



FOUNDERS' DAY

PRAYER DEVOTION 2023

INTRODUCTION

"What is SIM?" What are the essentials that define SIM and unite us together?

Our Statement of Faith is the first of those essentials, outlining **what we believe**. Our Core Values are another essential, describing **who we are**. Our Purpose and Mission are another essential, clarifying **why we exist** and **what we do**.



Our Core Values are rooted in scripture and vital in the life of our mission. For our Founders' Days of Prayer last year, we focused on the three D's of the summary of our Core Values. This year, we will pray through the three C's, to help us remember and live out these values.

Dependent on God

Diverse

Disciples of Jesus who make disciples

Church-Centred

Compassionate

Community

One of our founders, Roland Bingham, once wrote, our **"primary ministry is to pray"**. Please take time to pause from your routines and give yourselves wholeheartedly to pray with the global family of SIM.

While you can pray on our own, we have this unique privilege to express our oneness and celebrate our unity in the body of Christ by coming together in prayer. What a joy it will be for God to see us together, seeking His face, and encouraging one another through prayer.

DAY 1: COMMUNITY (5 DECEMBER 2023)

Community: We live a life of integrity in obedience to God and in relationship with each other as we listen, learn, grow, and innovate together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Quieting Prayer: In Matthew 11:28, Jesus tells us 'Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest' (NLT). As we approach today's prayer time, take a moment to release your mind from your burdens - the day's concerns, agenda, worries, and problems. Allow this time to be a safe space as we gather and listen to what God will say to us. As you exhale, focus on releasing your thoughts and burdens for the day. As you breathe in, step into the place of rest Jesus offers. (Allow a few moments of silence).

Pray: 'Jesus, as we approach you in this prayer time, we thank you for the rest you give. We release our concerns in this moment so we can focus on what you want us to hear, what you want to say, and what you may want to challenge us with. We pray you use today's value of community to encourage us, inspire us (to act), challenge us (to change), and build community within our teams.'

Scripture Reading: (Select the passages appropriate for your context)
Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 13:1-7;
Ephesians 4:1-4; Ephesians 4:21-32.

Scripture Reading Questions:

Acts 2:42-47

- What stood out to you in this passage? Why?
- In his book *Subversive Mission*, Craig Greenfield shares that today, the best place to see this type of community is in camp ministry. Do you agree?
 - If yes - What prevents us from experiencing that level of community elsewhere?
 - If no - where else do you experience that level of community?
- What is 1 thing you could start doing to better experience this type of community?



1 Corinthians 13:1-7

- What stood out to you in this passage? Why?
- We often think of 1 Corinthians in the context of a marriage ceremony. How does this speak to how we share life together in our communities?
- We all have people in our lives that can be more challenging to love. How does this passage encourage and help us to love them?

Ephesians 4:1-4

- What stood out to you in this passage? Why?
- On a scale of 1-10, how would the people your team works with say that this passage describes your SIM community?
- What does your community do best? Where can they improve?

Ephesians 4:21-32

- What stood out to you in this passage? Why?
- Are any of these attitudes or thoughts Paul mentions affecting your community?
- If this passage made you think of attitudes and thoughts that are holding your community back from what God wants it to be, what needs to be done to make it right?
- What are the positive attitudes this passage encourages? How can you continue to build those in your team?

Sharing Time

I grew up in a region of the world where personal responsibility and individualism was a cultural value. We even had a saying – you ‘pull yourself up by your own bootstraps.’ It means that you don’t look to others for help – you are self-reliant and don’t need others for help or support.

This mindset was really challenged when I was in seminary. One of my professors said that we can definitely have an individual relationship with Christ. We each need to make the personal choice to surrender to him and follow. ‘BUT’, he said, we are created for community. We see it embodied in the very nature of God – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

While Jesus saves each one of us individually, the depth of our understanding of God is directly related to our level of community. We are not made to go it alone. That statement has stuck with me ever since, especially when I find myself stepping into self-reliant spaces.

I love that community is one of our values summaries. It captures a number of our values (A Christ-like community, Responsive to our times, A learning, growing community, and a commitment to biblical truth). It stands as a boundary line for SIM that we are not going to step out of bounds and go it alone. We are committed to serving and journeying together.

We will finish today's devotion with some sharing time. We will finish today's devotion with some sharing time. To start, I've asked K & D from Asia and Pastor Tut from South Sudan to share what this value means to them. [Play video]

Has this made you think of any times where you have seen community alive within your SIM experience? If so, take yourself back to that moment and re-live the feelings, the relief, the way God spoke to you in that time.

[Encourage anyone to share when they have seen this value come to life in their SIM experience]

Closing Prayer

Lord, we thank you for building community into your plan for your creation. We thank you that we get to work together, encourage each other, grow in relationship, and serve you as a body and not just as an individual. We thank you for the times we get it right.

We can think of times when we have gotten it wrong. We repent of times when we have only thought of ourselves. We repent of holding attitudes and thoughts that erode our sense of community instead of building it up. We repent of not loving each other as you desire.

We pray that as we step into our days and weeks, that we would see your opportunities to step into community. To grow together, to respond together, to be a testimony to those we serve of what biblical community looks like. We pray that this testimony can help others see you and your desire to know and be in community with you.

As we go, we pray we can continue to be encouraged by how you have spoken to us today. In areas where you have challenged us or confronted us, we pray we have the courage to act and step into the community you desire for SIM. Amen.

DAY 2: COMPASSION (6 DECEMBER 2023)

Compassion: We are people of love. We humbly offer compassionate, holistic service and eternal hope, through the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Quieting Prayer: In Matthew 11:28, Jesus tells us 'Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest' (NLT). As we approach today's prayer time, take a moment to release your mind from your burdens - the day's concerns, agenda, worries, and problems. Allow this time to be a safe space as we gather and listen to what God will say to us. As you exhale, focus on releasing your thoughts and burdens for the day. As you breathe in, step into the place of rest Jesus offers. [Allow a few moments of silence]

Pray: 'Jesus, as we approach you in this prayer time, we thank you for the rest you give. We release our concerns in this moment so we can focus on what you want us to hear, what you want to say, and what you may want to challenge us with. We pray you use today's value of compassion to encourage us, inspire us (to act), challenge us (to change), and build community within our teams.'

Scripture Reading: (Select the passages appropriate for your context)
Luke 4:16b-19, 21; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; 1 John 3:16-18; James 2:14-26.

Scripture Reading Questions: Luke 4:16b-19, 21

- What stood out to you in this passage? Why?
- Jesus says this portion of Isaiah is fulfilled in His coming. How do you see this embodied in the church today? How is this reflected in SIM's ministries?
- The natural tension is to shift one way (proclaim Good News) or the other (show and act on Good News). How do we safeguard the tension of showing both words and deeds?



2 Cor 1:3-4

- What stood out to you in this passage? Why?
- How has this come to life for you?

1 John 3:16-18

- What stood out to you in this passage? Why?
- What is the easiest thing for you to sacrifice? What is the hardest?
- How can you show 1 John 3:18 love today?

James 2:14-26

- What stood out to you in this passage? Why?
- If you had to pick one, what is easiest for you to show – faith or deeds?
- Anyone can do good deeds. What makes them different for a follower of Christ?
- Reread v.17. How does this value (Compassion) relate to our other two values in this study (Community and Church-centred)? How does the tension of faith and deeds build Community and centres on God's Church?

Sharing Time

When I worked for a Christian NGO, I was introduced to the concept of Integral Mission after reading a paper from the Lausanne Movement written in the 70s. Integral mission speaks of the two poles of our Gospel – Faith and Deeds. The ideal space to be is right in the middle of the scale where the person or community feels the equal tension of proclaiming Jesus Christ and action because of Jesus Christ.

In my first year at SIM, one of the things I did to learn was read several missionary biographies. I remember seeing witness to this tension within the history of SIM. Seeing Missionaries who both worked alongside the emerging church to share the gospel as an act of love and redemption by our creator AND responded to needs by planting trees, responding to famine, teaching, meeting medical needs, and providing needed services. I remember thinking, 'I've finally found my sweet spot in a ministry organisation.'

The ongoing challenge to any organisation like SIM is to maintain this tension. To not let this tension lean one way or the other. I recently read a quote from an early Japanese pioneer of faith, Toyohiko Kagawa. He's worth googling – he led an inspiring life as a simple servant of Jesus. He's attributed to once saying, 'I read in a book that a man called Christ went about doing good. It is very disconcerting that I am so easily satisfied with just going about.'

I've asked Sarah Scott Webb of our For Freedom Ministry to share what this value means to her as an encouragement for each of us to do more than just go about. [Play Video]

This is how Sarah holds this value. How do you hold this value and see it evident in your life and ministry? [Encourage Sharing of experiences by others. Experiences can be from receiving or showing compassion]

Closing Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the compassion you have shown each of us. For being one who loves us unconditionally - no matter what we bring or don't bring to you. We thank you for meeting our needs, both spiritual and non-spiritual. We pause to ponder how your compassion gives us freedom and safety. Freedom to always approach you and safety to know we will always be received and cared for by you.

We know we don't always reflect the compassion you show us. As those moments come to mind, we repent and ask forgiveness for not reflecting your care and obeying your prompting. We ask forgiveness for lives being too busy to see the needs around us. We ask forgiveness for when our selfishness prevents our sacrifice for others.

As an organisation, we thank you for the privilege that is ours to demonstrate the compassion of Christ wherever you call us. We repent of those moments when we have debated the need to show compassion or act with compassion. When we have listened to our own desires or the arguments of others and mistaken them for your voice thereby seeking to pull away from ministries of compassion in the context in which we serve. Forgive us Father when we have mistaken our own desires for your heart and have shown compassion for our own selfish end rather than for your glory.

We pray you build our awareness to the needs arounds us. We pray you break our hearts with the hurt and needs within our communities and places of service. We pray you continue to make us aware of practical ways where we can join you in the redemption of your creation. We pray you give us an unescapable obligation to act - to work alongside those we serve to meet physical and spiritual needs they see around them.

Lord, compassion takes courage to sacrifice and respond. I pray SIM would be a community of courage. I pray this courage to act and this tension of proclaiming you and showing you will still be evident to our descendants as they read the biographies that will be written of our season of ministry. Amen.

DAY 3: CHURCH-CENTRED (7 DECEMBER 2023)

Church-Centred: We are part of Christ's church and together we plant, nurture and equip churches.

Quieting Prayer: In Matthew 11:28, Jesus tells us 'Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest' (NLT). As we approach today's prayer time, take a moment to release your mind from your burdens - the day's concerns, agenda, worries, and problems. Allow this time to be a safe space as we gather and listen to what God will say to us. As you exhale, focus on releasing your thoughts and burdens for the day. As you breathe in, step into the place of rest Jesus offers. [Allow a few moments of silence]

Pray: 'Jesus, as we approach you in this prayer time, we thank you for the rest you give. We release our concerns in this moment so we can focus on what you want us to hear, what you want to say, and what you may want to challenge us with. We pray you use today's value of compassion to encourage us, inspire us (to act), challenge us (to change), and build community within our teams.'

Scripture Reading: (Select the passages appropriate for your context) Acts 11:19-30; 13:1-3; Ephesians 1:15-23; Colossians 4:5-6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

Scripture Reading Questions:

Acts 11:19-30, 13:1-3

- What stood out to you in this passage? Why?
- I wonder if Paul's ministry would have been the same if it didn't include the church in Antioch. What made the Antioch Church special? What values enabled them to:
 - Have Paul as their pastor?
 - Send Paul and Barnabas?

Ephesians 1:15-23

- What stood out to you in this passage? Why?
- Do you think this passage is speaking to the individual or the church? What implications does it have for SIM?
- How can SIM support the church so they have this witness?



Colossians 4:5-6 (written to the believers [church] in Colossae)

- What stood out to you in this passage? Why?
- Share ways that the local church has helped you understand how to 'live wisely' and 'make the most of every opportunity'.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

- What stood out to you in this passage? Why?
- As part of Christ's church, what is the unique role you and your team play in planting, nurturing and equipping local churches.

Sharing Time

In NZ, SIM is part of a mission agency collaboration to serve the local church. As ethnic groups settle here, we recognize that we have a cultural skillset that can speak to the ministry opportunities, but we do not have the people or reach to be in all the communities where new immigrants live. But guess who does? The church! They have the reach like no other. I once heard a Christian leader explain it this way when asked who He worked for. He said, 'I work for a global entity with offices in almost every country/community in the world. I work in the church.'

This ministry effort came about when one leader saw the emerging need of the church and thought of an idea where mission agencies could help meet that need. I love it because it also acts as a testimony of who we see as primary in the mission agency/church relationship. It's the church God has chosen to be His representative and joining His efforts to redeem His creation.

I think this is my favourite value summary because it ensures my focus as a leader is properly placed. In view of the history of God's church, you don't have to go back many years to witness a time when SIM did not exist. I'm thankful we are the organisation we are today, but the reality is we have no idea how long we will be needed as part of God's plan. What I do know with conviction is that the church will ALWAYS be part of God's plan. I'm thankful that SIM as an agency can serve the church and respond to their needs.

I've asked Richard Hart from SIM Bolivia to share what church-centred means to him. [Play video]

What does church-centred mean to each of you? How do you see it lived out in SIM's ministry? How do you want to see it lived out?

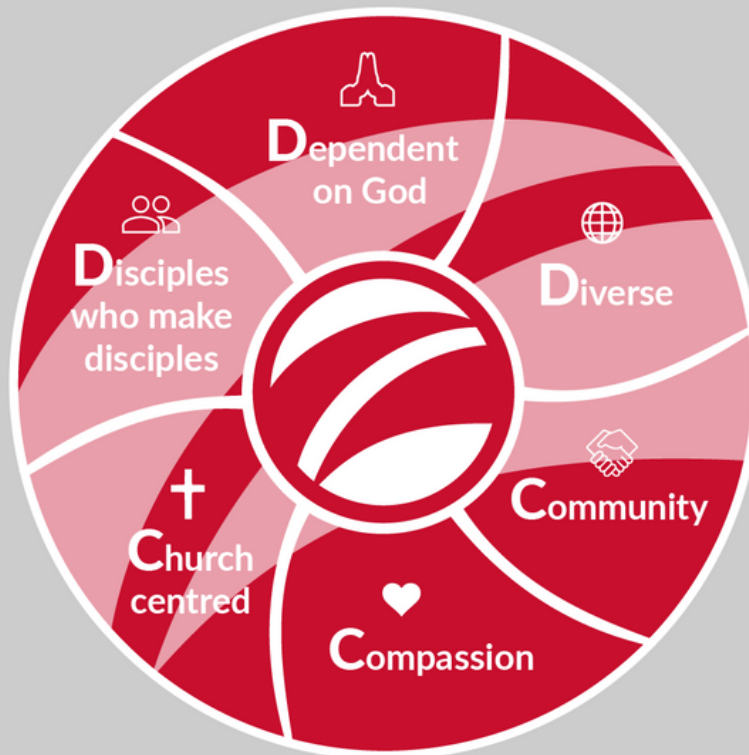
Closing Prayer

Father God, we thank you that we can look back through your Word and through history and see how you've empowered your church to grow and be your reflection in our world. We thank you for how the church shaped the passions of SIM's founders and encouraged them to act. We thank you that we can look back and see how the church has grown in areas where SIM has been working. We thank you that we have continued to refine how we serve the local church around us. We thank you for the partnerships with churches that we see today and the opportunity to work alongside them as a global community.

We can also think of seasons where this relationship hasn't been as you have desired. We repent of times when we have served our goals and needs instead of the local church around us. We repent when our ministries have become a substitute for the church. We repent when the church has been an afterthought in the work we do.

In some areas of the globe, we've witnessed the church face challenges and become a fraction of what they once were. As we step forward today, we pray this next year will bring new growth in the church. We pray that SIM can continue to listen to the local church and serve them as your voice in the 70+ countries we work in. We pray we can continue to learn how to be effective partners to the churches around us. We pray that we can equip and 'disciple' them as we help to send their people cross-culturally so that they grow in their understanding of mission. We pray we can live out this value exactly as it is written – to work together to help plant, nurture, and equip (local) churches. Amen.

SIM Core Values



3 Ds and 3 Cs

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