same time, Jesus challenged His disciples. From the outset, accepting His call required sacrifice—they had to leave behind their livelihoods and familiar lives. Throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus skilfully balancing invitation and challenge to foster growth in His disciples.

When this balance is skewed, it leads to different cultures:

- High invitation, low challenge: Results in a cosy culture prioritising comfort and care, but lacking growth.
- Low invitation, low challenge: Leads to apathy or boredom, with little happening or changing.
- Low invitation, high challenge: Creates a stressful environment where relationships are undervalued, often causing burnout.

At IIC, we strive to cultivate a culture modelled on Jesus' example—high invitation with high challenge—fostering covenant relationships while

encouraging Kingdom living in a low-control environment. This creates a discipleship culture where fruitful disciples can flourish.

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## Our Mission

Our mission, *Making Disciples, Impacting Nations*, reflects the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20:

*"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."*

This commission calls us not only to live as disciples but to actively reach out to others, teaching and demonstrating how to live as Jesus intended. Our aim is to be a church of disciples and disciple-makers, prioritising the lifestyle Jesus modelled over mere attendance at services.

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## The Process of Discipleship

Discipleship is a lifelong journey of learning, growth, and transformation. A key element of this process is captured in Mark 1:15, where Jesus says:

*"The time has come. The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Good News."*

Repentance involves changing our minds—turning away from patterns of thought or behaviour that oppose God's ways. The first act of repentance occurs when we accept Jesus into our lives, turning from sin and trusting in His death and resurrection to restore our relationship with the Father.

However, repentance is not a one-time event. As disciples, we are called to continually examine and change our mindsets, attitudes, and behaviours, aligning them with Kingdom values. This process, guided by the Holy Spirit and supported by fellow believers, leads us to freedom and renewal. Romans 12:2 reminds us, *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."*

Believing is equally essential. It is not enough to uproot wrong mindsets; we must replace them with truth. Believing means trusting in what God has said and applying it to our lives. As we learn and internalise Jesus' teachings, our faith deepens, and we grow in godly character.

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## Commitment to the Journey

Discipleship is not a uniform process; each of us is at a different stage in our journey. What matters is our commitment to continue walking the path, allowing God to renew our minds and transform our lives. As disciple-makers, we must recognise that we can only lead others to places we have journeyed ourselves.

To support this vision, IIC has developed a discipleship pathway, beginning with foundational teaching through programmes like Firm Foundations and Mission, Vision, and Values. These run alongside Relational Cells, small communities designed to facilitate the discipleship process. However, these initiatives are not the goal themselves; they are tools to aid in the greater process of living as disciples of Jesus—a process that encompasses every aspect of life.

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Discipleship is central to our identity as a church. As we embrace a culture of high invitation and high challenge, we will see the growth of fruitful disciples who, in turn, make disciples. Together, we will fulfil our mission to *Make Disciples, Impact Nations*, living out the transformative power of the Gospel in our lives and communities.

We are  
Family Friendly

## Being a Family-Friendly Church

At Ipswich International Church, we celebrate the diversity of our 20-30 nationalities, spanning various ages, backgrounds, and life stages. We believe the church is not a building but the people who embody it.

Genesis 1:27 reminds us that God created humanity in His image, male and female. This truth forms the foundation of our belief that every person holds immense value to God and to one another. As a result, we strive to value all people—Christian or not.

We are called to live as a family of faith, creating a community where everyone—members and visitors alike—feels they belong and can develop meaningful relationships.

## Family in Scripture

The Bible illustrates family life in two keyways:

1. Celebration Together: Families gathered at the temple for worship.
2. Community in Homes: Relationships were built as they shared life together.

We reflect this dual expression of family in our church life:

- Sunday Gatherings: We celebrate as one diverse family, bringing our unique contributions to worship and community.
- Relational Cells: Smaller groups meet in homes, fostering deeper relationships and a sense of extended family.

## The Acts 2 Model

In Acts 2:42-47, the early church demonstrated what true community looks like:

- They ate, prayed, and read the Bible together.
- They enjoyed life and grew in faith as a family.

Following this model, we encourage everyone to join a relational cell. These are not just meetings but spaces to build strong bonds, grow in God, and invite others into our extended family. Here, we practice the “one another”

commands of Scripture: love one another, pray for one another, encourage one another, and build one another up.

### A Family for Everyone

Psalm 68:6 tells us that God “sets the lonely in families.” Our desire is to create a family-friendly culture where people are welcomed into both our relational cells and our larger gatherings. Together, we aim to live out our calling as a true family of God, doing life together and reflecting His love to the world.

### Living a Balanced Christian Life

We live in a fast-paced world filled with demands and pressures, often making life feel like a juggling act. It’s easy to become so busy that we lose focus on what truly matters. As Christians, it’s essential to step back, assess how we spend our time, and reflect on how we live out our faith in daily life.

At Ipswich International Church, we have developed a rhythm to help us live with intentionality and maintain a healthy balance—socially, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. We recognise that while life is often messy and family dynamics can be complex, striving for balance is well worth the effort.

### Life to the Full

In John 10:10, Jesus promises, “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.” This full life encompasses every area of our existence—work, school, home, family, friendships, and leisure. A full life isn’t about filling every moment with activity but living with purpose in all dimensions:

- Socially: Building meaningful relationships.
- Emotionally: Maintaining inner well-being.
- Spiritually: Cultivating a vibrant relationship with God.
- Physically: Caring for our bodies.

### Inviting God into Every Aspect

God is deeply interested in every part of our lives. As Christians, we don’t compartmentalise faith; instead, we live it out wherever we go—at work, in



the school playground, or at the gym. The Father can use even casual conversations to bring His presence into the everyday.

Living out our faith means balancing three key relationships:

- Up: With God, through prayer, worship, and study.
- In: With other believers, fostering community and accountability.
- Out: With those who don't yet know Jesus, building bridges and sharing His love.

Recognising Imbalance

At times, we may struggle to balance these areas:

- You might prioritise time with God but lack connection with non-Christians.
- Or you might invest in friendships and outreach while neglecting your personal relationship with God.

Jesus calls us to live well-rounded, three-dimensional lives. Recognising and adjusting these areas is key to experiencing the fullness He desires for us.

Attracting Others to Jesus

A balanced, joy-filled life naturally draws others to Christ. When people see how we genuinely enjoy life and cultivate meaningful relationships, they are drawn to the source of our fulfilment.

Let's strive to live intentionally, walking in step with the Father, nurturing relationships with one another, and reaching out to a world in need of Jesus. In doing so, we reflect the abundant life He offers to all.

We are  
Intimate &  
Intercessory

## Living as Disciples of Jesus

To experience the fullness of life as disciples, we adopt a three-dimensional approach:

1. UP – Cultivating a vibrant relationship with the Father.
2. IN – Building meaningful relationships with other disciples.
3. OUT – Engaging with those who do not yet know God.

A healthy UP relationship with the Father is foundational. From this place of rooted identity in Him, our IN and OUT relationships can flourish. Jesus modelled this pattern by frequently withdrawing to spend intimate time with the Father. In John 5:19, He declared: *“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does.”*

For Jesus, His ministry flowed from His relationship with the Father. Likewise, as a church, we believe that prayer, worship, and engagement with the Word are essential for discerning the Father’s will for our lives, both individually and collectively.

However, it is easy to fall into the trap of prioritising *doing over being*. True discipleship stems from resting in what Jesus has done, not striving for approval through our efforts.

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## Seasons of Discipleship

Walking with the Father often mirrors the natural rhythms of the seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Jesus’ parable of the vine and branches in John 15:1–8 provides insight into these spiritual seasons:

- Abiding: Remaining in close communion with Jesus.
- Pruning: Undergoing intentional cutting back to enable greater future growth.
- Growing: Developing strength and capacity to produce fruit.

- Fruitfulness: Seeing the visible evidence of growth and bearing fruit for God's glory.

Understanding the characteristics of each season can help us respond appropriately, just as we adjust our activities and clothing to match the weather.

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## Characteristics of Each Season

### 1. Pruning

Pruning involves removing aspects of life that no longer serve our growth. This could mean the end of friendships, changes in mission work, or letting go of specific roles or expectations. While this process can be painful, it is vital for developing deeper capacity for growth and future fruitfulness.

During pruning, God often draws us back to foundational truths about who He is and His faithfulness. This season calls us to realign our focus on abiding in Him.

### 2. Abiding

Abiding follows pruning, providing a season of rest and reconnection. It is characterised by extended time with the Father, meditating on His love and the unshakable identity we have in Christ. This is not a time for striving but for resting in the truth of Jesus' words: *"Apart from me, you can do nothing."*

### 3. Growing

The growing season is marked by excitement and opportunity. New relationships, fresh mission initiatives, and spiritual disciplines emerge in this time. This is a season to stretch, explore, and step into new territory for God's Kingdom.

### 4. Fruitfulness

Fruitfulness is the culmination of walking faithfully through the previous seasons. It involves seeing tangible results, such as people coming to faith, fulfilled promises, and visible character transformation. This season is a time for celebration, bringing glory to the Father as we bear much fruit (John 15:8).

However, just as a vine is pruned after bearing fruit, fruitfulness often leads back into a season of pruning for continued growth.

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## Recognising and Responding to Seasons

Discipleship is an ongoing journey of moving through these seasons. Recognizing your current season can help you respond effectively. For example, trying to pursue extensive growth during a pruning season is as ill-advised as wearing shorts in winter.

As we grow in understanding these rhythms, we become more aligned with God's purposes and more effective as disciples.

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## Reflection Questions

1. Intimacy with Jesus: How would you describe your current relationship with Him? Is there anything hindering this area?
2. Rhythms of Rest and Work: Do you have a healthy balance between resting and working? What adjustments can you make to improve this rhythm?
3. Community: Are you part of a supportive community that holds you accountable and encourages you?
4. Mission: Ask God to reveal someone in your life who does not yet know Him and commit to praying for them regularly.

Let us journey together through these seasons, growing as disciples and glorifying God in every area of our lives.

We Are  
Passionately  
Mission-Minded



## The Mandate for Mission

Mission is the calling and responsibility of every believer. In Matthew 28:17–20, Jesus commands:

*"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

This Great Commission is not exclusive to certain individuals; it is a universal mandate. Regardless of age, spiritual maturity, or experience, every believer is called to embody and share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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## Mission: A Mindset, Not Just a Location

At IIC, we embrace mission as a lifestyle and mentality, not merely a destination. While international missions are an important part of God's call to reach the nations, we also recognise the critical importance of serving and transforming our local communities. This includes engaging with neighbours, colleagues, schoolmates, and those in the broader community.

A passionately mission-minded church is driven by the love of God and an unshakable belief in His desire for a relationship with all people. Genesis 1:27 reminds us that all humanity is created in the image of God, giving every person inherent value and purpose. Our mission is to see the God-given potential in everyone, regardless of their background, brokenness, or circumstances, and to call them into their true identity in Christ.

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## The Ministry of Reconciliation

The Bible emphasises our role as ambassadors of reconciliation. In 2 Corinthians 5:18–20, Paul writes:

*"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us*

*the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."*

As Christ's ambassadors, we carry the hope of the Kingdom of God, demonstrating through our lives how to live to the glory of God. Jesus came not to condemn the world but to save it, and we are called to reflect that same heart, offering hope, help, and transformation to individuals and communities alike.

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## The Early Church Model

Acts 1:8 reveals the empowering role of the Holy Spirit in mission:

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

The baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost enabled the disciples to share the Gospel in their immediate surroundings and beyond. Today, the Holy Spirit continues to empower believers to engage with the people around them in transformative ways.

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## IIC's Mission Strategy

At IIC, we believe that God has called us to reach Ipswich and beyond. In alignment with the early church's example, we are committed to seeing every part of Ipswich touched by the love of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. Our vision includes:

1. Local Transformation:
  - Developing a multi-campus church structure with a central hub.
2. Regional and International Reach:
  - Touching lives across Suffolk and beyond.

- Planting international campuses in the future as part of our mission to “Make Disciples, Impact Nations.”

Our goal is to reignite the early church’s zeal for mission, believing that the church is called to bear witness to God’s goodness in word and deed. Jesus’ ministry was marked by doing good, and we are called to do the same through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

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## Family on Mission

We believe the call to mission is best fulfilled together as a "family on mission." Supporting and encouraging one another ensures resilience and creativity in our outreach efforts. This can include:

- Acts of kindness.
- Interest or hobby groups.
- Initiatives targeting specific age groups or needs.
- Missional communities designed to engage with people in diverse and innovative ways.

When we listen to the Holy Spirit, discern the Father’s leading, and put our faith into action, the possibilities for mission are endless.

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## Commitment to the Mission

At IIC, we are dedicated to sharing the love of the Father and the power of the Spirit to transform Ipswich, Suffolk, and the world. Our mission is clear: to let people know that Jesus came for them and that they can have a personal relationship with God.

How will you participate in this mission? Let us go together, empowered by the Spirit, to see lives and communities changed for His glory.

We are One  
Congregation  
Many Cells

## One Congregation Many Cells

The early church often gathered in small, intimate settings for worship, fellowship, teaching, and mutual support. This idea is beautifully reflected in the analogy of the human body, which consists of many individual cells, each vital to the body's health and function.

Just as the human body is made up of countless cells working together in unity, the Church—the body of Christ—is comprised of smaller groups of believers who gather to support, nurture, and grow together. Here's how this principle is demonstrated in the New Testament:

### 1. House Churches in the Early Church

- In the New Testament, believers often met in homes for worship and fellowship, forming small, dynamic groups that were the foundation of the growing Church.

- "Greet also the church that meets at their house." (Romans 16:5)

- Just as cells gather to form tissues and organs, these small groups came together to form the larger body of Christ.

### 2. Fellowship and Discipleship

- Small groups fostered the close relationships necessary for discipleship, accountability, and mutual encouragement.

- "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." (Acts 2:42)

- In the same way, individual cells in the body communicate and work together to nourish and sustain the whole organism.

### 3. Jesus' Example with His Disciples

- Jesus modelled the small group concept by choosing 12 disciples, creating an intimate setting for teaching, mentoring, and sharing life.

- "He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach." (Mark 3:14)

- Similarly, within the body, smaller units like cells specialise in specific functions, contributing to the greater purpose of the whole.

### 4. Mutual Support and Prayer

- Small groups are a practical way for believers to support one another, share burdens, and pray together.

- "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)

- Just as cells in the body work together to heal wounds and fight infections, small groups provide care and support in times of spiritual or physical need.

## 5. Spiritual Growth in Intimate Settings

- Smaller gatherings allow for deeper discussions, questions, and spiritual growth. Paul often taught in informal, smaller settings.

- "You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house." (Acts 20:20)

- Like cells dividing and growing to sustain life, small groups nurture personal growth and discipleship that strengthens the larger community.

## 6. Practical Expressions of Love

- Small groups enable believers to practice love and care in tangible ways, reflecting the early church's example.

- "All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need." (Acts 2:44-45)

- In the body, cells share resources to ensure every part functions effectively, mirroring the care and sharing seen in early small groups.

## 7. Leadership Development

- Small groups provide a context for raising and equipping leaders within the church, as Paul did with Timothy and others.

- "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." (2 Timothy 2:2)

- Just as new cells are formed to take on roles in the body, small groups are fertile ground for nurturing new leaders in the Church.



We are  
Contagiously  
Generous

## Outrageous Generosity

As a church, we believe in a God who is extravagantly generous. John 3:16 reminds us: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”* This reveals not only God’s deep love for the world but also the costliness of His generosity. The Father gave the most precious gift imaginable—Jesus. As His disciples, we are called to reflect this generosity, even when it involves sacrifice, as we take up our cross and follow Him.

Generosity extends into every aspect of our lives. It is a heart posture—a willingness to share our time, resources, and gifts for the benefit of others. Whether it’s opening our homes, using our talents, or expressing Christ-like attitudes, our generosity should flow naturally as an expression of God’s grace working within us.

## Using Our Gifts

Each person in the church body has God-given gifts meant to bless the whole. Romans 12:4–5 says: *“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”*

We are called to serve in various ways—teaching in Sunday School, welcoming people, offering hospitality, or helping maintain the church building. Whatever the task, we serve as unto the Lord, reflecting the heart of Jesus, who said: *“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve”* (Mark 10:45).

## Grace-Filled Generosity

Generosity is rooted in grace—the unmerited favour we have received from God. It shapes how we speak, act, forgive, and support one another. Being generous means believing the best about others, forgiving quickly, and building each other up.

The early church exemplified contagious generosity, as seen in Acts 2:45: *“They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.”* Inspired by this model, we at IIC strive to be a church that is known for generosity—both within our congregation and in our wider community.

## Financial Generosity

Another expression of generosity is giving financially. The Bible calls us to honour God with our tithes and offerings, acknowledging Him as the source of all we have. As 2 Corinthians 9:7 reminds us: *“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”*

Financial giving is not just a duty—it’s an act of worship and gratitude. Through our giving, we support the work of God’s Kingdom, both locally and globally.

## Blessing Our Community

We are called to bless our community in Ipswich and beyond. This includes investing our time, resources, and prayer into its people. For example, our ESOL programme serves those from diverse nations, helping them learn English and feel welcome. We aim to explore even more creative ways to impact our community for Christ.

Generosity extends beyond programmes—it happens daily, through random acts of kindness, meaningful relationships, and simply reflecting God’s love in our workplaces, schools, and streets.

## A Challenge to Live Generously

Imagine how our town could be transformed if we lived generously in every encounter. Colossians 3:23 encourages us: *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.”*

- Are you serving the body of Christ? Consider your gifts and ask where God is calling you to serve.
- Are you generous in your attitudes toward others, quick to forgive and extend grace?
- Are you committed to giving financially as part of your worship?

Let’s embrace outrageous generosity as a way of life, inspired by the One who gave everything for us.



# Our Priorities

Elim 2020-2025 Strategic Plan

**MAKING  
DISCIPLES**

ADVANCE

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white shirt, is singing into a microphone with her right arm raised. The background is dark blue with light blue geometric shapes.

Elim 2020-2025 Strategic Plan

**DEVELOPING  
LEADERS**

ADVANCE

A man with short hair, wearing a dark suit, is speaking into a microphone with his hands clasped. The background is dark blue with light green geometric shapes.

Elim 2020-2025 Strategic Plan

**GROWING  
CHURCHES**

ADVANCE

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a patterned top, is singing into a microphone. The background is dark blue with yellow and orange geometric shapes.

Elim 2020-2025 Strategic Plan

**REACHING  
NATIONS**

ADVANCE

A man with short hair, wearing a light-colored shirt, is speaking into a microphone. The background is dark blue with red and pink geometric shapes.