

VISION FOR BRANCHING

John 15 : 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing... 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

Branching is the beautiful fruit of seeing a group of believers grow and mature. Branching is obedience to the call to make disciples. We desire that Midtown Groups would always have a safe place to welcome believers into growth and transformation. We meet with expectancy that the Lord will produce fruit by causing our groups to grow and eventually to branch.

As with an invitational culture, a vision for branching begins with the leader. A leader helps the group see branching as a birth, rather than a death, experiencing joy as group members catch a vision for discipleship. Leaders influence the groups’ perception and acceptance of branching as a natural fruit of growth. Use the Vision casting time of group to talk about the Lord’s call of discipleship for each of us and to discuss branching as the natural fruit of discipleship.

It takes time for a group to embrace branching. Not everyone in the group will understand right away. It may take many conversations about grief and fear around the changes that will come with branching. If you keep pursuing obedience over time, your group will branch.

There is something exciting about branching a group! You’re always anticipating the next thing God will do in the lives of the people you’ve been meeting with in group. But branching won’t happen unless the group leadership owns the vision for this and is intentional about putting it into practice.

Branching may occur through a set plan (for example, agreeing with an Apprentice at the beginning of a semester that they will start a new group by the end of the semester), or it may begin to occur and evolve naturally as the group changes (transitions, location, the available night to meet, etc).

A coach will help leaders determine the next steps for branching. Branching does require an apprentice or an identified new leader. It is never too early to begin to identify an apprentice.

A healthy group is growing toward branching.