

Kingdom Theology & Practice

The Vineyard is committed to the theology and practice of the kingdom of God--rooted in the vision of the Hebrew prophets and fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. The movement is distinctively rooted in a renewed understanding of the centrality of the kingdom in biblical thought. We view the kingdom of God as the overarching and integrating theme of the Bible.

From the beginning, the Vineyard has been committed to proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God and to bearing witness to the "already and not yet" of the kingdom in our words and deeds--through healing (physical, emotional, and social), doing justice, and delivering those held captive by evil. Since the kingdom of God is the future reign of God breaking into the present through the life and ministry of Jesus, we are a forward-leaning movement that emphasizes the ever-reforming nature of the church and engages the world in love.

Culturally Relevant Mission

The church exists for the sake of those who are exiled from God. We are called to bring the gospel of the kingdom to every nook and cranny of creation, faithfully translating the message of Jesus in language and forms that are relevant to diverse peoples and cultures.

The Vineyard seeks to plant churches that are culturally relevant in a wide variety of settings, both locally and internationally. Each Vineyard church is encouraged to reach those in its community not already reached by existing churches. To this end, we promote a creative, entrepreneurial, and innovative approach to ministry that is faithful to Jesus and expressive of his desire to reach those who are far away from God.

Compassionate Ministry

We lean toward the lost, the poor, the outcast, and the outsider with the compassion of Jesus, knowing we are sinners whose standing before God is utterly dependent on his mercy. This mercy can only be truly received inasmuch as we are willing to give it away.

We believe that ministry in Jesus' name should be expressed in concrete ways through the local church. The poor are to be served as though we serve Jesus himself. This is one of the distinguishing characteristics of a church expressing the love of Christ in a local community.

In fact, in all forms of ministry, compassion is a hallmark of the One who was "moved with compassion" in the face of human need. This being the age of grace (and "the year of the Lord's favor") compassion should constitute the leading edge of our service to God, each other, and our broken world. With humility, we seek to avoid unauthorized judgments of others, realizing that we suffer and struggle along with the rest of humanity.

Reconciling Community

Jesus is reconciling people to God, to each other, and to the entire creation. He breaks down divisions between Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female. Therefore, Vineyard churches are committed to being communities of healing, engaged in the work of reconciliation wherever sin and evil hold sway.

We also seek to be diverse communities of hope that realize the power of the cross to reconcile what has been separated by sin. This requires that we move beyond our personal preferences and engage those whom we perceive to be unlike us. We must actively work to break down barriers of race, culture, gender, social class, and ethnicity.

We are convinced that the church (locally, nationally, and globally) is meant to be a diverse community precisely because Jesus is Lord over every nation, tribe, and tongue. We are not satisfied with the status quo when it doesn't reflect this kingdom reality. Instead, we pray eagerly for the coming of God's kingdom here and now and hope to see the reconciliation that is evidence that kingdom in our midst.

Experiencing God

The triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is eager to be known and experienced by all. We believe that God is searching for the lost and longs to draw us into loving, intimate relationship with him. In Vineyard churches, we welcome God's personal presence, we seek to be attentive to his presence, and we value the passionate pursuit of his presence in order to respond in obedience to his initiatives.

We understand God's presence as a palpable reality. As we become increasingly sensitive and responsive to the Spirit's presence, we too can learn to "see what the Father is doing" and support his work with our lives.

We value an approach to God's presence that is respectful both of God and others. We eschew hype and other efforts to manipulate either God's presence or the response of others to his presence. We distinguish between the Holy Spirit and the human response to the Holy Spirit, which shares in all the beauty and brokenness of our humanity.

These, then, are the core values that draw us together as a movement. They are different aspects of the treasure buried in the field that is the Vineyard. The treasure, of course, is the kingdom of God embodied and brought forth by Jesus of Nazareth.