

LIVING AS AN APPRENTICE OF JESUS

ST. ALBERT ALLIANCE CHURCH
Core Practices

The bottom of the page features three horizontal stripes of equal height. From top to bottom, the colors are teal, yellow, and red. Each stripe is separated from the one below it by a thin white line.

ap·pren·tice

noun, often attributive \ə-'pren-təs\

¹one who is learning a trade, art or calling by *practical experience* under a skilled worker

“Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be.”

–Jesus

John 12:26



ALL ABOUT APPRENTICESHIP

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

Matthew 9:9

Jesus' invitation, "follow me," is being issued to each and every one of us. The invitation is to become a disciple of Jesus. The word *disciple* means the same thing as the word *apprentice* (a much more common word in our culture). Both words imply the same type of relationship: one in which an individual is trained through working and living alongside a master.

At St. Albert Alliance Church, we are all about becoming a loving community of Jesus' apprentices through:

- **Discovering God**
- **Connecting with Others**
- **Serving Neighbours & Nations**

Now this all sounds nice, but without a practical outworking, this statement is no better than a fleeting aspiration. So it begs the question: **what does this apprenticeship look like?**

Here at St. Albert Alliance Church, we take seriously the *practical experience* of being an apprentice of Jesus. We want to be a community of people who live like Jesus, engaging in a lifestyle that reflects his day-to-day priorities.

WHAT WERE THE LIFESTYLE PRACTICES OF JESUS?

As we read the story of Jesus, we see the ultimate example of a life that is centred on discovering God, connecting meaningfully with others, and serving those around him. Moreover, we see four practices that Jesus participates in time and time again:

Engaging

within a group of three

[Luke 9:28; Mark 14:33]

Connecting

in a group of twelve

[Luke 6:13; Matthew 26:20; Mark 10:32]

Sharing

meals with those who were spiritually disoriented and socially outcast

[Luke 19:1-9; Matthew 9:10]

Adopting

needs that were around him

[Luke 4:17-21; Mark 10:45; John 3:16; Matthew 14:14]

At St. Albert Alliance Church, we think that these same practices should be normal for all apprentices of Jesus. As we are all unique, these practices will likewise be lived out in different ways – there is no “one size fits all.” Fundamentally, it comes down to reflecting Christ’s lifestyle values in the context of our own individual lives. As we do so, we deliberately put ourselves in the pathway of the Holy Spirit so he can transform our lives.

With this in mind, we have articulated four core practices that we think should be a normal part of the lifestyle of an apprentice of Jesus. There’s nothing particularly extraordinary about these core practices — they are not quick-fixes, nor is this an exhaustive list by any means. They are simply tangible ways to live out this apprenticeship walk with Jesus. At St. Albert Alliance Church, we believe that as we choose to live out these core practices, we will be well-positioned to participate deeply in the mission of Jesus and see his life lived through us in amazing ways.

DISCOV

DISCOVERING GOD

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well.”

John 14:6-7

It all starts here. There are many good reasons for connecting in a local church, but most important is finding a place where you can grow to know God *personally, through Jesus Christ*. At St. Albert Alliance Church, we desire to discover God in an ever-widening way (Colossians 1:10), all the while experiencing the life transformation that comes through knowing him and walking with him from day to day. Scripture tells us that it was through Jesus that God made himself most vividly known (Colossians 1:15), and we are confident that a life lived as an apprentice of Jesus is a life in which God is richly discovered.

CORE PRACTICE #1: ENGAGE WITH A DISCOVER PARTNER

Jesus consistently took time to meet with a group of three, engaging in spiritual dialogue and prayer. We think this should be the norm in our lives as well. A great way to live this out is to engage with a Discover Partner — a person (or two) with whom you meet on a weekly basis; committing together to:

1. Read whole books of the Bible
2. Dialogue on what you are learning about Jesus and how you are (or aren't) responding to him from day to day
3. Pray for spiritually disoriented people in your spheres of relationship

These weekly meetings aren't meant to be super formal or complicated. They could be as simple as sitting down at a coffee shop or in a living room, reflecting together on the section of scripture that you read and asking questions like:

How have you experienced God in your life this week?

What do you think Jesus is wanting to teach you?

Praying for spiritually disoriented people in our lives is an incredible way to discover God, and Discover Partners provide an ideal environment to do so. Prayers can be as simple as:

"Lord, I pray that you will draw [person's name] to yourself." (based on John 6:44)

"I ask that you would give me the opportunity, the courage, and the right words to share your truth with [person's name]." (based on Colossians 4:3-6)

For more information on Discover Partners, go to:
www.staalliance.org/discoverpartners

CONNIE

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

*When evening came, Jesus
was reclining at the table with
the Twelve.*

Matthew 26:20

No one wants to do life alone, and for good reason — God created us to do life together! We believe that life is better together and that the greatest blessings in life come through meaningful relationships. Each person's uniqueness brings value to the church family, and we want to provide opportunities for meaningful connection with one another.

CORE PRACTICE #2: CONNECT WITH A SMALL GROUP

Jesus' most meaningful friendships were formed in the context of a group of 12. This approximate size of group is a perfect environment for developing real relationships – relationships that go deeper than simply talking about the local sports team or the weather.

One of the best ways to connect meaningfully at St. Albert Alliance Church is to join a Small Group for a semester. Small Groups meet around a variety of interests, life-stages, and pursuits – each one providing a unique environment for people to grow together.

You can sign up for a Small Group at St. Albert Alliance Church three times a year: in January, May, and September. Groups usually last for 6-10 weeks and meet in homes or other places around our community.

For more information about Small Groups, go to:
www.staalliance.org/smallgroups

SERVE

SERVING NEIGHBOURS AND NATIONS

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

–Jesus

Matthew 22:37-39

A self-centered life always leaves us wanting.

At St. Albert Alliance Church, we are seeking to live outward-focused lives, giving ourselves to something bigger than ourselves. As an overflow of the work Jesus has done in us, one of our greatest joys is partnering with others to selflessly serve the world around us – both neighbours and nations.

*“As you sent me into the world,
I have sent them into the world.”*

–Jesus

John 17:18

CORE PRACTICE #3: SHARE A MEAL

While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.

Mark 2:15

A heart to serve our neighbours begins with intentional engagement in the places where we live, work, and play – with the people that we rub shoulders with from day to day. Sharing food and drink is the most universal way to meaningfully engage others. Jesus certainly lived by this principle. The story of his life is riddled with meals shared with others – many of whom were spiritually disoriented and socially outcast.

While we all experience time pressures and find it challenging to make time to spend with others, we always seem to find time to eat every day (or at least to have a coffee). Sharing a meal with someone is a great way to invest in relationship and it opens up doors to talk about things that matter.

For more information about Sharing a Meal, go to:
www.staalliance.org/shareameal

CORE PRACTICE #4: ADOPT A WORLD NEED

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

–Jesus

Matthew 25:37-40

If we are not careful, we can become preoccupied with things that only concern us in the here and now, things we can readily see and touch. An apprentice of Jesus cannot afford to live with an out-of-sight, out-of-mind perspective.

Jesus is, again, our ultimate example. He gave up his rightful place, seated on a majestic throne with all of heaven's angels worshiping at his feet, so that he could engage humanity at its deepest point of need. Jesus went so far, in fact, as to take the deepest need of humanity upon himself, that he might meet it in the most profound way – through giving his life.

It should be normal for an apprentice of Jesus to find a way to engage in a world need of some kind - a way that extends beyond simply giving mental ascent to the plight of the nations. We use the phrase "adopt a world need" because it implies relationship *and* ownership, rooted in the understanding that the world and all of its people are ours to serve – both practically and spiritually.

What does it look like for you to adopt a world need? It is up to you, according to the unique way that you are wired.

Fundamentally, it comes down to:

- **Investing your time** to research and advocate
- **Releasing your money** to empower and bring relief
- **Applying your gifts and interests** to the places of greatest impact
- **Offering your prayers to Jesus** for his mercy to be poured out

For more information about Adopting a World Need, go to:

www.staalliance.org/adoptaworldneed

INQUIRING OF JESUS UNDERScores IT ALL

At the foundation of these core practices, there must be a desire to grow in relationship with Jesus. This desire is best evidenced by an unwavering resolve to inquire of Jesus in everything. It is the polar opposite of striving in our own strength to become *self-made* men and women.

Any apprentice worth their salt is diligent to ask questions, not taking anything for granted, and not assuming they know best. Learning to inquire of Jesus in everything is of paramount importance and informs the outworking of all the practices an apprentice engages in.

For additional resources on how to inquire of Jesus as a lifestyle practice, go to:
www.staalliance.org/inquiringofjesus

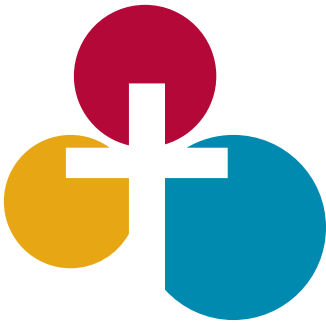
WHAT IF...

...an entire community of people, seeking to become wholehearted apprentices of Jesus, lived this way? What if it was normal to take our lead from Jesus, engaging in these kinds of practices, putting ourselves in the pathway of the Holy Spirit and allowing Jesus to live his life through us?

At St. Albert Alliance Church, we believe Jesus is inviting us to find out.

*“This is to my Father’s glory,
that you bear much fruit,
showing yourselves to be
my disciples.”*

–Jesus
John 15:8



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