



*Eden*  
Baptist Church

focus  
fellowship



# THE **FOCUS FELLOWSHIP** OF EDEN BAPTIST CHURCH

A vital force in the ministry of Eden Baptist Church includes a grouping of people who have passed the child-rearing years—people whose children have left home and single adults beyond the child-rearing season of life. Ranging from young, empty-nesters to widows and retirees, this distinct demographic is uniquely situated in life to wield tremendous influence in the ministry of a local church. At the same time, this demographic faces the unrelenting lure of the spirit-of-the-age to lose focus on eternal values by seeking satisfaction in the securities and pleasures afforded by our culture. The personal and corporate cost of such spiritual ill-focus is catastrophic and must be actively resisted.

An all-too common example of such a loss of focus is witnessed in the lives of young couples whose church involvement is marginal while their first infant matures, kicks into high gear during the years their children are involved in children's and teen ministry, then tails off markedly after the kids leave home. Such empty-nesters fall easy prey to the lure of eternity-blind pursuits because their children, not the unadulterated love of Jesus, were the primary motivation fueling their service for God. The Focus Fellowship exists, in part, to encourage empty-nesters to resist such allures.

Adult believers who have been freed from the demands of child-raising possess enormous potential to radically influence their world and church for Christ—to employ their experience and wisdom in building others up in the faith. But too often this potential is leached away by competing self interests and lack of vision. The Focus Fellowship exists to encourage and organize its members to live in active, fruitful ministry as we set our focus to complete life's journey well for the glory of God.

## **What is the Mission of Focus Fellowship?**

The mission of the Focus Fellowship of EBC is to encourage people without the daily care of children to glorify God by loving Him and others with all their heart. To this end Focus Fellowship pursues in community:

- a growing intimacy with God through Jesus
- active service as disciples of Jesus in pursuit of the edification of Christ's body
- evangelization of people separated from Christ

## **Why Emphasize Service to others?**

Active service to others is God's design for the local church and His express will for each of His followers.

- *According to Ephesians 4:11-16, Jesus desires local churches to equip believers by means of biblical instruction in order that they fulfill works of service. The goal is not to generate busyness. Rather, by gaining knowledge of Christ and serving others, the local church matures in the faith and progresses in unified conformity to Jesus.*
- *This passage commends adult ministries that are outward-oriented and vitally connected to, and integrated with, the larger body of Christ.*

*God issues a unique call to active service to those unencumbered with the daily responsibility of raising children.*

- In the spirit of 1 Cor 7:20-35, believers who are no longer raising children should realize their situation in life provides an extraordinary opportunity for single-minded investment in the cause of Christ.

In contrast to married couples with children, members of the Focus Fellowship have greater freedom to invest more concentrated attention upon the work of God.

*Serving others is a powerful antidote to the spiritual laziness which so naturally plagues adults who no longer have children in the home to motivate them.*

- Freedom from raising children, and freedom from the watchful eye of teenagers in the home, can breed self-centered, spiritual lethargy. Those who genuinely place the interests of others ahead of their own interests will experience joy and fulfillment as Jesus did when He established this model for us (John 13:1-5, 12-17; Phil 2:3-5).
- The project of influencing younger generations for Christ is an ongoing need in the church and an ongoing motivation for those who no longer have children in the home.

### **What Means Do We Use in the Pursuit of Our Mission?**

The Focus Fellowship of EBC seeks to serve and edify the body of Christ and to evangelize the lost by use of the following means:

*Generational Integration Projects:* We organize ourselves to systematically minister to those whose life-orientation is distinct from ours. We strive to strategically integrate our lives with the larger body and thus to edify the church with our experience, wisdom and mature influence. Such integration should follow naturally as a believer lives for Christ, but Focus Fellowship organizes and strategizes to create and encourage such opportunities. Projects may include, for instance, attending the music concert, play, science fair or sports event of a young person in the church, visiting an elderly person in the hospital, eating a meal with several singles, or participating in a Teen Seminar.

*Discipleship Outreach and Evangelism:* Active evangelism is encouraged with a particular emphasis on engaging individuals in

one-on-one Bible study, community service and outreach activities, as well as inviting unbelievers to social events where both believers and unbelievers are influenced for the gospel. The Focus Fellowship may periodically organize a trip to assist another ministry in the advance of the gospel.

*Service/Support Activities:* Projects are periodically scheduled and intentionally designed to encourage and edify others through service and support projects according to need. This may involve assisting a widow or elderly couple, blessing one of our church families or neighbors by performing acts of love and support, fulfilling a church project, or participating in a semi-annual church work day.

*Communication:* A system of communications is maintained whereby we stay connected to one another and also remain conscious of service needs in the church and of life-struggles the needy and infirm of our assembly are experiencing. We labor to systematically connect the church's ministry of the Word and prayer to shut-ins and to those in the hospital, as well as to address needs arising at their homes.

*Church Fellowships:* It is vital for us to participate in all-church activities. Men's Breakfast/Women's Brunch, Winter and Summer Retreats, activities, etc, provide crucial opportunities to develop mutually edifying relationships with other church members.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The Focus Fellowship of EBC longs to exalt Jesus Christ and to grow in our relationship with Him. If our orientation is primarily social, participation in this group will hinge on self-interest. But if our orientation hinges on our mutual love for Jesus, this transcendent relationship will bind us to one another in love and allow us as a group to significantly edify the body of Christ in self-giving ways.

We must remember that life as citizens of God's kingdom is not all about us. Whatever we can do to keep our focus on Jesus, on the love of others, and on our eternal home will help us avoid the snare of

self-orientation and spiritual lethargy which is so radically averse to the spirit and will of Jesus (Matt 22:34-40).

It follows from the preceding point that we must ever seek to blend with and to encourage the entire assembly. Each of us should seek to edify the children of the assembly. We should seek meaningful friendships with younger families and with younger singles. We should seek wisdom from those who are more mature in the faith. We should work shoulder-to-shoulder with others. We must learn to value the vital opportunity we have to build others up in the faith and to benefit from spiritual accountability as we journey toward the future as a company of believers.