

East Hill Church Sermon Discussion Guide: Strategic Priorities

Speaker: Pastor Keith Jenkins

Date: March 3rd, 2024

Introduction:

The service commenced with an enlightening segment on African New Life, highlighting the church's substantial involvement, particularly in child sponsorship. This initiative has been instrumental in providing educational opportunities to children in Rwanda, addressing the dire need for support beyond primary education to combat entrenched poverty cycles. PK (Pastor Keith) followed this with a comprehensive year-end review of 2023. This review showcased the church's attendance, both in-person and online, detailed financial contributions, and transparently outlined the allocation of funds through a pie chart. This introduction set the stage for discussing the church's four strategic priorities aimed at guiding their focus in the coming years.

Restoration & Healing:

Pastor Keith delved deeper into the theme of Restoration & Healing, emphasizing the church's resolve to confront and mend the brokenness within the community. He reiterated the commitment, "We will address brokenness to encounter freedom and courage," highlighting the church's dedication to creating a space where individuals feel empowered to confront their struggles openly. Furthermore, with the statement, "We will empower people with tools and support to experience freedom," Pastor Keith underscored the proactive steps the church plans to take. This includes providing resources, counseling, and support groups designed to equip individuals with the means to overcome their challenges. PK shared heartfelt stories and examples of transformation, illustrating the profound impact of this priority on individuals' lives, fostering an environment of hope and renewal.

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you share a time when addressing a personal brokenness led to a sense of freedom or courage in your life? How did that experience change you?
2. In what ways can we as a community offer tools and support to those seeking healing? Are there specific resources or practices you've found helpful?
3. How does our faith inform our understanding of restoration and healing? Can you think of a biblical example that exemplifies this process?
4. Discuss the role of vulnerability in the healing process. Have there been moments when opening up about your struggles led to unexpected support or insight?

Supporting Verses:

Psalm 147:3 (NIV): "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** This Psalm is a song of praise, celebrating God's power and compassion, particularly His care for the downtrodden and distressed.
- **Theological Significance:** It emphasizes God's attentiveness to the suffering and His role as the healer of both physical and emotional pain.
- **Application to Restoration & Healing:** This verse serves as a reminder of God's nearness to those in need of healing. In our journey towards restoration, we are encouraged to seek God's healing presence and extend this compassionate healing to others within our community.

Jeremiah 30:17 (NIV): "But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,' declares the LORD."

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** This promise comes within a prophetic declaration to the people of Israel during a time of great distress and exile, foretelling God's plans for their restoration and healing.
 - **Theological Significance:** It emphasizes God's power to heal and restore, not just physically but also the societal and spiritual wounds of a community or nation.
 - **Application to Restoration & Healing:** This verse reassures us of God's commitment to our complete healing. In our ministry, it encourages us to trust in God's restorative power for ourselves and to embody this divine promise as we minister to others, advocating for holistic healing that encompasses physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.
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Impact the Community:

PK painted a vision of the church as a beacon of light and friendship within the city. He shared the church's initiatives to engage with local issues, from feeding the homeless to partnering with city officials on community projects. The singular quote, "We will be a friend to the city," served as a rallying call for the congregation to extend their hands in service beyond the church walls. Pastor Keith emphasized the importance of active participation in community betterment, showcasing projects and partnerships that have made tangible differences. This priority is about living out faith through action, making the church an integral and indispensable part of the community's fabric.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does being a "friend to the city" look like in practical terms? Share an example of a time you or someone you know made a positive impact in the community.
2. How can our small group actively participate in community service projects? Brainstorm ideas for initiatives we could undertake together.

3. Discuss the challenges and rewards of community engagement. Have you ever faced resistance or discouragement while trying to make an impact? How did you overcome it?
4. In what ways can we ensure our actions in the community reflect Christ's love and teachings? Are there specific areas of need in our city that resonate with you personally?

Supporting Verses:

Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV): "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden... In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** Part of the Sermon on the Mount, these verses capture Jesus' teaching on the influential role of His followers in the world.
- **Theological Significance:** Highlights the responsibility of believers to reflect God's light through righteous actions, serving as a beacon of hope and guidance.
- **Application to Impact the Community:** Encourages us to actively engage in our communities, using our gifts and actions to illuminate the love and truth of God. Our collective efforts in service and kindness can significantly impact the well-being of our city, drawing others towards God's grace.

Galatians 6:10 (NIV): "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** Written by Paul to the churches in Galatia, this verse is part of his instructions on living a life that reflects the fruits of the Spirit, emphasizing the importance of doing good and supporting one another.
- **Theological Significance:** It calls Christians to actively seek out opportunities to do good, highlighting the importance of benevolence and support within the Christian community as well as to the wider world.
- **Application to Impact the Community:** Encourages us to look for and seize opportunities to contribute positively to our community, emphasizing the importance of kindness and support not only within our church but also extending our goodwill to the broader society. It challenges us to embody the principle of love in action, making tangible differences in the lives around us.

Leadership Development:

In discussing Leadership Development, Pastor Keith stressed the importance of preparing the congregation for active ministry roles, reflecting on the quote, "We will mobilize the people of East Hill to do ministry." He outlined a vision where every church member feels called and

equipped to serve, whether within the church's ministries or in the wider community. PK shared success stories of individuals who stepped into leadership roles, highlighting the transformative power of taking active roles in ministry. This focus on leadership development is seen as crucial for the church's growth and health, ensuring that its members are not just attendees but active participants in God's work.

Discussion Questions:

1. Reflect on a time you were called to a leadership role, whether in the church, your workplace, or another area of life. What did you learn from that experience?
2. How can we identify and nurture leadership qualities in others within our church community? Discuss the importance of mentorship and support.
3. Share a biblical figure who exemplifies leadership development. What aspects of their story can we apply to our efforts in mobilizing church members for ministry?
4. Leadership often involves making difficult decisions. Can you recall a decision you had to make that tested your leadership? How did you navigate that situation?

Supporting Verses:

2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV): "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** Written by Paul to Timothy, this letter encourages perseverance and faithfulness in spreading the gospel and strengthening the church's leadership.
- **Theological Significance:** It underlines the importance of discipleship and the multiplication of godly leadership through teaching and mentorship.
- **Application to Leadership Development:** This passage calls us to invest in developing leaders within the church who can faithfully guide others. By nurturing a culture of mentorship and discipleship, we ensure the growth and sustainability of our church's mission and impact.

Ephesians 4:11-12 (NIV): "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** This passage outlines the roles within the church designed to prepare all Christians for service, contributing to the growth and unity of the church.
- **Theological Significance:** Highlights the diversity of gifts and roles within the Christian community, all aimed at edifying the church and fostering spiritual growth among its members.
- **Application to Leadership Development:** This scripture underscores the importance of recognizing and nurturing diverse gifts within our community for ministry. It calls us to embrace and facilitate a culture where every member is empowered to contribute their

unique gifts towards the collective mission of the church, fostering a vibrant, multifaceted ministry.

Next Generation (0-25 yrs):

Focusing on the Next Generation, Pastor Keith expressed a deep commitment to investing in the youth and the supportive adults in their lives, encapsulated by the quote, "We will invest in the next generation and the adults in their inner circle." He elaborated on the various programs aimed at children and young adults, from Sunday school initiatives to mentorship programs, emphasizing the importance of providing a strong spiritual foundation. PK shared inspiring stories of young people leading change, driven by the support and guidance from the church community. This priority highlights a forward-looking approach, ensuring the church remains relevant and impactful for future generations.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it important to invest in the next generation and the adults in their inner circle? Share a personal story of someone who positively influenced your faith journey during your formative years.
2. Discuss the challenges and opportunities that come with ministering to children and young adults in today's cultural landscape. How can we better connect with them?
3. How can we create a church environment that is welcoming and nurturing for the next generation? Consider aspects like worship, teaching, and community involvement.
4. Reflect on the statement, "We will invest in the next generation and the adults in their inner circle." How does this commitment challenge us to act and think differently about our roles in the church?

Supporting Verses:

Proverbs 22:6 (NIV): "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** A piece of wisdom literature, this Proverb emphasizes the importance of early education and moral upbringing.
- **Theological Significance:** It suggests that the values and lessons instilled in youth have a lasting impact, shaping their future paths and choices.
- **Application to Next Generation:** Highlights the critical role of the church and families in guiding the next generation towards a life of faith and righteousness. By investing in their spiritual education and development, we lay a foundation for a strong, faith-filled future, ensuring that they, too, will contribute to God's kingdom.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (NIV): "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

Context and Reflection:

- **Historical/Cultural Context:** Part of Moses' instructions to the Israelites, this passage emphasizes the importance of constant, daily instruction in God's laws and principles as a central aspect of family and community life.
- **Theological Significance:** Stresses the responsibility of each generation to pass on their faith and God's commandments to the next, ensuring that God's ways are deeply embedded in the fabric of their lives.
- **Application to Next Generation:** Highlights the crucial role of intentional, continuous spiritual mentoring and education in the home and community. It inspires us to create environments where faith is lived out and discussed openly, ensuring that the next generation is grounded in their identity as God's people, equipped to navigate life with wisdom and integrity.

Conclusion/Reflection

Pastor Keith Jenkins has articulated a clear and compelling vision for the future. Through its four strategic priorities—Restoration & Healing, Impact the Community, Leadership Development, and Investing in the Next Generation—the church demonstrates a commitment to making a meaningful difference in the lives of its members and the broader community. This vision invites members to engage deeply with the church's mission, contributing to a vibrant and transformative church experience.

Prayer Requests:

[Share any personal prayer requests, and pray over the week ahead]

References:

Primary Sources:

- "Restoration, Community, Leadership, and the Next Generation" Sermon, East Hill Foursquare Church, 02/25/2024. Provided by Pastor Keith Jenkins.
- Sermon Discussion Guide, Provided by Kelly Paxton, and East Hill Church.
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Secondary Sources:

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 - Keller, Timothy. "The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism." Penguin Books, 2009.

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- Mounce, William D. "Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words." Zondervan, 2006.

Collaborative Contributions:

- LLM Contributions: Based on a mixture of licensed data, data created by AI models, and publicly available data, synthesized for the study of the provided biblical verses.

LLM Training Data:

- LLM Training Data. Includes a diverse range of texts (books, websites, and other publications) up to April 2023.