



The Collective Academy 2023

Coaching Congregations Into Vocational Stewardship for the Life of the World

Summary

A four-month learning community led by Flourish San Diego, composed of leaders from churches and ministries from San Diego County. Its purpose is to learn together how to form disciples who are stewarding their vocational power to love our city to life. We encourage and invite interested organizations to inquire and apply for the 2023 Cohort.

What Are We Trying To Do?

Here at Flourish San Diego, we believe that the kind of discipleship that will lead people to follow Jesus into his work of renewing and restoring humanity and creation is one that must embrace a robust understanding of calling, vocation, and work. Toward this end, we are working to catalyze a network of churches, ministries, and redemptive businesses in San Diego that can continually learn and collaborate in the kingdom work of renewing culture and flourishing our city.

What Will It Look Like?

Together, the 2023 cohort of the Collective Academy will:

- a. learn, champion, and infuse a robust understanding of faith, work, and economic wisdom into congregational life and practices.
- b. discern how to collaborate together in new initiatives, drawing on their members' gifts and callings to flourish our city.

The Flourish team — with alumni, volunteers, and friends — will facilitate and curate the learning experience. The teaching team will include notable practitioners and authorities in the arenas of "Faith and Work," "Calling/Vocation," spiritual formation, and economic wisdom.

2023 Retreat Dates

- **Retreat One** • Jan 14, 2023
Focus on approaching the work of the church through a missiological lens, reframing and redeploying the ideas of Mission, Discipleship, and Vocation.
- **Retreat Two** • Feb 4, 2023
Focus on the big story of God and identifying the posture best suited to Christian engagement in the current cultural moment.

- **Retreat Three** • Feb 25, 2023
Focus on the Gospel and contrasting it with its counterfeits. We will also revisit Kingdom theology and how its recovery can shape congregations to redemptive community engagement.
- **Retreat Four** • Mar 18, 2023
This retreat will focus on economics, social enterprise, and international development. We'll explore four pathways for deploying people in light of vocational stewardship.
- **Retreat Five** • Apr 15, 2023
Focus on "The Be Diagram" and its usefulness to design and evaluate programming for discipleship that transforms the heart and loves a community to life.

Who Is This For?

Our Intended Audience

While this learning community will not be for just anyone, we believe there are many audiences that can be served by what we are trying to do.

Our work will resonate with ministry leaders who:

- Believe that the gospel offers more than a ticket to heaven but points to the kind of life that we are both created for and yearn for.
- Know that discipleship is the answer, but yearns for a fresh way of following Jesus that embraces all of life.
- Seek a different posture to our prevailing culture that remains distinct within it, yet is perceived as being *for* the city.
- Have a sneaking suspicion, or a flat out conviction that "more and faster" does not describe the best way forward for the church to be a redemptive presence in our communities.

In the end, Flourish San Diego is interested in fostering a network of organizations who learn, journey and collaborate in an effort help the body of Christ flourish San Diego. We call this network the Flourish Collective and believe it can be an important contribution to help seek the shalom of our city.

Increasingly, we are finding that leaders a variety of ministries are seeking to participate as well. We welcome this opportunity to serve and will work to contextualize the outcomes to suit these contexts.

Team Composition

An important part of the design of this learning community is that we are asking for a minimum of two people from each church to attend and participate. Churches that bring a third or fourth person will be given priority consideration for participation.

One person should be a pastor or ministry leader with direct influence in the areas of discipleship and missions or outreach. The other person should be a person who is living into their callings in the marketplace, community, or home.

- The “pastor” does not need to be the head or lead pastor though that would be great. Ideally, we are looking for the person who has the freedom to direct and create discipleship curriculum, as well as the authority to implement it. Pastors or ministry directors oriented toward outreach, missions, and/or justice matters, are the people who will really resonate with our approach.
- The “partner” should be someone who lives into his or her callings outside of the church. We are looking for people who know that God has created them for “X” and “X” is how God will use them to bring a foretaste of the kingdom into the present. (Where “X” may represent a marketplace person, entrepreneur, nonprofit volunteer, elected official, musician, artist, mom, and/or spouse, etc.) This person tends to be a great partner in championing vocational understanding at the church.

Feel free to inquire with Geoff about who you think would be best suited for this learning community. We recommend the third or fourth participant from a church to be key leaders or staff.

Selection Criteria

To best steward the generous resources entrusted to us, below you will find a brief list of selection criteria that we’ll be using to help us discern who will be participating with us for the 2023 Academy Cohort.

- People who love Jesus, love their churches, and love their community.
- We are aiming for denominational diversity of participating churches.
- We are aiming for diversity in the size of participating churches (from church plants to much larger churches).
- We are aiming for ministries at different places in their awareness of calling, vocation, faith and work, spiritual formation, to name a few of the renewal streams we will be integrating.
- People who will honor a high commitment to the reading, learning, and application to their contexts. The dates for the upcoming meetings have been posted, and while

- situations may arise, our expectation is that participants would be able to attend all the retreats.
- Ministries who will want (or are willing as best as they can determine at the point of application) to collaborate, share best practices, and journey together in this “divine conspiracy.”
- Ministries with three or four participants will receive priority consideration. We have found these larger delegations have the best opportunity to bringing lasting change in their congregational practices.

Desired Outcomes

Flourish San Diego believes that three key elements are necessary to help form churches and ministries that are seeking the common good of their world. Such entities:

- Understand the comprehensive scope of the God’s mission in the world (the renewal of all things);
- Embrace the biblical vision of vocation, wherein God gifts and calls His people into other-centered service; and
- Implement effective discipleship practices that form congregants’ hearts and minds for authentic, powerful, and glad participant in the *missio Dei*.

Consequently, the Flourish Collective Academy will:

Inform participating churches with a sense of Mission that:

- Is conversant with an economic/stewardship lens, giving a more helpful picture of how to help the least among us; one that is informed by economic realities;
- Embraces the image of God in all people, including their innate calling to create and produce in service of others;
- Anticipates the renewal, redemption and restoration of all things, not just the rescuing of souls; and
- Is shaped by the narrative of God’s work in history as recorded in scripture.

Teach a robust understanding of Vocation and Calling:

- That embraces people’s gifts, passions, training, and resources to be employed in the specific places of God’s mission into which He is calling them;
- Which is increasingly free of the debilitating dualism that elevates the sacred while devaluing the ordinary and everyday;
- That sacralizes ordinary work whether in the marketplace, the community or the home; and
- That informs parishioners of ways they can steward their lives in fresh new avenues of service that contribute to the shalom of their cities.

Reframe or recover a Discipleship that:

- Transforms the inner life and character of people so that they are willing to live into their callings to flourish the world;
- Motivates people into kingdom service because of the gospel of grace rather than religious performance;
- Embraces spiritual practices as a means to cultivate and increasingly reflect the imago Dei; and
- Places a high value on hearing/listening for God's voice to foster the kind of reliance and response to Him for which we were created.

Vocation Infusion Plan

The central outcome of this local Learning Community will be the development of a customized "Vocation Infusion Plan" composed by each church's delegation. This plan will identify activities or initiative(s) that leaders will commit to implement so as to infuse their learning into their congregations.

Based on the experiences reported by churches participating in the last four years of these learning communities, we anticipate that participants will:

- Begin offering more and better preaching and teaching on vocation, faith, work, and whole-life stewardship;
- Place greater emphasis on vocational stewardship in adult education programs, youth ministries and worship services;
- Strengthen congregants' participation in God's mission of cultural and community renewal; and
- Launch new (or re-engineered) initiatives that flourish their neighborhoods, our city, and our world, which are based on sound economic understanding.

Ongoing Collaboration For The Life Of San Diego

Each year, we grow the number of churches and ministries in the network we call the Flourish Collective. Through the Collective, we are committed to developing ongoing relationships and offering continued learning experiences around vocational stewardship. These efforts seek to establish a growing collaborative network of churches—clear on mission and strategy and rooted in one city.

This network has the potential to implement significant new initiatives that draw on the unique strengths of multiple congregations, for advancing the common good.

Costs & Scholarships

Academy Tuition

The tuition for the first three people from a participating church or organization will be \$1,000.

Scholarships

To make the Academy accessible, scholarship requests of up to \$700 are available according to need. The Collective Academy Application includes a section for scholarship requests which can be applied for at the time of application. These generous scholarships are made available thanks to our fabulous ministry partners.

Additional Participants

Since we have learned that larger teams get the best benefit from our Academy, we are prioritizing larger teams. Each church will be responsible to pay for additional members of their team. Each additional person will pay \$50.

An Example

For example, a delegation of 4 people from one organization that requests a \$200 scholarship:

Tuition for the first three participants	\$1,000
Fourth participant	\$50
Total Tuition	\$1,050
Scholarship Request	\$200
Final Tuition	\$850

Applications

We will be accepting churches and ministries on a rolling basis. Scholarships will be available at the time of application. We hope to have enough funding for the entire cohort, so we encourage early application.

Mutual Commitments

Flourish San Diego commitment:

- We commit to creating a learning environment that will help you form disciples that will seek the common good of our communities.
- We will expose you to great reading, video resources, discussions on topics that will help your church and your people be formed into their vocation(s).
- We will do our best to put before you great examples of people and churches who are flourishing their communities.
- We hope to put before you the kinds of resources that will help you thrive as a church: ideas, examples, funding, etc.

We ask of you:

- A written and signed commitment to do the reading and homework in a timely yet unhurried manner.
- Completion of the Vocation Infusion Plan. It is a powerful self-assessment and planning tool. This completion is centrally important for ongoing reporting regarding the effectiveness of effort.
- Payment of tuition prior to participation in the learning community.
- Consistent participation in retreats and exit interviews.
- A willingness to journey together in partnership with Flourish San Diego to love our city to life.

I hope you will consider applying to join our 2022 Collective Academy. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Geoff Hsu at geoff@flourishsandiego.org.