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## Summary

Churches that adopt Scripture-driven ministry (SDM) aim to, by God’s grace, implement Scriptural mandates to the *local* *church* in a complete way.[[1]](#footnote-1) Completeness means all Scriptures to the church, not just some of them (Matt 28:20, Revelation 3:2). It means that church leadership can verify (“draw a line”) how each Scriptural mandate to the church is actually implemented through one or more ministries.

## Process

Those following the SDM process study the Bible to identify all Scriptures to the local church. The leadership prays for wisdom as to how, and in what priority order, the Lord would have them implemented *in His strength*. This will look differently in different churches. At Christian Fellowship we are starting with Ephesians 6:18 and Hebrews 3:12-13 because implementing the mandates of those two verses should have a large foundational impact on the rest of church life including continuance of the SDM process. As verses are being implemented, special equipping will be provided to those involved as appropriate.

## Scripture-driven vs. Non-Scripture-driven

Here is an example in a few areas of the difference between two approaches to church vision implementation

Table - Contrasting implementation of sample Scriptures in SDM and non-SDM churches

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scripture** | **Scripture Summary** | **Scripture-driven outcome** | **Non-Scripture-driven outcome** | **CF Status** | **CF Goal Date** |
| Ephesians 6:18 | Everyone should be prayed for at all times | Everyone is prayed for every day | Prayer is encouraged and times are set aside for it, but this goal is not explicitly set. Not everyone is prayed for regularly or even at all | Implement small groups w/adoptees[[2]](#footnote-2), establish as relationships form. Connect all people to a small group to pray for them daily | 2019 |
| Hebrews 3:12-13 | Everyone should be encouraged every day to avoid unbelief | Everyone is encouraged every day. Unbelief is minimized or prevented | Encouragement happens but this Biblical goal is not explicitly met  | Implement small groups w/ adoptees, establish as relationships form. Develop method of communicating encouragement daily | 2019 - 2020 |
| Matthew 18:15-16, 2 Cor 12:20 | Relationally safe culture for resolving conflict and avoiding gossip | Each person is clear on how to resolve conflict and how to respond to attempted gossip to prevent it at inception | Resolving conflict Biblically and avoiding gossip are taught and addressed on a case by case basis  | DFF updated to explain expectations.Plan to implement as part of discipleship process | 2019-2020 |
| Matthew 28:18-20 | Teach all to make disciples and teach all Jesus commanded  | All people have individual discipleship growth paths and associated relationships to facilitate. | Varies widely | Summer 2019 – Leadership team to develop plan. Implement in small chunks. | Start top priorities in 2019 (e.g. Matt 18). Foundation built in 2020-21 |

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is Scripture-Driven Ministry?

Simply put, it is the ministry that results from a careful church process that first identifies and then aims to do what the Bible says it should do (orthopraxy[[3]](#footnote-3)) by seeing to it each Scripture to the local church is implemented in ministry.

### Don’t all churches that aspire to be Biblical, have ministries that are Scripture-driven?

No, not as defined here. To be Scripture-driven requires a multi-year intentional focus to get there and stay there. It is driven by the idea that God can give grace to the local church to obey all His mandates to it. Churches that do not have an explicit list of Scriptures intended for the local church and an associated plan to tie the implementation of those Scriptures to their various ministries are not intending to be Scripture-driven.

### Why give this a name?

Names for things help make conversations more efficient and effective. Because goals and processes to achieve them are unique within SDM, it is helpful to name what it is we are actually doing.

### Is Scripture-driven Ministry Biblical?

This may seem like an odd question given we are calling this Scripture-driven ministry. Its very name shows that those implementing this aspire to be and are aiming to be Biblical. The question needs to be asked though: why bother? Isn’t a growing church with seemingly thriving ministries the measure of success? Here are two Scriptures that indicate that aiming to be Scripture-driven is Biblical and that it is intended by the Lord:

* Go therefore and make disciples … 20 teaching them to observe ***all that I have commanded you***. Matthew 28:19-20 (emphasis added)
* Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works ***complete*** in the sight of my God. Revelation 3:2

### Where do you start with SDM?

SDM starts by making a list of all the commands to the local church in Scripture. Christian Fellowship came up with over one hundred. Those commands are then turned into questions – “are we doing X?” If the answer is no, a gap is identified and needs to be filled. If a church has not taken this step of listing these commands, it is not intending to be Scripture-driven.

### Won’t trying to obey all that Jesus commanded us lead to legalism?

Not if it is implemented in a Scripture-driven, grace-based way. Scripture-driven means that the process and the end goal need to avoid unscriptural ways and outcomes – including legalism. The process toward the fulfillment of the goal needs to be grace-driven and the destination needs to be grace-based. Unless a church is already grace-based and gospel-centered, attempting to be Scripture-driven may only increase legalistic tendencies amongst the leadership and members.

### Won’t a Scripture Driven Ministry church create “cookie-cutter” Christians?

On the contrary, there should be less chance of that with SDM. In order for something to be Scripture-driven, it means the implementation will take into account that each member is part of a body with a different function, different gifts, callings and passions (1 Corinthians 12). SDM would seek to help people find their unique calling rather than trying to make everyone be the same. In a non-SDM approach, the passions, giftings and callings of a church leader or leaders may be more apt to be pushed to the congregation in an out of balance way than one that takes 1 Corinthians 12 carefully into account. This does not mean you need to do SDM to take 1 Corinthians 12 into account properly, but SDM must take it into account or else it isn’t SDM by definition.

### Why does it take so long to implement just one verse (e.g. Ephesians 6:18)?

Because we want the Lord to lead in the implementation – by His grace. Our goal is not simply to achieve goals. If that were the case, we could within one week assign each person another person to pray for and vice versa and then check off Ephesians 6:18. We do not believe that process is Biblical. Rather, praying for each other every day and the relationships that are underneath that ideally should be formed as God leads (organically) versus by an efficient edict. God has already formed relationships in the body. Those relationships, or ones about to be formed through small groups, are a means God can use to foster Ephesians 6:18 prayers between those in them. We are praying God will orchestrate these prayer relationships as they are being encouraged by small group leaders. As they form, we will prayerfully work to ensure everyone is covered in this way as the Lord wills.

### What can I do to help to implement the first two verses?

**Ephesians 6:18** – Do you have someone, perhaps in your own family, you would want to pray for every day? Let us know so we can support you. We would like to know who is *not* being prayed for so we can get to our Biblical goal of “all” as seen in this verse: “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication…making supplication for ***all*** the saints” - Ephesians 6:18 (emphasis added)

**Hebrews 3:21-13** – Do you have someone to whom you may be called to give some daily encouragement? This can be people in your own family as well. This type of encouragement described in this verse is a form of grace specifically aimed at preventing unbelief and replacing it with faith in the Lord. This person can be the same person you are praying for every day, particularly because prayer requests naturally lend themselves to situationally-specific encouragement.

### Does aiming to be Scripture-driven automatically imply we will be successful?

No. Ultimately God is sovereign over the affairs of men and there are many more factors than pursuing SDM that determine an outcome. Whenever man sets out to achieve something and is relying on his own strength and planning, failure is sure to come. In order for God to get the glory, the focus needs to be moving forward in His strength, listening to His voice and going at His pace:

*…whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen* - 1 Peter 4:11

### Can leading or being a part of an SDM church make you proud?

Yes, because anything that aims for some form of obedience can be twisted by the flesh or Satan into thinking any of this comes from us. It is absolutely essential those leading and participating are 100% convinced of this truth and join with Paul in saying: *Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.* - 2 Corinthians 3:5-6. Aiming for implementation of SDM, if anything, should be humbling for the participants. For these high and holy goals to be met, the Lord truly needs to do it.

1. At this point, a “red flag” may raise: “this sounds legalistic” – this is covered in the FAQ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In order to meet the mandate of “all”, small groups “adopt” those who cannot actually attend a small group. An adopted member can still participate in Ephesians 6:18 and Hebrews 3:12-13 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Orthopraxy is a compound Greek word. The first word in the compound is ortho, which is quite familiar to most of us today. It means “right, correct, or straight.” … Praxis, the second word of the compound, sounds similar to the English equivalent—practice. Orthopraxy or orthopraxis is simply “correct practice” or “correct behavior.” (<https://www.gotquestions.org/orthopraxy-orthopraxis.html>) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)