**Introduction to Listening [originally through the loving-first cycle]**

Goal of discipleship through this lens: a way of being in relationship with your neighbor that welcomes and builds relationship with people who are uninterested in institutional church, but may be interested in exploring spirituality through a Jesus perspective.

**Listening**

• What do I know about my community?

• What do I need to unlearn about my context?

• To which group of people do I feel called?

• Who in my community is not connected to the church?

• How are they already gathering?

SO! Who do you need to be listening to? **What is God already up to that we might be able to come alongside?**

**Why are we doing this?**

1. We want to know what God is already up to in our community!

2. Mapping helps us look at our community and see what we might be missing.

3. You know your community best, because it’s where you work and learn and live and breathe! Involving even more folks (from outside the church) in this, could lead to even deeper understanding and a deeper understanding of your context (and the way that folks beyond your circles understand their community).

4. Such an exercise helps you to see everything you have! Your place and your networks are full of people and places through which the Holy Spirit moves and where God is present!

5. Jesus knew his context; he took 30 years to really understand where he was to serve...so should we!

Today we’re starting a process that you can continue literally as long as you want! We’re just going to dream together, but you could interview folks, you could put out a survey, go on community walks, etc. You could make a digital map later, but we’re going to be messy and brainstorm today.

à Map, in pairs, using the given instructions. (15 mins)

à Analyze data together (10 mins)

1. What is coming across in common ideas or themes?

-How often do things appear?

-What are assets of our community? What are some needs in our community?

-Who are notable people of peace?

2. What might God be saying to us about our community?

-Where are we well plugged in?

-Where might we pay more attention?

-What is lacking?

-Where are opportunities to build relationships?

3. What are we going to do about it?

-How might we deepen relationships in new spaces?

-What spaces are we already involved where we could explore adding a spiritual component?

-What is each person’s role?

Goal: Each person commits to a simple step forward. For example:

* “I will hang out at the burrito joint on this day, at this time, just to pray for and connect with people in this space”.
* “I like to run, so I’ll make a Facebook group / put up fliers around campus to invite people to run with me.”

Where are you already plugged in?

Don’t forget spaces where your group is already involved in outreach! Do you have a community meal? Could you invite folks to stay after to listen to some music, hear a story from scripture, just 15 minutes with no pressure? The meal will continue as normal whether people stay or not.

--> keep these maps! You can break down the lists even further and ask more specific questions in your planning and in your listening to the Spirit:

- What organizations are doing the most amount of good in our community? Why do they have such a great reputation for a specific group of people? Is there a way we could offer a spiritual component? Is there a way we can partner?

-Where in our community could we “fill the gap” in regard to lack of access to resources or meaningful relationships?

-What are three evidence of God’s kingdom breaking into our community? What are pain points? What are beautiful things?

Sources:
- Listening for Mission, Presenters: Shannon Kiser / Eliseo Mejia / Sarah Keasler (Sept 16, 23, 30 & Oct 7)

- How to Start a New Kind of Church, Luke Edwards

- 21st Century Christianity