

## 5 FOUNDATIONS FOR CONGREGATIONAL FAMILY MINISTRY

### 1. **Family Ministry flows out of God's gifts in public worship.**

- Theologically, all Christian ministry is grounded in and flows out of God's gracious gifts given in and through sacramental worship.
- In family ministry we are either (i) reminding children, youth and families of their baptism and tending their baptismal journey; or (ii) drawing children, youth and families toward the font.
- The central rites of the church: baptism, the Lord's Supper, confirmation, marriage sit at the centre – they are crucial points of connection with families for proclamation, teaching and nurture.
- Infant baptism is one of the key missionary activities of the church.
- When we give worship its place at the centre, we ask questions about how worship connects or can better connect with the daily lives of God's people in their homes and families.

### 2. **Spiritual Growth is the goal of Family Ministry.**

- The central goal of family ministry is to help persons – whatever their age, stage or station of life – to grow spiritually. “Becoming”, not “doing”.
- Key emphasis is placed on the practices of discipleship: the “Four Keys” as the shape of the baptismal life.
- Mission and disciple-making happens as we are disciples to and with one another (mission as a product rather than a goal).

### 3. **Family Ministry is a Perspective, not a Program.**

- Family ministry is not a single program but a perspective or lens through which to view and conduct all of ministry.
- Family ministry does not remove the need for or replace age-specific or group-specific programming, but infuses these with a family perspective.
- It also concerns how we function cross-generationally as a “faith family” or “family of families” – the two levels of family ministry.

### 4. **Family Ministry is Missional.**

- As a ministry of discipleship, family ministry is inherently missional: it involves ministering to families not only in the circle of the congregation but also those in the wider community; and engaging families and family members in ministry and mission to and with one another.
- Family ministry = the family in ministry. Homes as congregational mission outposts.

### 5. **Family Ministry is about more than Nuclear Families**

- Authentic family ministry takes into account the great diversity of modern family life and recognizes the particular needs and challenges of “non-traditional” family types (e.g. single parent families, families with one parent of faith, blended families, families formed by adoption,
- Every person, by virtue of being in relationships with others, has some form of “family”, whether structural, functional or both. Family ministry therefore excludes no-one, aiming to serve and strengthen all persons in and through their primary relationships.
- At another level, the church family, the body of Christ, is wholly inclusive of all Christians, placing them in faith-kin relationships with one another. Thus, while family ministry has particular concern for families with children and youth it does not focus exclusively on such families.
- Moreover, it seeks to connect families and family members of all types together for mutual support, encouragement and edification.