

SESSION 1 — THE MAIN DOOR

KEY POINTS

- Everyone has a longing to belong; Christians and non-Christians alike.
- Smaller Biblical communities facilitate belonging as demonstrated in Scriptures.
- RiverLife is a cell church; not a church with cells. Our key ministry is the cell ministry. All other ministries revolve around it.
- Cells are the places where a member's primary community life takes place.
- We need a renewal as a cell church.

SESSION SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

- Christians and non-Christians alike all have a longing to belong; to have genuine relationships.
- Churches are places of belonging as demonstrated in the book of Acts.
- Cell groups provide a platform for people to belong and associate with a group they can identify with.

WHAT IS A CELL CHURCH

1. There are various ways how we do church:
 - a. Traditional Model
 - Characterised by rituals and Bible teaching.
 - The focal point is the worship gathering and church programmes.
 - b. Seeker Model
 - Characterised by sleek programming with practical sermons.
 - Invests heavily on worship gatherings.
 - c. Apostolic Model
 - Characterised by a prominent and dominant leader. Personality driven church.



- The focus is on worship gatherings.
- d. Revival Model
 - Characterised by personal experience.
 - The focus is on worship gatherings.
- e. Cell Model
 - Characterised by an emphasis on disciple-making.
 - Invests heavily in small groups.

2. Are we a cell church, or a church with cells?

- A Church With Cells
 - Sees cell groups as an option / just another ministry.
 - Community does not normally happen in cells. Cell is just a program.
 - The Sunday service is the most important meeting. Cell meets every other week because it is the secondary meeting.
- A Cell Church
 - Centres itself on cell groups.
 - New people find community within the cells.
 - Cell is the primary community; not secondary.
 - The time for cell is blocked out by members. There are no competing programs during these times as it is the place of primary community.



WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF A CELL CHURCH

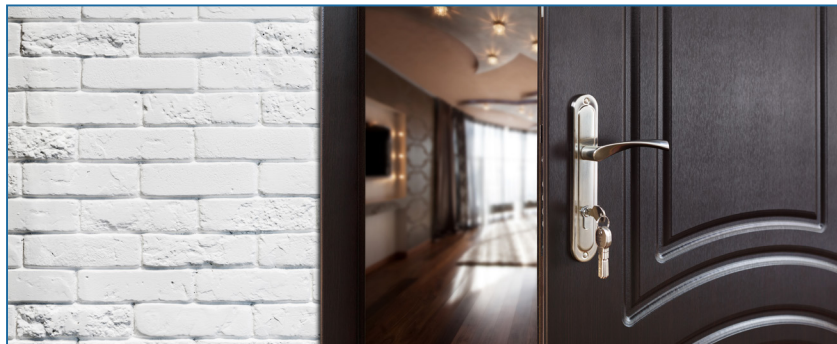
1. Every church has 3 kinds of doors, but one of these doors is the main door.
 - The Front Door
 - The focus of the front door church is the adding of members.
 - Typically, the main platform for this to happen is the Sunday Services.
 - Most churches are Front Door Churches especially seeker sensitive churches.
 - The Back Door
 - This door is where people leave the church.
 - Most churches would want to narrow this door.
 - The Side Door
 - This door refers to the cell community.
 - The first encounter non-believers will have with the church is through the cell community or a ministry of the church. This does not happen within the physical facilities of the church.

2. Principles of a Cell Church (Side Door Church)

- The Side Door Church model is evident throughout Scripture (Jesus and the 12 disciples, House to House Principle in Acts, etc)
- Disciple-making happens in the context of everyday life.
- Value changes take place with accountability as people learn and interact in a smaller setting.
- Every individual is a minister (Eph. 4:1-16, 1 Pet. 2:9).

3. The definition of a Cell Church (Side Door Church)

- The ministry of the church is built around getting as many people as possible into small groups (cells) who can then discover spiritual friendships and grow spiritually together.
- Cell ministry is at the heart of the church.
- A big majority (65%-80%) is involved with a church-related cell.



4. Common features of a Cell Church (Side Door Church)

- A side church has a common vocabulary:
 - “Church begins when the service is over.”
 - “Church happens between services.”
 - “Our purpose is to create ministers out of spectators.”
- Evangelism is more effective when done together as a team (net fishing) than alone (line fishing).
- Cell groups are at the heart of the strategy of the church.
- Leaders function primarily to equip members for service.
- Church staff ensures that the ecosystem within the church enables the leaders to raise disciples of Christ and for members to use their giftings to serve others.

5. Discipleship platforms in a Cell Church (Side Door Church)

- Worship Gatherings: Celebrate and learn (Upwards)
- Mid Size Groups: Community and Mission (Outward)
 - A cluster of cell groups (30-200 ppl) intimately linked to the life of the church.
 - It’s purpose is to combine resources for outreach, enfold newcomers and provide a sense of identity according to peer group or similar life situation.
- Cell Groups: Care and Involvement (Inward)
 - A small group (7-12 people) intimately linked to the life of the church.
 - It is a transformational community that prays and participates in God’s mission together for the purposes of God’s work (Acts 2:46).

- The purpose of a cell group is to make disciples that behold Christ and reveal Him.
- Mentoring Groups
- Personal Walk

RIVERLIFE AS A SIDE DOOR CHURCH (CELL CHURCH)

1. In 1991, RLC made the intentional move to become a cell church. This process was complete in 1996.
2. The key question we need to ask ourselves – is cells (side door) still the main door at RLC?
 - Currently, we have 67% of worshippers in cells.
3. We are a cell church in need of renewal.

