

April 11, 2005

Dear GEBC Family:

Next month will mark the first anniversary of Kelly's installation as Senior Pastor at Glen Ellyn Bible Church. As we near this anniversary, we are excited about the Lord's work in and through our congregation and wanted to share with you some of what the Elder board has been working on during these last twelve months.

Philosophy of Ministry: As Kelly joined the Elder board our first task was to prayerfully consider our philosophy of ministry. Asking questions such as, "What are our goals in ministry at GEBC?" and "How will we define success as a church in the years ahead?" the Elders quickly affirmed the primary goal for GEBC of disciple-making. We are a church committed to helping people follow Jesus.

At the same time, while the biblical mandate of disciple-making was readily embraced, the Elders spent time in prayer and in the study of Scripture in an effort to define discipleship more specifically. It is our prayer that being specific about what it means to follow after Jesus will help us all to better understand where he is leading us, both as individuals and a community.

In the end, we identified eight attributes that, although certainly not exhaustive, will provide a specific target for those longing to follow after Jesus. These eight attributes served as the basis for the fall 2004 sermon series that Kelly preached titled "*Following the King*." This series is available on the website (www.gebible.org) if you would like to revisit any of these attributes.

Disciples are those who:

1. Receive salvation freely by grace (John 3:16)
2. Live in worship continually (John 4:23-24)
3. Serve with Jesus passionately (Luke 14:27)
4. Obey Jesus' teaching wholly (Matthew 7:24)
5. Love others selflessly (Matthew 22:36-40)
6. Pursue the lost intentionally (Matthew 28:18-20)
7. Depend on Jesus' power fully (John 15:5)
8. Connect in fellowship deeply (Acts 2:43-47)

Evaluation and Implementation: Setting our sites on becoming a disciple-making church meant evaluating our current strengths in disciple-making and implementing a plan for improvement. In our evaluation one of the tools that we used was the February 2004 congregational survey (available online at www.gebible.org), and we found the following:

- Over 57% of GEBC shared that they were either not serving at all or were under utilized in service at the church.
- Over 50% of GEBC shared that they were reading their Bibles only twice a week and praying on average only five minutes a day.
- 37% of GEBC shared that they were either stopped or stalled in their spiritual growth.

Believing that these issues will not be fixed over night, but that disciple-making is time consuming and labor intensive task that requires intentional leadership and strong relationships, we suggested hiring 3 full time staff in an effort to focus on the issues of recruiting and equipping people for service, strengthening biblical literacy, and nurturing spiritual growth. These hires were approved at the November 2004 business meeting, and as of April 1, 2005 all three position have been filled. We thank God for these quality staff members that will be building into our children, students and families. These new hires are:

- **Sarah Hendriksen**, Children's Ministry Assistant Director. Sarah grew up in our church and is a recent graduate of Wheaton College. She joins Leah Wilson, the Children's Ministry Director, and Bonnie Skala, the Children's Ministry Administrative Assistant in our children's programming department.
- **Dave Schubert**, Senior High Director. Dave is a graduate of Taylor University and most recently served on staff at Cielo Vista Church in El Paso, Texas.
- **Kate Neyland Rickard**, Junior High Director. Kate also grew up in the church and is a recent graduate of Taylor University. Both Dave and Kate will join Brian From, our Student and Adult Ministries pastor, in the student ministry department.

At the November 2004 business meeting we also shared with you that we would not be hiring someone to fill Kelly's previous position of Family Life Pastor, but would instead divide that job description into two positions. These two positions are:

- **Student and Adult Ministry Pastor:** We have asked Brian From to assume some responsibilities in adult ministry, as well as to oversee the two new hires in student ministry. This will provide continuity in transition for the new hires and maintain quality in student ministry programming, as well as allow Brian to grow in his ministry experience as he is able enter adult programming. We are excited for how the Lord continues to grow and use Brian in ministry at GEBC.
- **Outreach and Assimilation Pastor:** This pastoral position will focus on helping us reach our neighbors with the gospel, as well as help newcomers find a place of connection at GEBC and begin to grow in their faith as disciples. In an effort to fill this position, Kelly has commissioned a team including several Elders, as well as members of the congregation, which has reviewed a large number of resumes, interviewed several candidates, and are currently interviewing a candidate. We would ask

that you join us in praying for God's provision for our church in this position.

Vision Cultivation: We have also been prayerfully considering the "what next" in GEBC's life. Identifying who the Lord would have us "be" as disciples has necessarily lead us to begin considering what the Lord would have us "do" as a church. This process of vision cultivation has three steps.

Step 1: Asking Questions

How is the church meant to accomplish the mission of growing disciples? In an effort to answer this question the Elders have continued to pray and search the Scripture, looking to identify both Jesus' and the early church's model for disciple-making. To date, 4 key activities have been identified that the church must be involved in if we are to successfully make disciples. These four activities of a disciple-making church will serve as the focus of Kelly's fall 2005 sermon series titled "Becoming a Disciple-making Church."

- **Proclaiming** the good news of God's salvation. (Matthew 4:17)
- **Restoring** people through a connection to the Holy Spirit and with another. (Matthew 9:36)
- **Equipping** people for service in ministry. (Ephesians 4:12)
- **Sending** people out to carry the gospel message. (Matthew 28:19-20)

Step 2: Collecting Wisdom

Not wanting to cultivate GEBC's vision in a vacuum and wanting to understand how God is leading other churches in the disciple-making effort, the Elders will be meeting with several key leaders from area churches to gather wisdom. We are not as concerned about "what" they are doing specifically, but rather with "how" God has worked in and through the membership of their church to cultivate the vision.

Step 3: Identifying God's Vision

The final step in this process will be to prayerfully identify measurable objectives for our church. Those objectives will be communicated to the congregation as we determine God's leading through this process, but our goal is to be specific and measurable in order to know clearly where we are aiming and whether we are succeeding.

Theological Review: With the responsibility of guarding the doctrine of the church, the Elders make it a regular discipline to review GEBC's theology. While Elders do not need to be professional theologians, we recognize that each member of the Elder board must be able to articulate GEBC's theology in order to lead well. Toward that end, we have spent considerable time studying various theological issues in order to provide direction and guidance to our teaching ministries and our staff. We take seriously our responsibility to oversee the spiritual life and pastoral care of the members of the church, and so we want to "hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that [we] can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." (Titus 1:9)

Constitutional Review: With a new era in leadership beginning, the Elders decided to review the mechanical elements of our church's Constitution. Some elements of governance, particularly a few standing committees, are simply no longer a part of our church's operational procedure and it is our desire to update the constitution to better reflect our current methods of operation. It is our intention that these changes will be presented for approval at the May 15, 2005 business meeting. A summary of these changes, as well as an opportunity to ask questions in advance of the May business meeting, will be provided. It should be noted, though, that we will not be proposing any changes to the church's Statement of Faith.

Care giving: The apostle Peter writes to encourage the Elders in the local church to "shepherd the flock of God," (1 Peter 5:1-2) and the Elders continue to provide both prayer support and spiritual counsel to individuals and families in crisis. If you or someone you know has a need for counsel or prayer please contact us. We are eager to be the shepherds of God's flock here at GEBC.

In closing, we would like to say thanks for the opportunity to serve and we are encouraged by your eager participation through financial support of the ministries of GEBC. Enclosed is your quarterly giving statement. We would also encourage you to attend the May 15th congregational meeting from 5:00-6:15 p.m., where we will share more of our vision for the future of GEBC. Also, we would invite you to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have, or to share your needs so that we can pray for you.

Sincerely, The Elders of GEBC

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