

Missional



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Is that a real word?

You may have never actually used this word before but Ed Stetzer defines missional as simply “living sent” by joining God on His mission. But let’s face it, most of us hear anything with the word “mission” in it and we immediately think “mission work” or “mission trip.” The first people that enter our heads are those homely looking tennis-shoe-and-skirt-wearing folks who came and talked to our churches when we were children. We think of it as an option on the buffet line of church, one choice of many in our effort to do what God wants. But the truth is, to follow Jesus is to be on mission. So here’s the breakdown. Missions is a noun. It’s something you do. Missional is an adjective. It describes the quality of life of a follower of Jesus. Not something we are occasionally required to do, but who we are, all the time.

The missional life:

If John 15:1-5 is truly the case in our lives, that we are connected to Jesus, the vine, and that by remaining in Him, we bear fruit, then living missional lives starts to seem attainable. The problem is that we often view the sharing of the message of Jesus in a one-dimensional way. We fail to consider that the Great Commission is about making disciples, people who understand what it means to follow Jesus well. What better way to make disciples could we find than to live our lives on mission, like Jesus called us to do? So missional living is about much more than just the verbal telling of the Redemption Story. It’s realizing that God has appointed every circumstance in our day for HIS NAME’S SAKE. We can assume that He is at work in each of those situations and that He is calling us to respond to Him in obedience at every turn. Oh by the way, missional living is not just what we do when we are around unbelievers, it’s also how we are to relate to the body of Christ. We are to uphold and encourage one another and love each other well.

The missional church:

Here is a quick comparison of an institutional church mindset with a missional church mindset.

Institutional Church	Missional Church
Sends money to missionaries in foreign countries	Sent by God as missionaries in our own culture
Exists for the members of the church: Join the church	Exists to take Jesus to the lost: Go to the world
Members expect pastors to bring in the lost and unchurched	Members personally engage their community
Has become a sub-culture of Christians living in their own universe	Submerged into its culture, like Jesus
Main focus is supporting church activities to attract new families	The goal is to help others find Jesus in their own way in their own timing
Faith is a routine activity that is private	Faith is practiced in community
Participants compartmentalize their religion and their lives	Participants are affected in every way through a calling by God to be an agent for the Gospel

For further reading/study:

Scripture:

Colossians 3:12-17
Matthew 5:13-16
Ephesians 5:1-2, 15-16
1 Corinthians 9:19-23
Genesis 12:2-3

Books/Articles:

Total Church by Steve Timmis and Tim Chester
<http://jonathandodson.org/2009/04/missional-without-overloading-your-schedule/>
www.redeemer2.com/resources/papers/missional.pdf
www.theresurgence.com/2010/10/10/being-missional-may-kill-your-church
www.acts29network.org/article/missional-christianity/

Podcasts:

www.acts29network.org/sermon/everyday-mission-discipling-in-the-margins/

For Reflection: How is missional living different from doing missions? What parts of missional church will be most different from what you’ve experienced?