



PORT
CHURCH

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN

WELCOME

Welcome to the First Port Booklet!

Sometimes when you're new to a church it can take weeks, months and even years to feel like you understand what makes a church tick. These meetings are designed to speed up that process.

Each week is structured around three broad activities:

First, we **get to know you** (you can share as much or a little as you feel comfortable) Second, we **get to know God** together by reading through the book of Colossians and finally, we will **get to know Port** - what makes us tick and the ways you can get involved. There will be space for questions/comments at the end of every session.

Ideally, we'd catch up for an hour or so for 5 weeks over a coffee or beer. Alternatively, we'd catch up once for a couple of hours maybe on a walk/day trip somewhere (to make the most of this you should work through the material prior to the catch up)

There are five sessions covering the following topics, feel free to flick through now to get a sense of where it's going.

1. We love Jesus
2. We love the lost
3. We love each other
4. We love to grow
5. Partnering with us

With love in Christ,

Mike Turner and Andy Russell

Port Church Pastors

SESSION 1: WE LOVE JESUS

✝ GET TO KNOW YOU

Can you share a bit about your story – who or what has shaped you into the person you are today?

✝ GET TO KNOW GOD

➤ READ COLOSSIANS 1:1-23

1. Why does Paul thank God for the Colossians (v.3-5)?
2. What does Paul pray for the Colossians (vv.9-12)?
3. What has God done for us (vv.13-14)?
4. Who is Jesus (vv.15-20)?
5. What is God's goal for all things (v.20)?
6. How has his goal already impacted the Colossians (v.21-23)?

➤ THINK IT THROUGH

Imagine a church that loves Jesus and is the answer to Paul's prayers. What excites you about belonging to a church like that?

✝ GET TO KNOW PORT

We are convinced that life is all about Jesus. Christians don't begin with rules or religion—we begin and continue in Jesus Christ.

That we are loved in Jesus is the most important thing about us, and it motivates everything we do.

Jesus stepped into our world, took on our weakness, and gave himself for us. At the cross, we see the depth of God's love: he bears our sin, takes our judgment, and secures our place in the kingdom of the Son he loves. In his resurrection, we see his victory: sin is defeated, death dies, and new life begins. He is Lord of all and in Him all things hold together.

To love Jesus is not only to sense that he is great and good, it is to trust His word and rely upon him in our lives. Jesus taught his disciples: "If you love me, keep my commands. And he promised that he would be with you always to the very end of the age" We don't simply admire him from afar, we learn from him and obey him as his Spirit opens the scriptures to us each day.

We listen to his words because we trust his voice.

We turn from sin because we want to follow him.

We love others because he has loved us.

We love Jesus is the foundation and the motivation for the other loves. Peter says: "Though you have not seen him, you love him... and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy." And one day, we will see him face to face and we will know and love him, even as we are known and loved by him. This will be the sweetness of the new creation, our greatest pleasure, our most noble task for all eternity, and it begins now.

➤ QUESTIONS / COMMENTS



SESSION 2: WE LOVE THE LOST

‡ GET TO KNOW YOU

- What does an average week look like for you? How do you spend your time?

‡ GET TO KNOW GOD

➤ READ COLOSSIANS 1:3-8, 1:24-2:7

1. How does Paul describe the gospel (1:5-6)?
2. How does Paul describe his ministry in 1:28-29?
 - a The Content
 - b The Method
 - c The Means
 - d The Goal
3. What (who) is the mystery?
4. What does that mean for the Christian life? (2:6-7)

➤ THINK IT THROUGH

Imagine a church that is gripped by Christ and His gospel. What excites you about a community like that?

➤ PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING

✝ GET TO KNOW PORT

In Colossians 1-2 Paul highlights the dynamic power of the gospel as it bears fruit around the world and in the lives of the Colossian church.

At Port Church, Jesus has gripped us, rules us and gives us hope. We are so glad that we get to play a part in God's marvelous work of saving people for Jesus!

We have a team dedicated to reaching the lost with the gospel. If you'd like to find out more about this team or begin a conversation about joining it, please feel free to talk to me.

Some things that you could immediately get involved in are:

- **Joining a team or community group** and connecting those contacts into church life. We host regular church BBQs to help that happen and church is always a good first point of contact.
- **Mobile Community Pantry** meets fortnightly in the Port Church carpark on Mondays at 1.30pm during school term time. This service is run by Anglicare and provides food staples to customers at a discount. We invite people to stick around for chat and a cuppa.
- **Evangelistic Courses** are the main way that we seek to communicate the gospel for unbelievers. We run a two 5 week courses a year and follow up these courses with bible reading groups specifically designed for people who are looking into life with Jesus. You could provide for food, decorations, hosting, advertising etc. for these events.
- Finally, and most importantly, we are convinced that **loving Jesus leads to loving the lost**. We encourage everyone to grow in their knowledge of God love for them in Jesus so that the overflows in their everyday lives.

We don't want to twist your arm into inviting people to things or sharing the gospel. Christians who are filled with the love of Jesus see unbelievers for what they are – lost sinners in need of a shepherd. Healthy Christians who know they are loved, love people enough to open their mouths, their homes, their hearts, and yes, even their bibles, for the sake of Jesus.

➤ **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**



SESSION 3: WE LOVE EACH OTHER

✝ GET TO KNOW YOU

- What do you appreciate most about a church? a friend? a pastor?
- Have you heard of the five love languages? Which one are you?

✝ GET TO KNOW GOD

➤ READ COLOSSIANS 3:1-17

1. How and why does Paul encourage Christians to live differently to how they “once walked” (vv.1-4)?

2. Fill in the table

Put off	Put on

3. How are Christians described? What difference does that make? (v.12-14)
4. How does the message of Christ dwell in churches? (v.

➤ THINK IT THROUGH

Imagine a church that sets their hearts on Christ and his love and treats each other this way. What excites you about belonging to church like that?

➤ PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING

✝ GET TO KNOW PORT

Last time we thought about how the gospel is making progress all around the world.

This time we are thinking about the kind of community the gospel creates. Fundamentally, the Christian community is one of love.

Christ has not brought us together to squabble or remain in factions, but to be members of one another, “knit together in love” (Col 2:2). Our unity in Christ trumps all other divisions - e.g., racial, socioeconomic etc. Therefore, the bible demands that we work hard to maintain our unity by showing kindness, humility, and love towards one another (Col 3:12-15).

Church is not a performance designed to give us our spiritual fix. It's the body of Christ serving each other and teaching one another in love (Col 3:16).

Here are some ways that we could love our church family today:

- **Showing up regularly** and organising our time so that church is a priority is an important way to love our church. If our lives revolve around Jesus, they will revolve around the church because the church is the body of Christ for whom he died.
- **Serving** at Port Church is a great way to love people at church and to get to know people better. You could speak to me about joining one of our teams and/or roster. These include band, kids, and lost teams, and the Sunday gathering and other events rosters.
- **Getting Safe Ministry Trained** is not required unless you are serving within Youth and Kids programs or on parish council. However, we strongly encourage everyone to get it done. Our church is full of kids, and we think it's important for everyone to fully equipped to engage in church life safely.
- **Get together throughout the week** to hang out socially and serve the community. Hospitality is a wonderful thing and there are quite a few chat groups to join as you get embedded in the community. Join them and get involved.

➤ **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**



SESSION 4: LOVE TO GROW

✝ GET TO KNOW YOU

What was a time when you experienced rapid growth/character development? What was it about that time that made it possible?

✝ GET TO KNOW GOD

➤ READ COLOSSIANS 2:6-3:4, 4:12

1. How do Christians grow? (v.6-7ff) What is the logic of these verses?
2. How does Paul describe the dangers Christians face? (v.4, 8)
3. What does Paul mean by the “in him” “with him” language in v.10-13?
4. What’s the “Therefore” there for in v.16? Try to sum up the essence of Paul’s argument.
5. Paul warns the Colossians about those who will “pass judgment on” their spiritual experience - as if being “in Christ” is not enough - what kinds of things does he mention?
6. How does Paul sum up the value of these alternative spiritualities’?

➤ THINK IT THROUGH

Where are you in your Christian walk? Would you say you are growing, stagnant, or going backwards?

✝ GET TO KNOW PORT

Broadly speaking, Christians may refer to four sources of knowledge:

- 1) **The Bible:** where God tells us about himself and the way of salvation in Christ. This is where hear the spirit inspired word of Christ.
- 2) **Reason:** we can work things out using deduction and logic.
- 3) **Institutions:** we can learn from other people (past and present) about what they know.
- 4) **Experience:** we can learn from our own experiences of things.

All these sources of knowledge are good. In fact, they rely on each other to make sense. Ultimately, none of these sources of knowledge should contradict each other, but they often do. Human reason, human institutions, and human experiences (or at least how we interpret them) can be flawed and broken, and often are. Our family might tell us one thing, our school might tell us another, and our brain might tell us that they're both wrong.

The most important question to ask yourself in these kinds of situations is, which is your highest authority? Which source of knowledge will you trust above all the others?

At Port Church our aim is to put the bible first. Everything else is held up to the bible for scrutiny. This places God at the centre because He rules us by his Word, there is no Jesus apart from what God has revealed about himself in His Word,

➤ THINK IT THROUGH

Other than the Bible, what do you tend to rely on when making decisions or forming opinions?

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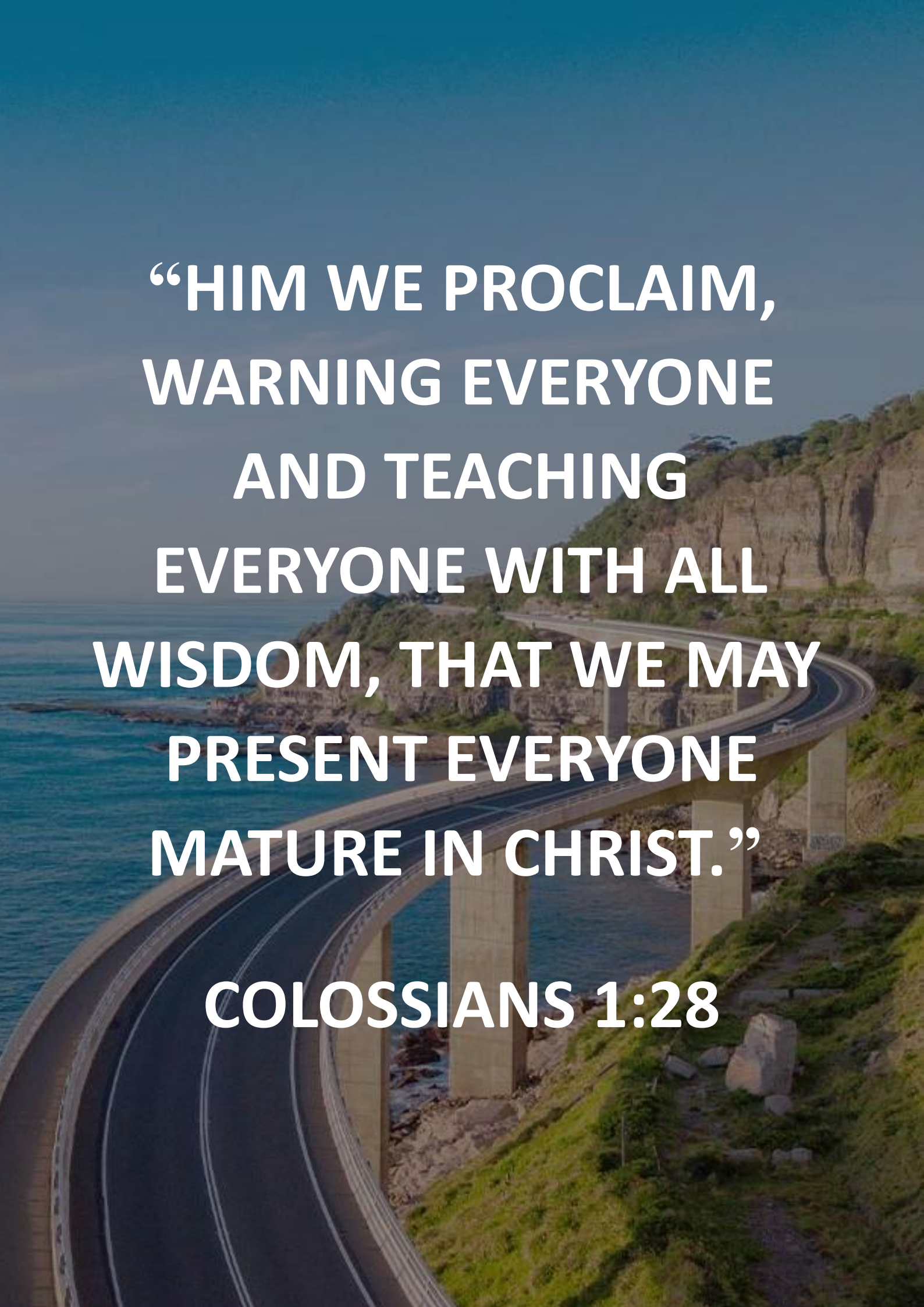
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We are convinced that people grow in community. **Growth groups** get together to share life, a meal, read the bible, pray, and grow up together in love. We don't study the bible for its own sake, there's no test at the end of term and we don't hand out stickers for right answers. We read to grow both in our understanding of God, and in our obedience to His good will.

Additionally, reading the bible **one on one** with a mate is a great way to grow. Two people can be more honest about our sin, wrestle with our doubts, and come up with specific ways to overcome the challenges we face.

If you'd like to join a group or a one to one, please let me know.

➤ **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

A scenic view of a winding coastal highway on a cliffside overlooking the ocean. The road is a multi-lane concrete bridge with a guardrail, curving along the edge of a steep, grassy cliff. The ocean is visible to the left, and the sky is a clear, deep blue. The text is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

**“HIM WE PROCLAIM,
WARNING EVERYONE
AND TEACHING
EVERYONE WITH ALL
WISDOM, THAT WE MAY
PRESENT EVERYONE
MATURE IN CHRIST.”**

COLOSSIANS 1:28

SESSION 5: PARTNERSHIP

✝ GET TO KNOW YOU

- Do you have any hobbies? Special talents?

✝ GET TO KNOW GOD

➤ READ COLOSSIANS 4:2-18

1. How does Paul ask the Colossians to partner in his Work?
2. What are the ways that the various people named here partner with Paul already?
3. What unites the churches mentioned and what are the ways these churches partner with one another?
4. How well does Epaphras' prayers sum up the overall concern of the letter? (See also Colossians 1:28)

➤ THINK IT THROUGH

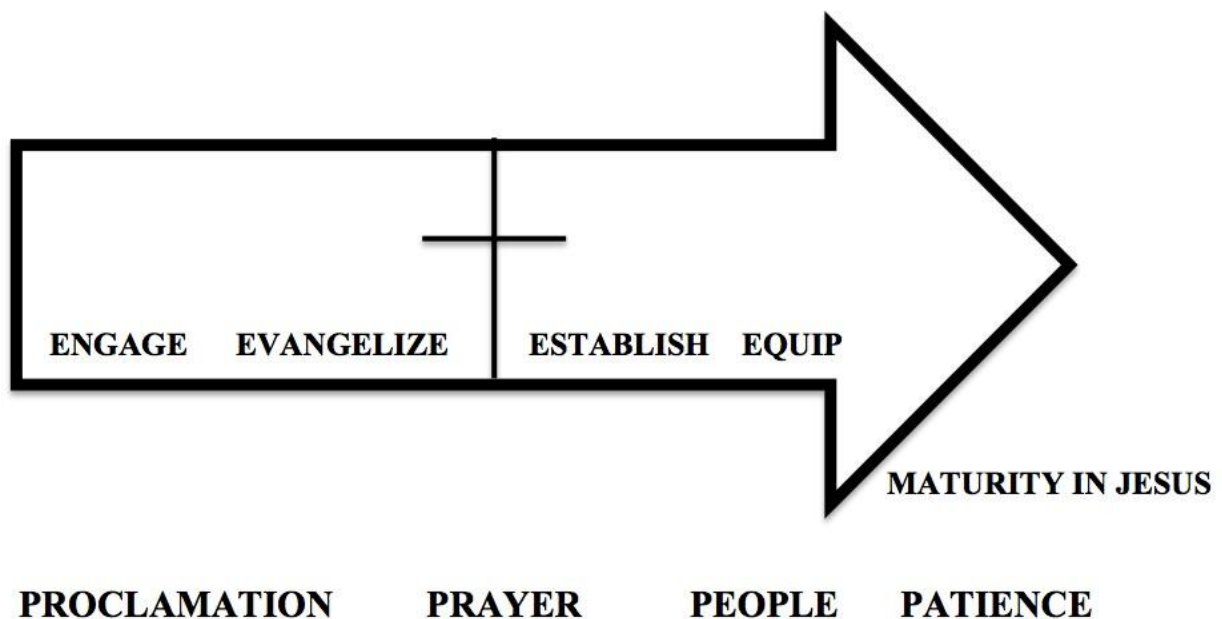
1. Have you seen churches partner with each other effectively?
2. Do you prayerfully and financially support gospel ministry in Australia and abroad?
3. How do you plan to partner with this church?

➤ PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING

✝ GET TO KNOW PORT

> MOVING TO THE RIGHT

This diagram sums up the goal of our church and the means of achieving the goal. The arrow indicates the desired direction of travel, the cross indicates the point of conversion, and maturity in Jesus is the end goal. The four e's represent where people are at along the way, and the four p's are the ways God moves people to the right.



Q: Where would you place yourself on the diagram right now?

> PARTNERING IN PRAYER

We'd love for you to commit to praying for our church.

- Prayer points are shared on Facebook and in messenger groups regularly.
- When people share something with you, why not pray with them on the spot.
- An all-in prayer meeting is held on the 1st Saturday of each month.

> PARTNERING FINANCIALLY

In the Old Testament, God's people were required to tithe. The New Testament doesn't give a figure but encourages radical generosity.

Jesus is the ultimate example. He gave up the riches of heaven (and his very life) to make us rich. Christians have been given more than what anyone could imagine in Christ and generosity is the overflow of a heart filled with Christ.

There are lots of examples of generous churches but I've always been struck by the Philippians who "begged for the opportunity to give" even as they lived in poverty. In Colossians 4, Archippus is responsible for collecting funds for the Jerusalem church which is something that all the churches took part in.

See 'Thesaurus Consulting' for more information on how to steward your finances according to Christian priorities. We strongly encourage you to give generously to our church, CMS, Anglican Aid, and other Christian organizations that further the gospels impact around the world.

> QUESTIONS/COMMENTS



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