

OUR SOUTH END CITY GROUP

BY TODD MORR



WWW.MISSIONALMADESIMPLE.COM

SOMA TACOMA: SOUTH END CITY GROUP

The following details come from our time leading a Missional Community and helping lead the South End City Group the last 5 years we were in Tacoma from 2011-2016.

On the South End, we had a really fruitful experience with the City Group reality for the last 5 years we were in Tacoma. In that time, we had anywhere from 3 to 7 MC's working together to make disciples and influence the South End with the Gospel. These MC's were all located within 10-15 minutes driving distance from each other. Half of them were within 5 minutes of each other. We went through seasons where we did a lot of good things together and had frequent contact, while at other times we had less contact but still supported each other's MC's.

Here are some of the principles that we learned along the way, some examples of the types of ways we supported each other and partnered together as MC's, and a few practical stories of the difference it made in people's lives.

For a couple of years, the South End CG met together monthly (Sunday nights) for learning, encouragement, and prayer. Sometimes we would tell stories of how different MC's were living out their missions, so that we could all learn from it. Other times, we would share the struggles that each MC was experiencing, so we could encourage each other and speak the Gospel into each other's lives and circumstances. We also spent a good amount of time praying for personal issues going on in people's lives and praying for issues and circumstances related to their MC's. Sometimes we ate a big meal, when we were together, and other times we'd just do some simple snacks or dessert.

Some months, when we felt the need to be more equipped in an area, we would ask someone to prepare a training piece or invite a guest trainer to come in and do it for us. When Soma Tacoma really woke up to the reality and the importance of our need to depend on the Holy Spirit in all of life, some of that "awakening" as a church came out of a 3 month study that our CG did together on the role of the Spirit. The idea that we often talk about now that the Holy Spirit is the primary discipler and equipper of people came directly from that work we did together studying and discussing as a CG.

We also prioritized communicating consistently as a CG through The City (communication platform), email, and Facebook about all kinds of things. This helped us stay aware of what was going on in people's lives and their MC's. It also helped us to pray more and pray more specifically for each other. And, it helped us know when different situations needed some kind of practical help: with finances, meals and groceries, babysitting, marriage counseling, car or home repairs, etc. This often was true with helping in these same ways with the needs of our non-Christian neighbors.

The Missional Communities in the South End CG consistently helped bring increased financial, relational, and prayer capacity to each other's MC's. Examples of this included cross-pollinating relationships with non-Christian friends through doing parties, play dates, sports, and other activities together as a group of MC's. One MC leader couple



organized a number of backyard concerts for their neighborhood that many others from the South End and other MC's helped support and participate in.

We also did numerous work projects - cleaning, fixing, building, and painting - for different families in the neighborhood that multiple MC's helped with financially and with tools and labor. We did a number of repair and cleaning projects for Network Tacoma, a non-profit that works holistically with homeless families, that multiple MC's partnered on together.

The South End City Group helped babysit about 10 kids for one MC, so that they didn't have to worry about childcare for 10 weeks, while they went through the Storyformed Way with their non-Christian neighbors. The City Group did lots of other babysitting for each other, so that different people and MC's could be freed up to do creative things to love their non-Christian neighbors.

We also organized meals for neighbors who were sick or having babies or moving into the neighborhood, where multiple MC's provided many meals by working together. We pooled money at times to help pay for car repairs, home repairs, and many other types of expenses. And, we had much more financial capacity and ability to help, because the burden was not on just one MC but was shared by a number of MC's working together.

At one point, the South End CG helped organize a monthly meal and life skills training night for many homeless families and single Moms connected with Network Tacoma and Step by Step, a non-profit that works with homeless single Moms. We did that monthly at our church facility for over a year. Another time, we partnered with Stewart Middle School, which many of us lived near, and helped them with a number of projects that they didn't have the manpower for. We also organized a number of men's and women's retreats that were specifically just for the MC's from the South End CG that were amazing! This was probably because of how much shared life we were living as an extended family of Missional Communities.

Two quick stories. Hannah and I and our MC cared deeply and consistently for a single Mom and her 5 kids for those 5 years. Though our MC carried much of the load of caring for them, many others from other MC's on the South End joined us at times to help care for their family. Sometimes that meant giving her kids rides, sometimes helping fix something at her house, sometimes giving money to fix her transmission or buy tires, and so many other things. If it had been just our MC trying to care for her in all those ways, for all those years, it would have buried us. Because we had other MC's in the South End though that were helping, it made it possible for us to care for her in a consistent and sustainable way.

When our neighbor Alina lost her 10 year old son in a tragic car accident, it was devastating for her. She wasn't a Christian and knew almost nothing about Jesus or the Bible. She had very little hope. Soon after her son died, we offered to bring her meals for the next 7 weeks. That's a lot of meals! Obviously, 1 MC couldn't do that, but a group of MC's working together could. During that time, Alina's family was greatly blessed with the food, but she also got to meet a bunch of awesome people that love Jesus that were delivering those meals to her home each time. She was blown away by all of it and a short time later started asking Hannah if she would read the Bible with her and discuss



it. A few months later she gave her life to Jesus! A few months after that her 9 year old daughter gave her life to Jesus!

There's more I could share, but hopefully you've seen the power of a City Group and the potential of a group of MC's working together to support each other and to support the different missions that each one is called to in their neighborhoods.

