

BROTHER-SISTER PROJECT

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

Matthew 12:46-50

BIG IDEA: *Multiple active familial connections lead to sustained personal growth.*

Church as Family.

A local church is a collection of individuals who take the worship of God seriously and live on mission for Christ day in and day out. To understand a collection of disciples as "family" we need only look to Jesus's own words (above). Jesus used familial language to describe his relationship to the friends and disciples with whom he shared mission. Following in Jesus' footsteps means that we too lean into this same familial language, hoping to live it out in our relationships with the Christian friends with whom we share life and mission.

Jesus calls us to this kind of meaningful familial connection, connection marked by responsibility for one another and the willingness to speak up and wade into the uncomfortable moments that can lead people away from pain and spiritual death and toward joy and spiritual life again.

Sadly, for many if not most Christians in our city, the biblical idea of church as family has only ever been empty words. At Sideris we want to at least try to make it more. What if at our church the "attendance-only" consumer mentality couldn't survive? What if when every person showed up to our church they were greeted by at least one person who knew their true story? What if when they didn't show up for some time, at least one person actually noticed and reached out to make sure they were okay?

One part of our plan for making this dream a reality for as many people as possible at Sideris is what we are calling the **Brother-Sister Project**. For every individual who commits to Sideris Church as their "home church" we will match them up with another family member of the same gender. We try to pair you with someone who is not already your best friend or in your cohort, because we believe the more varied connections you have in the church, the better. If someone's time at Sideris ends we will work to re-pair you with a new brother or sister.

Here is the flow:

1. Attend the **Family Member Class**
2. Affirm **Family Membership Covenant**
3. Be matched up with an existing family member
4. Schedule a coffee or happy hour meetup
5. Seek to get together once every 6 months or so

Suggested Conversations

1. Spend your first conversation getting to know one another by sharing your stories. Possible topics could include:
 - *Where are you from and how did you get to Seattle? (Physical History)*
 - *Did you grow up exposed to Christianity? What was spirituality like for you as a child & young adult? (Spiritual History)*
 - *Where do you think you would be if it weren't for your relationship with Jesus Christ?*
2. Spend your subsequent conversations “checking in” with questions like these:
 - *How are you doing?*
 - *What is providing most of your joy right now?*
 - *What's currently sourcing most of your anxiety?*
 - *How is the Sideris Family extending life to you?*
 - *How could someone help you right now?*
 - *How can I be praying for you?*

Suggested Ways to Share Responsibility:

1. Keep a special eye out for the other and are quick to reach out when you notice extended absences or if you sense changes in mood or joy.
2. Pray for one other frequently.
3. Encourage one another to stay connected to the major life rhythms of the church (cohort, cadres, etc.) and serving rhythms (worship band, children's ministry, etc.)
4. Both parties might advocate to a pastor or leader when it seems appropriate. (Ex: “*Hey pastor Dave, it seems to me that Hank has been really struggling lately, I think he would benefit from sitting down with you.*”)

We're hopeful that as we engage one another as Jesus hoped that His life will be extended to us through His Holy Spirit, in fact, we even expect it! Please share these life-bringing stories with us as they are attached to this project. Also, do not hesitate to reach out to us with any type of feedback. As we continue to “in all humility consider one another better than ourselves” (Phil 2) we have much room to grow in discovering how we might embrace this as his church.