

INTRODUCTION: WHY FAMILY ON MISSION?

Over the years we have trained a lot of leaders in missional discipleship, and as we've done so, we started noticing something interesting happening. People often put the structure of discipleship and mission into place, but then come back to us scratching their heads, because it doesn't seem to be working. In other words, structure alone doesn't produce the kinds of results they expected.

What we began to realize is that they had been implementing the *structure* of discipleship, but weren't catching the *texture* of the process that truly mobilizes and empowers people to be on mission. They were technically correct, but they needed to learn how to nurture the atmosphere in which the structure can thrive.

So we began reflecting on what the texture of our disciple-making process was. What did we see Jesus doing in the Gospels that we were imitating and implementing in our own disciple-making? We began talking about it as a couple and with our team, and we started asking questions about the way we had been doing things, and how we learned to do them. Those conversations were where this book began.

What we are calling family on mission is the texture of discipleship that allows the structure to do its job. Family on mission is the music to the lyrics of

discipleship. Family on mission is how we stop thinking of discipleship as a task that we do and start living out discipleship as a way that we are. Family on Mission is how we stop doing discipleship as a class, program, or curriculum, and start living it as a way of life.

Here's the bottom line: discipleship and mission never really work unless we are able to create the texture of family on mission. Without the "soft tissue" of a family on mission, this discipleship stuff will be just another program we'll forget about in a few months, and mission will be just another activity we need to fit into our already busy schedule. If we're going to make disciples and move out in mission, we need to go from managing boundaries between the compartments of our lives to integrating family and mission into one life, a cohesive framework and fabric that empowers a culture of discipleship and mission, not just occasional events and periodic programs.

We need to learn how to live out the texture as we implement the structure. That's what this book is intended to help you move toward.

In this second edition, we build on the principles of family on mission found in the first edition. We've added key thoughts on what to do during the crisis times when we focus on family as our mission, and we have also added three key triangles on spiritual parenting, predictable patterns, and missional purpose that further explain what family on mission looks like in real life.

So imagine yourself sitting down around the kitchen table with a nice cup of tea, and let's begin the conversation of being a family on mission.