

MULTIPLY

+

MAGNIFY

LIFE GROUP BOOK

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MULTIPLY + MAGNIFY

Hi Church,

Happy New Year. I hope you are excited and full of faith for all that God will do among us in 2024. There are two words that keep resonating in my heart as I pray for Gateway in 2024: MULTIPLY & MAGNIFY.

Let's start with some math. From the very beginning, God trusted the power of multiplication in creation. He created every living thing to multiply and the very first command given to humankind in the Bible is to "go forth and multiply". Without multiplication the world would stay empty and a little lonely.

As we move to the New Testament, we see that the only miracle recorded in all four gospels, other than the resurrection of Jesus, is a miracle of multiplication. Jesus took five loaves and two fish and multiplied them to feed more than 5000 hungry people. Jesus is a miraculous multiplier, and He trusted the future of His ministry and message to the power of multiplication. On the side of a hill, He commissioned 11 ordinary people to multiply what He had invested in them over 3 years.

The first command in the Bible was to multiply. Jesus' first miracle was to multiply. Jesus' last command was to multiply, and the early church witnessed the power of multiplication from day one. When ordinary believers were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, they shared the good news of Jesus and 3000 people were saved in one single day. I believe that Jesus is calling us at Gateway to multiply what He has entrusted to us, so that more people will know His saving grace.

The other word God has for Gateway in 2024 is MAGNIFY. There are two kinds of magnifying: microscope magnifying and telescope magnifying. One makes a small thing look bigger than it is and the other makes big thing begin to look as big as it really is. When David invites us to: “O come magnify the Lord with me”, he does not mean, let us make a small God look bigger than He is, but to make a big God begin to look as big as He really is.

However big you think that God is right now, He is bigger than you think in your life, in His Church and in our nation. Please mark out 21 Days of Prayer in your diary (Monday 26 February – Sunday 17 March) as we come together to magnify the Lord and believe for miraculous breakthrough. As we magnify the Lord together, I believe He will mature us in our faith and use us to multiply His message, His ministry and His miracles throughout the world. It is a privilege to serve Jesus alongside all of you again in 2024.

God bless,

Jason Elsmore



VISION SUNDAY

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19–20

Read Jason’s letter to the church

Ask: Do you have a word for the year? Why did you choose that word and what impact are you hoping it will have in your life this year? Share with the group.

Ask: What are Gateway’s words of the year? What makes you excited about this focus for our church?

Read Matthew 28:16–17

Ask: What did the disciples do when they met with Jesus? Discuss the relationship between doubt and worship. Is it possible to do both? When are you more likely to doubt? When are you more likely to worship? What difference does it make when you are a part of a Christian community?

Read Matthew 28:18–20

Ask: What is the importance of the truth in verse 18? How does this impact what Jesus says in verses 19 and 20?

Ask: What did Jesus ask his disciples to do? With the advantage of hindsight, discuss how their obedience has impacted the world over the past 2000 years.

Ask: This command is still relevant to those of us who are disciples of Jesus today. How is it easier and harder for us to be obedient to Jesus' command? What practical things can we do to fulfil Jesus' command?

Share: Describe the power of Jesus's promise at the end of verse 20. How does this truth change the way you approach life? How does this truth affect the way you share your faith with others?

Read Acts 1:1–9

Ask: Who wrote the book of Acts? Who was written to? Why was it written? (See also Luke 1:1–4)

Ask: Why did Jesus ask the disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait? What did he promise them?

Ask: How have you experienced the power of the Holy Spirit at work in your own life? How do you know the difference between living in your own strength and living in the power of the Holy Spirit? What does the Holy Spirit give you power to do? How can you live in that power more fully?

Pray

Our mission statement at Gateway is: "Leading people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus." How do you see the church fulfilling its mission this year? How can you contribute?

Take time to pray for one another and the church as we begin the new year.

Action

Ask God how you can contribute to the church's mission in 2024.

MULTIPLY *the ministry of* JESUS

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

Matthew 25:21

Connect: If you were to give someone on Team Gateway a ‘Volunteer of the Month’ award, who would you give it to and why? What inspires you about this person and their service to the Kingdom of God?

Read Matthew 25:30

Ask: Who is the ‘master’ in this parable? Who are the servants?

Share: Describe the character attributes of the servants in the parable. How were they different to each other? How were they the same?

Share: Describe the character of the master. What did the master expect from his servants? Put yourself in the shoes of each of the servants. How would you feel about the master’s response on his return?

Ask: What does this parable teach us about the character of God? What does it teach us about what God expects of us?

Ask: In modern times, what would the life of each of the servants look like? What would they be doing?

Ask: Which of the servants do you identify with most? How can you become more like the first servant? Give practical examples.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4–11

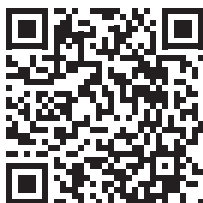
Ask: What does this passage teach us about God? What does this passage teach us about one another? What are the dangers of misunderstanding the Bible's teaching about spiritual gifts?

Ask: What gifts has God entrusted to you? What gifts do you recognise in others in your group? Feel free to include gifts that are not specifically mentioned in the passage.

Ask: How are you using your gifts to multiply the ministry of God? What barriers are you facing that make using your gifts difficult? Discuss practical ways to overcome these barriers together.

Pray

Pray that God will help you multiply the gifts He has entrusted to you. Pray for opportunities to use your gifts to multiply the ministry of Jesus in our church and around the world.



THIS WEEK

Action: Find your place to serve in 2024 on Team Gateway

MULTIPLY *the message of* JESUS

“Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”

Mark 4:8

Connect: Have you ever grown your own food? What did you grow? Was it successful? Share your experience.

Read Mark 4:1–8, 13–20

Discuss: Explain this parable. Who is the sower? What does the seed represent? What does the soil represent?

Discuss: Describe each type of soil and the life of the person each represents. Do you recognise any of these characteristics in your own life?

Ask: What inhibitors to fruitfulness are mentioned? What aspects of our modern lives can stunt our spiritual growth and stop us from being fruitful?

Ask: What does this parable teach us about the condition of the human heart? What does it teach us about the nature of evangelism?

Read Matthew 9:9–13

Ask: What does this passage teach us about God’s heart? What does it teach us about sinners? What does it reveal about the attitudes of religious people?

Discuss: The Israelites were required to pay taxes to the Romans, an enemy power who occupied their country at

the time of Jesus. The Romans recruited local Israelites to collect the tax. Many of them exploited their countrymen by collecting more than the required amount. As you can imagine, these tax collectors were hated among the people.

Ask: Why is it surprising that Jesus called Matthew to be his disciple? Put yourself in Matthew's shoes. What was attractive about Jesus' invitation?

Discuss: Matthew's friends were described as 'tax collectors and sinners.' In today's culture, who might this include? How can we cultivate relationships with people who do not yet know Jesus? What makes it difficult? Share practical ideas to overcome these obstacles.

Ask: What was the response of the religious leaders? Why were they upset? How is this similar or different to religious attitudes today? Do you recognise any of these attitudes in yourself? How can you overcome them?

Pray

Pray for God to give you a heart like Matthew's that loves people who do not yet know Jesus and shares the Good News with them. Pray for opportunities to open your home and show hospitality to those who are lonely and marginalised.



THIS WEEK

Action: Invite someone to do Alpha with you in 2024, in your campus or in your lounge room.

MULTIPLY *through maturity in* JESUS

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

Acts 2:42

Connect: Who are your closest friends? What do you love about them? What are some things you do together that you wouldn’t do alone?

Read Acts 2:42–47

Discuss: Describe what life was like for the members of the early church. What would it have been like to be a part of this church? What do we learn about Christian community from this passage? What aspects of their lives can we emulate today?

Discuss: What are the advantages and challenges of Christian community. What makes it difficult to live in close community? Discuss practical ways to overcome these challenges.

Read Colossians 1:28–2:4

Ask: What does it mean to be ‘fully mature in Christ’? What does the life of a mature Christian look like? Describe their attitudes and behaviours.

Ask: What are the ways Paul tells the church to grow in maturity in this passage? What are the blessings he mentions? What is the goal? What is the method? What do these things look like in the church today?

Ask: How does Christian community contribute to spiritual maturity? Why is it difficult to grow in maturity when you are isolated? How can you support and contribute to the spiritual growth of others in the community you are a part of? In what way can others in your group help you grow to maturity?

Pray

Pray for one another in your group so that you may become an Acts 2 community who loves, shares, and grows together in Christ.

THIS WEEK

Action: Who do you know who is outside of Christian community who may feel lonely or isolated? Make an effort this week to connect with them and invite them into a closer relationship.

MULTIPLY *the miracles of* JESUS

“How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.” When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.”

Mark 6:38

Connect: Describe a time when you had a problem you didn't know how to solve. What happened? How did you get through that time?

Read Mark 6:30–34

Ask: What happened just before this passage? (See verses 14–28.) How do you think Jesus and his disciples were feeling?

Ask: What was Jesus' plan for this day? What did Jesus end up doing? What does this teach us about God's heart? What does this passage teach us about the balance of our personal life and ministry?

Read Mark 6:35–43

Discuss: Describe the problem and solution from the perspective of the disciples. Describe the problem and solution from Jesus' perspective. What can we learn from this?

Discuss: Put yourself in the shoes of the disciples. How would you have responded to Jesus' request? How does this challenge your faith?

Ask: What insurmountable problem are you facing? What is the human solution to this problem? What would a miraculous solution look like?

Discuss: Imagine Jesus asking you, “How many loaves do you have?” Even if it is grossly inadequate, what resources do you have that you can offer to God?

Pray

Pray that God will grow your faith, and trust God for miraculous provision to multiply what you have.



THIS WEEK

Action: Join with others for 21 days of prayer. Commit to praying for a miraculous breakthrough.

MAGNIFY *Jesus in* PRAYER

“Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them... Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

Acts 4:24-30

Connect: Describe your prayer life. Do you use a prayer journal or some kind of system? Do you use any tools to help you pray?

Read Acts 4:1–22

Ask: What was the message Peter and John were sharing? Who were they telling? Why were they so passionate and bold? What was the response of the people?

Ask: Why were Peter and John in trouble with the authorities? What did the religious authorities notice about Peter and John? What can we learn from this?

Read Acts 4:23–31

Discuss: Describe how Peter and John responded to their run-in with the authorities. Summarise their prayer.

Discuss: Put yourself in Peter and John's shoes. What would your prayer requests have been? How does this differ from what we read here? What does this teach us about prayer? What does this teach us about our response to opposition to the Gospel?

Read Acts 3:1–10

Discuss: This passage tells us about the event that started this series of incidents. What does this teach us about the power of God? What does it teach us about the faith of the apostles? How does this story encourage you and challenge your faith?

Discuss: Have you ever experienced or prayed for miraculous healing? What happened? What are some of the things that make it hard for you to pray? How can we overcome them?

Pray

Pray for healing for those who are sick. Pray for God to increase your faith and boldness to pray for miracles, believing in God's power to heal.



THIS WEEK

Action: Continue or join in the 21 days of prayer and fasting. Commit to praying for ongoing healing for those you know who are sick.

MAGNIFY *Jesus in* WORSHIP

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

Luke 1:46-48 ESV

Connect: What is your favourite worship song? What do you love about it?

Read Luke 1:26–38

Ask: What does this passage teach us about Mary? What would her life have been like because of her obedience to God's call? What are some of the costs of following Jesus and living in obedience to Him?

Read Luke 1:46-55

Discuss: Mary wrote a song, borrowing words from the Psalms that she had memorised and sung as a young girl. What does this song reveal about Mary's character and her relationship with God? What can we learn from this?

Ask: What scriptures have you memorised? What impact do these verses have in your life? When do you recall them to mind?

Ask: Is worship part of your Monday-to-Saturday life? If so, what does that look like? How does the practice of worship impact your faith?

Discuss: Mary wrote this song during a time of upheaval and uncertainty in her life. How can magnifying God in worship give us peace and courage during difficult times? How can our worship be an encouragement to others?

Discuss: Mary's song is still sung today all around the world. How does the practice of worship contribute to making God's name known throughout the world? How does your personal worship make God known to those you live, work and laugh with?

Read 1 Peter 2:9

Ask: What does this passage teach us about who we are, who God is and why we magnify Him in worship?

Pray

Lift your voices in worship and magnify Almighty God together. Use your own words to sing or speak out praises, or borrow the words of scripture to express your worship to God.



THIS WEEK

Action: Attend the unified prayer night at church this week to finish the 21 days of prayer and magnify God together.

