

Questions Re Prayer and Healing at Journey

1. At First Step, Ed discusses Journey's DNA! If you haven't attended First Step recently you are invited to join us! The following is our statement regarding our vision for swimming in all 5 streams here in our Journey community, including the Holy Spirit stream.

We Want Everything God Has to Offer (The Five Streams)

So what kind of church IS Journey anyway? It used to be easy to tell a lot about a church without ever stepping foot in it or knowing people from the church. Denominations were a part of the spiritual landscape and the labels actually meant something to people. Journey is not affiliated with any denomination. But currently even that doesn't tell you too much. So when people ask what "Kind" of church Journey is they often mean style or emphasis or maybe what camp Journey is in.

We see it as streams. It seems to us that God's Spirit is flowing through streams expressed in several current styles of churches. We at Journey believe that God isn't asking us to choose one. We want to swim in all five.

The Seeker Stream- This is deep in the identity of Journey. We want a church that is a safe space for people to connect with Jesus. We want to remove cultural barriers while holding the gospel out without compromise. We do church in a way that expects people to be in the crowd who are at all different places on their journey to life with God.

The Passion Stream- We want to be a church that is God-centered. That seems like a "duh" but it really isn't. We want people to taste genuine passionate worship. We want people to see what a God-saturated life would look like. We want people to hear Jesus' call to enter into the "with-God" life.

The Holy Spirit Stream- We believe in all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They may not all be obvious in every worship service, but we believe in and will seek for these gifts to be used in a way that builds our community up for our mission. We believe in signs and wonders and expectantly pray that God's kingdom will be transfused in our community, including experiences of these gifts.

The Spiritual Formation Stream- God has been awakening His church to take more seriously the call of Jesus to make people into students, disciples, and followers...teaching them to actually DO the stuff He taught them to do and to actually live it out. Jesus changes people and we want to help each other to slow down and allow His presence to change us.

The Missional Incarnational Stream- We are people who are sent by Jesus to proclaim and embody the good news that Jesus is alive and He is Lord. We, like Jesus, are sent to

live out what life is like when God is in charge. We seek first His kingdom and His justice! We, in the name of Jesus, bless our community.

Different churches have really embodied each of these streams and made it their “deal”. We are grateful for that. We sense for us that these streams are not mutually exclusive. We sense that God wants us as a church to swim in each of these streams. So.....let’s dive in!

2. Over our years of growth and development as a church, we have at different moments, sensed that we were being led by God to give focus to one or another of these 5 streams.

In 2010 we dove into the **missional incarnational stream** in a new way when we partnered with a church in Haiti. Later, we opened a food bank and thrift store in order to increase our outreach to our community here in East County. It is so exciting that we’ve invested in becoming missional and incarnational as a church in the past 9 years. We intend to continue!

Another example is our recent movement to more fully invest in another one of the streams; the **spiritual formation stream**. After a year of work, discussing the question of how we as a church were going to intentionally make disciples of Jesus, we rolled out the Pathway and are inviting all to move together toward Jesus as His disciples on this pathway.

We are constantly at work, determining how we, as a church, can continue to dive into all five streams so that we can have ALL that God wants to give us! One of our initiatives in this season, is to explore and be more intentional with the Holy Spirit stream, developing our understanding and expressions of prayer and healing. We’ve been doing lots of work in order to make this stream more accessible to all at Journey in a way that fits with our DNA.

3. “Embrace Tensions” is part of our DNA here at Journey. As we read the descriptions of the five streams, we understand that some who are a part of Journey will feel more comfortable with or more passionate about one particular stream or another. **We want to swim in all five streams at Journey and believe each one is important, understanding that our efforts to do so may cause tension that must be navigated by our leadership. We can embrace tensions as we all move toward Jesus together, discerning from Him where He is leading us individually to explore streams outside our comfort zone.** Our Pathway embraces all five streams and we hope everyone will get their feet wet in all.

4. There are a few ways that we've approached diving into the Holy Spirit stream:
- A centralization of all of our prayer ministries which includes training as well as prayer guidelines that enable us to access this stream in a way that is consistent with our values and DNA. (see attached) All of our people on the prayer teams have agreed to Journey prayer guidelines and promote a prayer culture that is unique to Journey.
 - Kristy Dees has taken on the responsibility as pastor over prayer ministries in order to create an effective and consistent prayer environment at Journey through training and regular meetings.
 - The launch of ACCESS in November 2019 will promote connection with God through extended worship and followed by elective participation in spiritual formation practices, healing prayer, restorative prayer or encouraging words from God. This is a part of our Transformation step on the Pathway and we are hoping that all in our Journey community will experience deeper connection with God through this regular gathering.
 - Continued engagement with prayer during our nightly weeks of prayer gatherings, 24/7 Prayer weeks and our Prayer Corner.

5. A few common questions:

Q Is the leadership importing programs from another church into Journey?

A No. The leadership learns from other leaders and churches but we prayerfully discern how God is leading us to express those learnings within the constructs of our particular mission, vision and DNA at Journey Community Church.

Q Does the leadership believe that it's always God's will to heal and that if healing doesn't take place that it is because of a lack of faith or forgiveness or sin in someone's life?

A We do believe that it's always God's will for healing and wholeness in our lives. We press in through prayer for that healing, praying for God's kingdom to come to earth as it is in heaven. Hebrews 2:8 speaks of the new reality of all things subjected to Jesus and His kingdom, but at the same time acknowledges that sometimes we still don't experience the fullness of that reality. (For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.) When we don't observe healing after prayer, we live in the tension. Lack of faith, unforgiveness, or unconfessed sin are not necessarily the cause of unobserved healing. We can't explain what God is doing in the unseen world but we continue to pray for healing in the midst of the mystery because we know that God's ultimate will for each one of us is to be healed and whole.

Q Are we saying that a person's brokenness or disabilities or conditions that we have carried from birth are not OK? Why should we pray for healing from these things that we have come to accept are from God?

A God's ultimate desire for us is to live in a world where what He wants done is done. We get a glimpse of what this might look like in Genesis 1-2 when humans, who were created imago dei, lived untouched by the impact of alienation from God, others and nature that took place in Genesis 3. We were all created imago dei. But we also know that something is not quite right in each of us. Each of us is broken in different ways. What happened? All of us have been impacted, even before we were born, by the Genesis 3 event when man decided to grasp for life on his own terms. Jesus died to break the grip of this sin and to make it possible for us to partner with Him in bringing redemption and a return to the Genesis 1-2 world. The world is in need of the redemption that Jesus came to purchase. I am in need of the redemption that Jesus came to purchase. I am in need of redemption: body, soul, spirit, mind, will and emotions.

So we agree that we are made imago dei but that at the same time, the image of God in each of us has been cracked. We are not OK and the world is not as it should be.

We are excited to say "yes" to Jesus' invitation to partner with Him through prayer to see the kingdom of God restored through the power of Jesus' death and resurrection. We ask God for healing and the reality of the fullness of His kingdom to come in our physical bodies and then live faithfully in the tension and the mystery when healing doesn't take place here and now.

Having said, all that, we also know that God can make something very beautiful out of our brokenness. The imago dei is present in each of us and God is continually working to transform us and more fully reveal its beauty. We recognize and respect that beauty in every person. There's no reason to feel pressured if you feel you are not being invited to ask for healing at this time. No one will judge you. Keep walking with Him, hearing His voice, following His lead and allowing Him to create something glorious and beautiful in you in the context of the Genesis 3 world.

Q Is the leadership trying to change Journey?

A Yes. We always desire to be changing in such a way that we experience MORE of God and work together to bring His kingdom to earth. But no, Journey's mission, vision, values and DNA are not changing.

Q Is ACCESS a “healing room”?

A NO. ACCESS is part of the Transformation Step on the Pathway. We are providing a space to connect with God through worship, healing prayer, encouraging words and individual time for reflection and journaling. We do hope that people will be healed as they come into God’s presence in the room. But connection with God’s presence is the point of ACCESS.

Q Why are we having Chris Gore come and referencing Bethel from the front in this season?

A We are entering a season in which we are working on developing our Holy Spirit stream, just as we did our Mission Incarnational Stream and our Spiritual Formation Stream and others in the past. This does not mean that this Stream is any more important than the others, only that we’re currently working on taking it seriously. Just as in the past, we’ve learned from different churches and leaders and integrated our learnings in a way that is consistent with our mission, vision, values and DNA. Chris Gore and Bethel, as well as other Christ followers and churches have given us some valuable help with this task.

Chris in particular has been helping us to figure out how to use our learnings in Journey’s unique context.

Q What do we expect from guest speakers we invite to teach our weekend messages?

A We DO

- believe that they are godly people of admirable character
- recognize that they bring a message to our weekend service that will be of benefit to the church
- deliberately invite innovative speakers that might be immersed in one particular stream to help us to move toward getting our feet wet.

We DON’T

- endorse every position they hold
- endorse their every association
- insist that they are in line with ALL of the biblical understandings that Journey’s leadership holds.

Note: For more clarity please listen to Journey podcasts September 1 & Sept 8.