

SECTION 12

Participant Pages

Readings for Huddle Participants



SouthBrook
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

SECTION 12:

THE TRIANGLE

(NUMBERS 49-51 IN “52 WEEKS OF HUDDLES”)

Sometimes Significant Events happen *to* us, but we can also *plan* them.

If we are intentional, we can build our schedules to align with the priorities of Jesus. As we see from Jesus' life, His biggest priority was *relationships*.

Jesus prioritized three different kinds of relationships. He pursued connections:

UP — with His Heavenly Father, God

IN — with others in the family of God, those who already followed Him

OUT — with the world, those who did not yet know Him, and who had not experienced the good news.

Jesus intentionally ordered the events of His life to reflect these three relationship priorities. All through the gospels, we see them. Here is one instance where we see all three:

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all. —Luke 6:12-19

Jesus spent all night on the mountain focusing **UP**, praying to His Father in Heaven. In the morning, as He was hanging with a big group of His followers, He invited twelve of them **IN**, to be with them, to teach them, and to pass on His work to them. With those twelve in tow, He moved **OUT**, heading to a spot where He could dispense kingdom grace to those who had not heard or who weren't experiencing the good news.

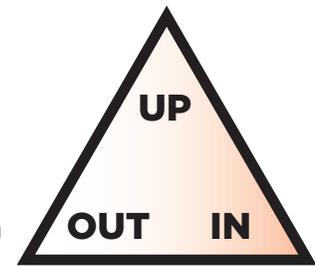
As His disciples followed Jesus, they too learned to live in these three directions. They learned to know, trust and obey the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (**UP**). They built long lasting friendships with other Christ-followers that were full of grace and truth (**IN**). They learned to proclaim the gospel to the lost, to heal the sick, to serve the needy, to drive out demons (**OUT**). They passed it all on to the next generation, who passed it to the next until...us.

When we boil it down, it's quite simple, isn't it? Live UP, IN, and OUT. Those are God's two greatest commandments summed up in seven letters.¹ A primary way we do this is by simply planning and tasking the Significant Events of our lives, big and small, to

¹ Matthew 22:37-40: 37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'. 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

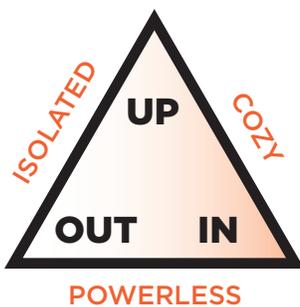
align with these priorities. We visually represent this way of living with one of our tools for Significant Events, the Triangle.²

When we grow in these three directions, UP, IN and OUT—we move toward living a balanced kingdom life. Now, let's be careful not to become overly religious with this; it's not as though every day or even every week we should expect to achieve a near-perfect balance of all three. In fact, there will be seasons where God wants us to focus more in one direction than another. Jesus spent the first 40 days of His earthly ministry in the desert in Solitude with God (UP) with virtually NO connection at all with other followers (IN) or with the lost (OUT). But if over time, we neglect one or more the corners of the triangle, our lives will hobble out of balance.



From time to time, it can be helpful to pause and ask, "How's my UP?" "What about my IN? And my OUT?" Through different seasons of our lives, we may find ourselves neglecting one corner more than the others.

Some of us focus a great deal on UP and IN, but we struggle to express OUT through our lives. This lifestyle in a word: **COZY**. It may feel nice, but it has very little kingdom impact outside the church.



The UP and IN lifestyle is like a never-ending *K-Love Cruise*. You may have listened to K-Love; it's a radio station that plays songs by popular Christian artists. They also host a yearly Caribbean cruise. People, mostly Christians, pack onto an ocean liner to enjoy the Caribbean and hear 20+ of the most popular Christian artists of today perform throughout the trip. Now a week on that ship may be a positive and encouraging experience—but what if you *lived* on it? Satan would certainly hate everyone and everything on that boat; they also would not concern him in the least, as their boat crested waves far away from his turf, no threat whatsoever to his agenda.

Some of us do well with IN and OUT, but we don't invest much in the UP dimension. This lifestyle in a word: **POWERLESS**. We may spend a lot of time around people from church, and we may engage in various services and activities for those outside the church. But we lack relational intimacy with God. Rather than our activity flowing from our identity in and connection to Christ, we may serve out of shame, guilt, religious obligation, or because we believe our activity is what bring a sense of worth.

IN and OUT living reminds me of the word "*Activist*." The activist is likely involved in the community, but has forgotten that hope, for oneself and the world, is found in Jesus. The activist strives to be a "good person" rather than living in surrender to the God who makes us new. This lifestyle may do more to inspire hope in humanity than in the Creator. Works are accomplished but with little kingdom transformation.

How about the person who focuses UP and OUT but not IN? A word to describe this lifestyle is **ISOLATED**. The "Up-and-Outer" may seek God faithfully and spends lots of time with those outside the church, but lacks authentic community with others in the family of God. Though one relies on the power of God and may help not-yet-believers experience faith breakthroughs, one is also more susceptible to temptation, loneliness, and feeling like he or she has to stand for Christ on one's own. If someone does become interested in Christ, the up-and-outer may not have any community into which to invite that person.

² This tool and much of the content ideas in this section were developed by Mike Breen, and can be read about in his book *Building a Discipling Culture*, chapter 7, copyright 2011 by Mike Breen.

The Up-and-Outer is the *lone wolf*. Sometimes people are lone wolves because they've moved to a new place, and they haven't made new connections yet. Others are lone wolves by conscious or unconscious choice. They may frequently talk about how other Christ-followers have failed them, or how they don't really like other Christians. They may apologize for the behavior of other Christ-followers to non-believers, not in a way that says, "Hey, we're all just saved by grace and we haven't got it all figured out yet," but rather in a way that says, "I don't really want to be associated with them." They may throw their true family, their family in Christ, under the bus.

So how do we use Significant Events to intentionally grow UP, IN and OUT? We do it through both organized and organic occasions.

ORGANIZED EVENTS

[Jesus] went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. —Luke 4:14

A synagogue was a place of Jewish worship. People would gather there on the Sabbath for prayer, teaching and Scripture reading. It housed a weekly, organized event where Jews would focus UP. Notice that it was Jesus' "custom" to participate in Sabbath worship at the synagogue. It was part of His weekly, intentional rhythm of life.

Organized events are occasions that are already planned. They may be planned by someone else, but we can opt in, making them part of our weekly and monthly rhythms. The organized events are those that many in America are most familiar with when we think of "church." Here are a few organized events, and the primary direction(s) into which each helps us grow:

- Weekend Church Gathering (UP)
- Men's or Women's Ministry (UP/IN)
- Huddle Weekly/Bi-Weekly Meetings (UP/IN)
- Marriage Seminar (IN)
- Recovery Meetings (IN/OUT)
- BOGG Ministries, One Bistro, Homeless Shelter (OUT)
- PLAY Group, including Mission Days (UP/IN/OUT)
- National or Foreign Mission Trips (UP/IN/OUT)

ORGANIC EVENTS

Organic events happen within the context of our everyday lives. We can either create new space for UP, IN, or OUT rhythms in our schedule where there was nothing before, or we can re-task things we're already doing to make them more purposeful.

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. —Luke 5:16

With all that was going on in His life and ministry, Jesus knew He had to intentionally plan times to withdraw from others to connect UP with His Father. These, and others like them, were not highly organized or meticulously planned events, but they were *intentionally* planned events that resulted in a healthy UP, IN and OUT lifestyle. He

modeled how love for God, other Christ-followers, and the world can be expressed in the everyday life of the disciple.

Here are some ways people are creating new rhythms, or re-tasking old ones to live UP, IN, and OUT in everyday life:

- Allen rises at 5:00 everyday and spends over an hour praying and reading Scripture (UP).
- Athletes sometimes listen to podcasts, sermons or Scripture while lifting weights or running on a treadmill. (UP)
- Men tote their Bibles or journals into the bathroom with them when they plan to spend a little extra time there. I know. Gross. (UP)
- Some spouses pray or read devotionals together every night before bed and discuss briefly what God may be saying (UP/IN).
- Michele uses her time driving the kids to school as “UP” time with her kids. As soon as they reach Whipp Road, that is their cue to pray for a friend or discuss how to live out Scripture values that day (UP/IN).
- Jess and Jody make sure they put their girls in the same swim class, so they have time to connect and exercise together (IN).
- Young adults play basketball together on Wednesdays, to which they can invite friends (IN/OUT).
- Sol uses his time in line at Chipotle to encourage the workers, get to know them, and even invite them to the Sunday gathering at SouthBrook. (OUT).

MEANINGFUL MEALS

One of the simplest, most effective ways to build UP/IN/OUT intentionality into our lives is to utilize our meal times. Eating is a spiritual act as well as physical. When we eat, we acknowledge our dependence on God, who told us to ask Him for our daily bread. They can also be times to intentionally enjoy the company of others.

Consider how many significant things occur at mealtime in Scripture. God commanded the Israelites to celebrate who they were as His people through various feasts every year like the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Jesus initiated the communion meal on the last night before His crucifixion to commemorate His death and resurrection. And when an angel tells Jesus' friend John about our reunion with Jesus in His heavenly kingdom, he describes it as *“the wedding supper of the lamb.”*³ That's just to name a few.

Unless someone has figured out a way to inject all their nutrients through a syringe or eats every meal in their car, or habitually works with one hand and eats with the other, most meals are times to pause. They are Significant Events. What if we more intentionally utilized them to connect with God and others?

This has been a huge revelation for our family. It's so easy at meal times to just...eat. But adding a little intentional engagement is not too difficult, and it has made a huge difference for us. As such, I thought it might be helpful to share a few of our mealtime rhythms, and how we have utilized them for UP, IN, and OUT.

Now for starters, I have four kids. All of them are in organized sports and activities. We spend plenty of time running kids all over the Miami Valley and beyond. Quite frequently, the whole family is not together during meals, and some meals are rushed. Undoubtedly, all who read this will have their set of challenges to work through, whether single or married, whether parents of young kids or empty nesters, whether living in a single bedroom apartment or mansion, whether at home in the city or the country.

What we try to do, though, is to be intentional with the meals we CAN have together. Even if certain members of our family can't be there, we will still use them purposefully.

Breakfast for us is UP time. During breakfast each morning before school, we have what we call, "10 Minutes of Power." It's a time where we together focus on our relationship with God by engaging with something simple that takes no more than ten minutes. It's important that we keep it relatively short like that; if we expected ourselves to make it much longer, we probably wouldn't do it at all. Know what I mean?

Here are a few things we have done during "10 Minutes of Power" time over the last few years. Each item below is for one 10-minute increment:

- **Read a chapter out of *The Jesus Storybook Bible (for little kids)*, or *The Action Bible (for older kids)*.** I, or one of my kids read. If there's time, I may ask, "What does this story say about God? About us?" This helps get our kids immersed in the story of God. Starting at the beginning of the book means hundreds of mornings already planned!
- **Share a passage of Scripture.** Jody or I will share a passage that has been particularly relevant to us lately, and why. If there's time, we may ask, "What from this passage grabs your attention?"
- **Pray for someone in the family who is sick, anxious, or having a bad week.** My wife's head hurt the other day. We put hands on her shoulder in between mouthfuls of eggs and cereal and prayed for healing.
- **Pray for needs we see outside the family.** We'll ask our kids, "Who, outside of our family, has a need we can pray for?" We'll invite each of them to share one they've seen. It can be a need a friend at school has, or something they heard about on the news, far away. It helps them learn to pray *missionally*.
- **Pray for People of Peace⁴.** Recently we asked our kids to each identify one Person of Peace; then we prayed for them.
- **Have someone share a Significant Event (kairos) that they've experienced.** Then we use the Learning Circle to help Discover what God might be saying, and Decide what to Do about it. The others can practice "overhearing" and give feedback too.
- **Each share three things we're thankful for.** We do this one a lot. My 3-year-old's three things are Christmas trees, Christmas presents and Christmas lights EVERY TIME, including now, in May.
- **Share a discipleship tool and talk about it.** Recently, I drew this very tool, the Triangle, on a little white board I had lying around. I asked my boys, "How is your UP? IN? OUT? Give yourself a score between 1 and 10 for each." They shared. The next few days, we talked about steps they could take to grow in their weakest directions.

⁴ See Participant pages section 9, the Person of Peace

- **Each tell God three things we love about Him.** This is a simple exercise we sometimes do to give praise to God.
- **Wrestle with a difficult question.** The best place for kids to start wrestling with questions like, “How do I know atheists don’t have it right?” is in our homes—BEFORE they head off to college or wherever.
- **Share stories of how we’ve experienced God at work in our lives.** They may be things God has been teaching us or ways we’ve each seen God meet us in difficulty. These testimonies bring glory to God and embolden the other listeners.
- **Do the most recent fiveonfive challenge together.** My boys are old enough to handle this, and it keeps us on rhythm with the rest of the church.

This looks good on paper! It doesn’t always feel so good when we’re doing it, and our “10 Minutes of Power” can feel like 10 minutes of pain-in-the-butt. Some mornings my boys kick each other under the table or yell things at each other when it’s someone else’s turn to talk. Sometimes when I’m talking, I’ll think, “Wow, listen to how quiet they’re being!” only to ask them a question and find they’re completely spaced out. About once a month, one will fart in the middle of prayer, at which point all is lost. Sometimes they’ll get up and leave in the middle to go to the bathroom. That drives me nuts. A few times I’ve quit 3 minutes in because I can’t take their shenanigans anymore.

At other times though, the heavens part. I’m amazed when I hear one of my boys explaining to a friend something they learned at “10 Minutes of Power” time; or when my kids gather around someone who is sick or sad to pray for them; or when they share how they’ve been journaling prayers to God and reading Scripture at night before they fall asleep; or when they are locked-in and asking good, raw, authentic questions; or when my 3-year old says at random, “Hey daddy. Jesus wuvs me.” There’s just no value one can put on experiences like these. They make it all worth it.

Taking time to seek God as an individual or as a family is like pulling a chair up to His banquet table. Sometimes the feast is rich, like Cheesecake Factory Godiva Cheesecake; like God is right there and we’re enjoying all that He is for us. At other times, it’s more like eating plain tofu—bland as heck. Either way, it’s good. Building an UP *rhythm* keeps us coming to the table. It safeguards us from becoming distant from God.

Dinners have worked well for IN. IN is about enjoying the company of others in God’s family, including our nuclear families. The very act of eating with others is an IN activity. With a little extra intentionality, “IN” meals can become rich, fun times of connection.

For us, IN dinners happen in a couple of ways. First, my wife and I have “Date Night” once a week. We used to be creative with this; we’d drive to Cincinnati, stroll a river walk, go to cool outdoor cafes with live music, stay out late—stuff like that. Four kids later, it’s a pretty standard affair: Dinner, coffee, movie. We may run a quick errand together if we need to. We LOVE it. We don’t just do it if nothing else is going on; it has a place of priority in our weekly schedule, usually Tuesday evenings. We schedule around it. Date night is one of the primary ways we nurture our most important IN relationship. Today is Tuesday. Five more hours and we’ll be on a date!

Second, we make family dinners happen whenever we can. These do not happen every night. Between soccer, rugby, swimming, parkour, ballet and volleyball (I can't believe those are ALL happening right now), there are many nights we eat on the go or in shifts. But at least a few times a week, we try to all sit down together. Usually, we'll ask a simple question, and go around the table allowing each person to answer:

- What was your "high" from today, and what was your "low?" (Sometimes we ask, "What was your 'sunny' and your 'cloudy'?" or "What was your 'happy' and your 'crappy'?" just to mix it up).
- What were three interesting things that happened this weekend?
- Who were three people you talked to this week? What did you talk about?
- What is one thing you're excited for, and one thing you're NOT looking forward to?
- For other great questions, do a Google search for "250 Conversation Starters".

You may have noticed that many of our questions ask for a specific number (3 things), or target (high, low), and there is a reason. Just about every mom who has genuinely attempted to connect with her 10-year old son after school knows the agony of trying to extract more than one-word answers. It would be easier to pull gum out of his hair. The same holds true for some ladies when trying to draw answers from their significant men. "We've been apart for 10 hours, and you're telling me you can't think of ANYTHING to tell me?"

Asking for a number or target makes the questions more concrete. "How was your day?" is very ambiguous, abstract. The concrete thinker is thinking, "I went to school. You saw me go. I was there all day. You already know that. What do you want from me?" Asking for a specific number of things, or a specific target empowers the concrete thinker to *sort* his experiences. If asked, "What were three things that happened today at school?" he now has a concrete goal, a task to accomplish. "I turned in my history assignment, I played basketball at recess, and I almost fell asleep in ELA."

Even that short answer can generate more conversation. "Oh, you played basketball at recess? Who did you play with?" "Jeff, Chris, and DiMarco. Jeff was so annoying. He kept shooting the ball from like a hundred feet away, and he wouldn't pass it." It might not be super deep, but now you've got something to go on. And ladies, this tactic just might work on those strong, quiet types, too.

Unlike morning time, we frequently have other people orbiting in and out of our house in the evenings. Friends often come home from school with our kids and stay through dinner. Parents coming to pick up their kids often linger and hang out for a while. Sometimes friends and family of ours pop in to say hello. From my dad, I have inherited the "food-pusher" gene, which, my wife will tell you, means I will do about anything short of forcing people to try whatever food we have out for dinner, whether they want to at first or not. We joke about people getting "sucked in" and staying for longer than they had planned, which we love. When other people are around during dinnertime, we don't change our IN rhythm; we just widen the circle. Whoever is here gets to listen and share! Thus we get to hear what's going on in our friends' lives, and even in the lives of our kids' friends.

We have found that dinnertime also works well for **OUT**. Thursday is earmarked as a day to invite potential People of Peace or families we are getting to know to dinner. If Thursday doesn't work, sometimes we've invited couples to join us for dinner on date night. Recently, Jody and I went out and got some wings with a couple we have been getting to know.

Though we try to be intentional with our OUT focus, these Thursday dinners don't happen every week. Sometimes it's just not feasible for us, or the people we're inviting.

It's also not always feasible to have all these extra people over for our IN dinners. Sometimes our family just needs family time. We usually reserve Friday evenings for just our family. Sometimes we lovingly tell people it's time to leave so we can have a quiet evening together or to make sure our little one gets to bed early. It is certainly okay to do that, and often it is essential.

God has made us stewards of our selves and our families. If our engine is running hot, it is our responsibility as adults to pull the car over and give it a rest. In our zeal to open our lives to others, we don't want to live boundary-less lives. We need to trust the Holy Spirit to lead us, step out and try some things, and adjust as necessary. Introverts need not panic. There is balance in all of this, and there is no one-size-fits-all formula. We each need to decide which parts of our lives we can healthily open up to others.

What would it look like for you to be more intentional with your meals? What if you chose between one and five meals a week to focus UP, IN or OUT, either as an individual or family? My guess is, whether you are married or single, whether you have multiple young kids or are empty nesters, whether you live in a mansion or a one-bedroom apartment, if you use your meals more intentionally, you will experience new growth and kingdom breakthrough—without adding any additional commitments to your schedule.

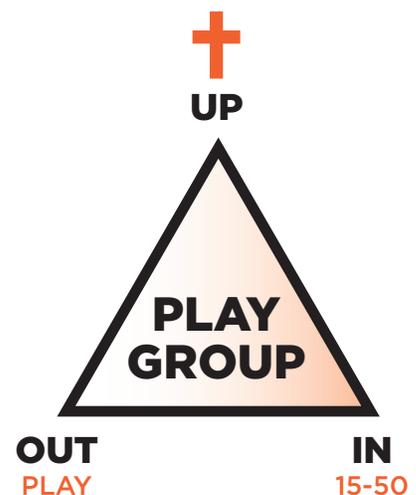
INVITING PEOPLE IN

At a recent PLAY Group Launch Training, Jana shared her hesitations with starting a PLAY Group.

A PLAY Group is a Christ-centered community of about 15-50 people (including children) joining God in His work by putting their lives into PLAY together. It's essentially an extended family of Christ followers committed to living UP, IN and OUT together.

SouthBrook has multiple PLAY Groups with different missions. One reaches women in prison; another reaches young adults; another young families. There are others. They are communities on mission with God. Some of you have heard them called "missional communities."

Jana, who is currently part of a huddle and growing as a disciple, has great vision to help children in crisis and was encouraged to consider starting a PLAY Group. But she became concerned about the drain on her schedule, trying to organize all these UP, IN and OUT events "required" to function as a PLAY Group. How would she find that kind of margin along with everything else going on? How could she lead a PLAY Group? AND start a business? AND somehow build Christ-centered values into her kids? AND keep her marriage healthy? AND have friends?



I could see what she meant; that sounded overwhelming. It also sounded like she was envisioning a very high-maintenance PLAY Group.

I began sharing with her what we do for our PLAY Group. Since Jana is already practicing her well-defined OUT, I mainly shared with her how we do UP and IN. For UP and IN, we do dinner together twice a month on Sunday evenings, usually from 6:00-8:00. We invite our friends, family, and People of Peace, and so do the others in our group. Everyone brings a low-maintenance dinner—nothing fancy, just whatever they were going to eat that night anyway, plus a little extra to share. Some people order pizza. We throw all our food on the table, someone prays, and then everyone helps themselves to the food.

The first 45 minutes to an hour is devoted to eating dinner, playing, and hanging out. Adults grab food and sit together in the living room, on the deck, or out by the fire pit. Stories are shared. Fellas like to throw Frisbees or congregate around the grill if someone brought meat. Kids wolf down their food and head to the backyard to play. Trampoline games are played. Soccer balls are kicked. Little kids play in the sandbox, or on the swing set. Most evenings, the older kids and some of the adults will play a rousing game of Ultimate Frisbee or soccer in the side yard. If it's raining, everyone congregates inside. Little kids play cars and dress up. Older kids make goofy movies with their screen devices and Legos. It's great, organic IN time.

During the second hour, we all gather together for “big family” time for about 20 minutes in the living room or around the fire pit. What do we do during this time? *The same things we do during our UP and IN times as a family.* We'll ask people to share highs and lows, or something they're thankful for. We celebrate birthdays and milestones, like finishing the school year. We'll ask for volunteers to share testimonies of where they've seen God at work. Sometimes we'll read a story out of the Scriptures, and ask the kids to act it out; then we'll ask what the story shows us about who God is or who we are. Most nights, I take a few minutes (not more than that!) to reference a discipleship tool. They work for kids, too. Recently, we've been talking about the Person of Peace, so the other night we asked every person, kids included, to identify between one and three People of Peace in their lives. We don't cram *all* of these ideas into the same night; we just do one or two.

For the last 40 minutes or so, the adults and older kids split off from one another so that kids can process as kids and adults as adults. Here, we explore how the gospel reaches us in everyday life. Scripture and life are discussed. People receive prayer. Action steps are decided. There is laughter, and there are tears. Sometimes we'll ask, “Who is sick, anxious, or hurting?” They share, and we pray for them. On the evening mentioned above, the older kids shared who their People of Peace were with one another, then prayed out loud as a group that they would come to know Jesus. The next dinner, they talked about how they could make space for those People of Peace in their lives, and each left with a practical step to do just that. Adults did the same.

Around 8:00, everyone helps clean up. Someone takes out the trash. Someone wipes down the table. Toys are picked up. Everyone pitches in. Many people linger. Some of the best conversations happen long after 8:00 in front of the fire over S'mores. If there is a Cleveland Cavaliers game or a World Cup game on, people may stick around to watch.

I didn't go into as much detail with Jana as I did here, but she got the idea—and I watched her face change from registering stress, to relief, to longing. "That's what we need!" she said. "That's just life!" And I agree. It's just doing life together. Our PLAY Group dinner is meant to be *lightweight, and low maintenance*. And it's not adding much, if anything, to our family's schedule; if nobody showed up but our family, we'd be doing these things anyway. All we're doing is saying, "Hey, YOU all need to eat and grow in Christ; WE need to eat and grow in Christ. What if we all just do it together?" We are, after all, family. It's our collective identity in Christ.

For many of us, when we think of starting something like a PLAY Group, we think of an event we add to our schedules that we need to manage and run. And truthfully, we can do it that way. Often, this is how "above ground" expressions of church happen, by necessity. A room needs to be scheduled, services are meticulously planned, the event is executed, and after the event we go home. We can start a PLAY Group in a similar way. We find a night we're not doing anything, choose how we will execute UP/IN/OUT throughout the month, send out the invite, host the event, at our house or out somewhere, and when it's over we go back to normal life. This route means adding an event to our lives.

There's another way to do it, too. We can start living healthy UP, IN and OUT rhythms, and then *just invite people to join us*. The event flows *from* our life. If no one else shows up, we're doing it anyway. We've already determined it's a healthy life rhythm, something Jesus would do if He were us. We make some adjustments because there are more people, like setting out more chairs, and maybe giving a bit more thought to what we'll do—but other than that we're not adding much to our schedules. We're just more intentional with what we're already doing.

In fact, that's what discipling others is really all about, isn't it? We start by growing as disciples ourselves. A disciple is someone who knows Jesus, and who learns to be and do like Him. So we utilize the events of our lives—big and small, organized and organic—to imitate Jesus. Thus, we build lives worth imitating. Then we invite people to walk alongside us, and we say, "I don't have this all figured out, but I'm learning. Feel free to imitate the things in my life that are starting to look like Jesus' life, and forget the rest. And I know that imitation will go both ways."

How will you grow in UP, IN and OUT? What organized events can you opt into or start? What everyday organic occurrences can you re-task to make more purposeful? Where can you invite people to join you?

Growing UP, IN and OUT will mean growing in the two greatest commandments: To love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves—just like Jesus.

