

Discipleship Toolkit

A guide to help you **GROW**
and **GO** with Jesus



**Pathway
Church**

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Hello from our Pastor

Hello! I am really glad you've got this little toolkit in your hands. My name is Dave and I have the honour of leading Pathway Church. I moved to join the church in the summer of 2023 along with my wife Natalie and son Jed. If I haven't met you already, I look forward to doing so soon.

This toolkit is meant to be a little guide to explain a few things. It explores who we are and how we do things at Pathway Church. We are a little different from lots of churches, meeting and structuring ourselves in ways you may not have experienced before, so a bit of an explanation about that could be useful.

But most of this is a discipleship toolkit, explaining what a disciple is and some of the key tools we use to grow as disciples of Jesus. There is lots more that could have gone into this guide, and over time more and more will appear on our website, but this gives some real basics to help you see what we're about and what we focus on in our lives together.

Then there is a brief bit at the back about how to be part of what is going on (and you might already be!), and in particular what it would look like for you to become a formal 'member' of the church.

If you have questions about anything, I'd love to hear from you.

God bless,

Dave



Pathway Church:

WHO ARE WE?

This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls." (Jeremiah 6:16)

Our VISION:

'On a journey together with God'

As a church, we believe there is a pathway for all of us to find from where we are now to a complete, full, and fulfilled life with God. We believe that pathway is found in Jesus, who once said, **"I am the way and the truth and the life."** We have discovered that if we wish to have the fullest and truest life, then following Jesus is the way to find it. In fact, the earliest Christians didn't call themselves 'Christians'. They called themselves 'followers of the way', and we stand in line with them, on a journey together with God.

But this pathway and this and journey are not just for us! We believe God wants everyone to find it and discover the joy of walking it with him. That is why we seek to be an 'open' church, with different ways for people to engage with us, to meet together and to travel the journey of life and faith with God and with others. So we have four values as a church, and all are about being 'open'.

Our VALUES:

1. We are OPEN TO GOD

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will **make your paths straight.**” (Wisdom in Proverbs 3:5-6)

As a church, God is central to everything, and we want to follow him instead of going our own way. So we commit to remaining open to him through prayer, and through being guided by the Holy Spirit as individuals and collectively as we journey on.

3. We have OPEN BIBLES

“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a **light on my path.**” (The effect the Bible has in our lives, helping us know where to go, found in Psalm 119:105)

As a church, we believe God has revealed himself and what is true through the Bible. It is our guide and our map as we seek to navigate life in this world. So we commit to reading, studying and following what it says, both individually and together, and letting it be our guide in all things.

2. We are OPEN TO ALL

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, **make straight paths for him.**’” (A description of someone who pointed others to Jesus, in Matthew 3:3)

As a church, we want the invitation to meet Jesus to ring out. We want to be like John, Jesus’s cousin, who prepared the way and made straight paths for others to hear about, meet and follow him. Everyone is welcome. We want everyone to find their place.

4. We are OPEN TO CHANGE

“In their hearts humans plan their course, but **the Lord establishes their steps.**” (About liking to plan, but God being in control, in Proverbs 16:9)

As a church, we are not set in stone when it comes to our structures, our rhythms and our activities together. So we make plans, but we also hold them lightly. We experiment and try things, and we submit all of our plans to God ask him to establish our steps and lead us on his pathway.

Our RHYTHM OF LIFE

Every family or group of friends has a rhythm to it. Shared habits, shared time, shared life. Pathway Church is no different, and we think of our rhythm of life in three ways: daily, weekly and monthly.

Every DAY: being and making disciples of Jesus

As followers of Jesus, our first commitment is to him! We try to live every moment of every day for him. Being led by him as a disciple and leading others to him to take their steps of faith. Most of this toolkit is focused on this part of our lives, how we can grow and go with Jesus every day and in every situation.

Every WEEK: growing in a 'Scatter Group'

As a church, we don't all meet in just one way, in one place and at one time. There are different groups that meet, and we call them 'Scatter Groups'. They are the central part of our life as a church. These are different shapes and sizes, because God has made us all different. Our hope is that everyone can find a place to belong, grow, and be equipped to live for Jesus. You can find out about the different groups that meet each week on our website, or by talking to someone who's part of the church.

Every MONTH: sharing with the whole church

Even though we don't all see each other every week, we are one church! So each month there is also a chance for us all to come together to worship Jesus together, get inspired, hear stories of God at work, and celebrate with those we don't see week by week. We also have a monthly rhythm of prayer for the whole church to seek God together. Details are on our website.

How LEADERSHIP works

At Pathway Church lots of people lead in different ways. We have an overall leadership team, led by our minister, who are responsible for the overall vision, direction and shape of the whole church. Each weekly community also has a leadership team, and there are others with specific roles and responsibilities. You can see who all these people are on our website. But there are a few things which mark how we lead, and these are really important to us.

1. Servants, not dictators

Jesus is the perfect example of leading by laying himself down and serving others, not asserting himself and bossing people around. We seek to follow that example.

2. Teams, not lone heroes

The only hero in our church is Jesus! So for everyone who leads, we do so by releasing and working with others, not doing everything ourselves.

3. Character, not just competence

The Bible makes clear it isn't just being gifted that matters. Leaders need to have character, and be good role-models too, so we hold ourselves to that.

4. Leading on our knees

If you lead at Pathway Church, you do that first and foremost by praying. Alone and with others, this is how God's Kingdom is built, so we are committed to this.

5. Accountable hearts

Leaders listen. So all the teams and leaders are accountable both to those they lead and to other leaders, both inside and outside the church. In particular, our leaders are accountable to the Yorkshire Baptist Association, who regularly check in and support us.

Discipleship Toolkit

What is a 'disciple'?

This bit of the toolkit is here to help us take steps forward as disciples of Jesus. But what does that mean?

A disciple is a follower of Jesus. He famously had 12 disciples, but there were other men and women described as disciples too. And that was then. Now there are billions of disciples across the world, and if you have chosen to follow Jesus you are one of them!

This is the call Jesus made to his first disciples: **"Come, follow me, and I will send you out"** (Mark 1:17). There are two big parts to this. There's the 'follow me' part, and the 'I will send you out' part. Or, in other words, a disciple grows closer as a follower, and goes to share and that invitation with others.

GROWING, and the Great Commandment

When Jesus was asked what the most important commandment was, he answered with this: **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength"** (Mark 12:30). He then says the second is to love other people as we love ourselves. But the most important thing to do in our lives, according to Jesus, is to love God more and more deeply.

Notice that Jesus says this is about every part of us. Loving God is not just about knowing things in our minds, but committing to him with our hearts. It is not just about praising him with our souls, but using our strength to do the things he calls us to. So as we seek to grow in love and devotion to God, it means all of us, our whole lives.

GOING, and the Great Commission

After his death and resurrection, Jesus gives his followers (and by extension us) marching orders. He says, **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am always with you, to the very end of the age”** (Matthew 28:18-20).

Jesus sends those he calls. If we are his disciple, his call is that we go and make other disciples. This involves building relationships, telling people about Jesus, leading them to make a commitment to him, and helping them grow and go with him for themselves. It’s a big task, but he promises his authority and his presence as we go!

Growing AND Going

Of course as we go in Jesus’ name, we will grow. And as we grow in closer relationship with him, more of who he is will spill out of us into every relationship in our lives. Growing and going happen together, but we need to be equipped with tools for both.

What you’ll find now are tools to help you with all of this. Some will help you grow as a disciple personally, and some will help you go and make disciples. They’re divided into two sections, but as we’ve seen there is a lot of overlap.

Tools to GROW



There are lots of things we can do to grow as disciples of Jesus, but some are really central to how we do things at Pathway Church.

'Three Thirds' Structure

This is something you can do with others who you meet with regularly to spur each other on to grow with Jesus. This is the normal structure for all our weekly gatherings at Pathway Church. However long you have, divide it into three sections, and go through these three stages:

Look BACK



1. Care for each other
Share highs and lows from the last week.



2. Loving accountability
How did you get on with last week's goals?

Look UP



3. Worship
By singing or in other ways.



4. Open the Bible
Often with a Discovery Bible Study

Look FORWARD



5. Obey, train, share
What will you do this week?



6. Pray & commission
Send each other out in God's name.

Discovery Bible Study

If one of our values is to have 'Open Bibles', we often use what is called a 'Discovery Bible study to do that. This is something you can do on your own, with one other person or in a group, and is often how we will open the Bible together when we gather. This is also often part of the 'Three Thirds' Structure just shared. The process is simple:

1. Read a passage twice through

2. Summarise it to make sure you've grasped what it's saying

3. Ask and answer or discuss these simple questions:

- What do I like about it? (including what encourages or inspires you)
- What do I dislike about it? (including things you don't understand or find challenging)
- What does it say about God? (including Jesus and the Holy Spirit)
- What does it say about people? (people in the passage, and people generally)

4. Obey: what will I do as a result of reading this?

Prayer (and fasting)

Prayer is a vital part of our lives with Jesus, and something to grow in as a disciple. It is the primary way that we deepen a relationship with God, coming to him just as we are and bringing the things to him that matter the most.

Fasting (which is going without something, normally food) is also something that many Christians find very useful in deepening their prayer life and pressing into God more fully.

Instead of giving a guide to how to do these things, take a look in your Bible at Matthew 6:5-18, where Jesus himself gives some teaching about both prayer and fasting. You could do a Discovery Bible Study on those verses to delve into them by yourself or with someone else.

Relationships to spur you on

The final vital tool for growth is the relationships we have with other people who follow Jesus. At Pathway Church, we are on a journey with God TOGETHER, not just by ourselves. The central part of that is by committing to a weekly Scatter Group, and that is why we really encourage people to get stuck into these and let them be a vital part of their life.

But you might also ask one or two others to go even deeper with, by being accountable to each other, praying together regularly and really investing in each other in a very intentional way. If you'd be interested in this, speak to someone so we can guide you in it.

Tools to GO



This section gives guidance about how to share Jesus with others as we 'go' in Jesus' name. It shares advice on the who and the how.

Who? Identifying connections

Everyone needs to know the love of Jesus, so there is no wrong answer to this! But a good thing to do is jot down names under 5 lists:

1. **Family** (people in your human family)
2. **Friends** (people you are close with)
3. **Acquaintances** (people you see regularly)
4. **Neighbours** (people you live near)
5. **Colleagues** (people you work with)

As you look at the people under each of those lists, consider (and pray about) who it is you feel you could connect with best and share Jesus with most strongly. Don't choose dozens, but identify those you are really going to seek to 'go' to with Jesus.

How? B.L.E.S.S.

There are a few really simple practices we can all do to invest in the people we know and share Jesus with them. The word B.L.E.S.S. is a helpful way to remember them. Each letter stands for a different thing to do (and they're all things Jesus did lots of), and has a simple tool to go with it.

B. Begin with Prayer

This is where it all starts. If we want people to become disciples of Jesus, they need to meet him, so we need to pray they would do so.

TOOL: Pray for five. Write down the names of 5 people and pray for them daily by name. Simple prayers asking God to bless them, reveal himself, and give you opportunities to share.

L. Listen

When you speak with people, listen deeply for hopes, fears, motivations and what matters most. It shows we care, and helps us share better too.

TOOL: Ask great questions. When preparing to see someone, take time to think of questions that will open up more meaningful conversation. Ask, listen, and push deeper.

E. Eat

Relationships often grow best over food & drink. It is a sign of openness to someone when we spend time over a meal, and creates space for conversation to go in good direction.

TOOL: Meal planner. Draw out a plan of your next week or month, and decide which breakfasts, lunches or dinners you can invite someone to share with you. Drinks also work!

S. Serve

When we help someone in ways they really need, we show what Jesus' love looks like in action. Meeting a real need by using our own time, money or skills speaks volumes!

TOOL: Meet a need. This isn't a tool so much as a commitment to do something to serve people. Once you discover a need, do something about it, and involve others too if you need.

S. Story

As we build relationships, opportunities will come up (and we can help create them) to share Jesus with words. So we need to be ready to tell two stories: our story and God's story.

TOOL: Learn & Practice. These stories are so important, we've given them their own space in the toolkit, so keep on going to find them!

Telling your story

Everyone has a story, and there are lots of ways to tell it, but a good way to practice telling your Christian story is in these 3 sections:

BC

BEFORE CHRIST

What was life, or a situation, like before Jesus was part of it?

JC

JESUS CHRIST

How did Jesus enter that story? How did you discover him?

AC

AFTER CHRIST

What was the result of Jesus now being part of it?

This can work either for your whole life story of how you met Jesus in the first place, but also for stories about parts of your life where Jesus has really made a huge difference. After you've told this story to someone, you could even ask if they have a similar story or can relate to any part of it.

Practice really helps with this! Why not use the space below to jot down some things you could share from your life. Then practice sharing those stories, into a mirror or to a Christian friend. If we've practised by ourselves, it will be easier when we have the chance.

MY STORY

BC

BEFORE CHRIST

JC

JESUS CHRIST

AC

AFTER CHRIST

Telling God's story

It is also really good to be able to simply share the good news of Jesus with people. There are different way to do this, and mostly it will be through conversation, but sometimes there is a chance just to tell people what God's story is, and this can be a good summary:

1. GOD MADE IT

Everything was originally made good and perfect, so whatever you are talking about with someone you can point to God's perfect plan for it.

2. WE BROKE IT

Because we want things our ways not God's (sin), the world was broken and nothing is perfect as it was meant to be. Again, you can point this out in lots of relevant ways.

3. JESUS IS FIXING IT

We believe that God entered the broken world at Christmas and died to deal with the problem (sin) at Easter, rising again to give new and perfect life. And those who follow him are part of sharing that and living that life now to bring more wholeness and less brokenness today.

Once you've shared God's story, you can then ask people what they think about that, whether they ever feel broken or like they break things, and tell them Jesus can bring his life to them.

Other useful links and resources



As well as the tools in this toolkit, there are some really great online tools, channels and apps that can help you grow and go with Jesus.

Videos from Pathway Church

Over time, we are building a series of videos with simple guides to the things mentioned in this toolkit and other areas that are helpful as you grow with Jesus. These are added to over time, and can be found at pathwaysheffield.com/resources

'YouVersion' Bible App

There are lots of Bible apps, and they're all good because they are all the Bible! But the YouVersion app has lots of features to help you get deeper into the Bible, including reading plans, series of studies you can use, and lots more.

'Lectio 365' Daily Devotion App

This app leads you through a short time of prayer every day, giving you things to reflect on, prayers to pray, and prompts and space for your own prayers. You can use it on your own, or with family or whoever you live with.

'The Bible Project' YouTube Channel

This channel is packed with videos introducing and guiding you through every book of the Bible, explanations of words in the Bible, and unpacking big themes and ideas. It is a treasure trove of information and inspiration!

Membership – how to commit

**“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together”
(Hebrews 10:24-25)**

Who is part of Pathway Church?

Anybody who wants to be can be part of Pathway Church! Whether you are part a groups or activity that happens in our building, or regularly join in with our weekly and monthly gatherings, we are glad you are part of us as we are on a journey together.

But we also have something called ‘membership’. You do not have to be a member to belong, but when certain decisions are made it is only members that can vote on them. To be a member, someone needs to be a Christian, and we ask for three levels of commitment in every member.

Membership - three levels of commitment

The three levels of commitment that we ask all members to make reflect the ‘rhythm of life’ that our church has laid out toward the start of this guide. They are:

1. Committing to daily personal discipleship

This is a personal commitment to GROW and to GO, including using some of the tools shared in this guide.

2. Committing to a weekly Scatter Group

Because the weekly Scatter Groups are the bedrock of how we relate as a church, every member needs to be a committed part of one of these.

3. Committing to the church as a whole

This looks like many things: joining for monthly gatherings of the whole church, serving at activities and events, giving financially, and being part of church prayer meetings and mission events.

Steps you could take

If you are interested in taking a step forward in your commitment with Jesus or with Pathway Church, you might like to consider:

- Joining a Scatter Group
- Becoming a Christian for the first time
- Getting baptised
- Praying with someone
- Becoming a member
- Giving financially (www.pathwaysheffield.com/give)
- Helping at one of our events or groups
- Exploring your spiritual gifts and starting to serve or lead
- Speaking with someone about your next step

If there is anything in this guide you would like to discuss with someone, please let a leader know and we can organise to speak with you soon.

