



WELCOME: *This week begins a new series, based on the values of Connect and seeking to help us engage in personal and communal spiritual formation around those values.*

The earliest followers of Jesus were known as people of "The Way" (Acts 9:2). Following Jesus is more than believing certain truths; it is learning a way of life shaped by His presence, His character, and His mission. Connect Church family expresses our core values through a picture of the "Garden of Endearing," a visual representation of God's plan for us. Each tree in the Garden represents an important aspect of what it means to flourish as disciples of Jesus. As we explore these values together, may God help us become people who are grounded in Christ and fruitful in His Kingdom.

1- The Tree of Life (Jesus at the Centre)

Read John 15:1-8 Jesus is the source of life, growth, and fruitfulness. The Tree of Life reminds us that everything begins with Him.

Discussion Questions

- What stands out to you in Jesus' teaching about the vine and branches?
- How can we tell the difference between being busy **for** God and remaining connected to God?
- What does "being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and doing what Jesus did" look like in everyday life?

2 - The Cedar Tree (Prayer) rising like incense Ps 141:2

Read Luke 5:15–16; Phil 4:6–7 The Cedar Tree is first on our list and reminds us that prayer is not a last resort but our first response. We depend **on** God before we do anything **for** God.

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think Jesus regularly withdrew to pray?
- What helps or hinders your prayer life at this stage of your journey?
- How might our church change if we truly moved at the speed of prayer?

3 - The Oak Tree (Identity)

Read 1 Peter 2:9–10; 1 John 3:1 The Oak Tree represents strength and security. Our identity is not found in what we do but we determine who we are by whose we are.

Discussion Questions

- What do these passages teach us about who we are in Christ?
- How does understanding our identity affect our confidence and purpose?
- What voices compete with God's voice in defining your identity?

4 - The Vine (Family)

Read John 13:34–35; Acts 2:42–47 Jesus calls His followers into a spiritual family marked by love, encouragement, generosity and shared life in Him.

Discussion Questions

- In what ways is the church different from simply being an organisation or institution?
- What practical actions demonstrate Christ-like love within a church family?
- How do you think Connect Church can become an even stronger spiritual family?

5 - The Olive Tree (Journey)

Read Matthew 28:18–20; Luke 24:13–35 The Christian life is a journey of following Jesus, helping others follow Him as we become increasingly like Him on our journey.

Discussion Questions

- What do you think it means to "make disciples" rather than simply attend church?
- How has Jesus met you personally during your faith journey?
- Who do you think God might be inviting you to encourage or disciple at this time?

6 - The Palm Tree (Village Hub)

Read Matthew 5:14–16; Jeremiah 29:7 The Palm Tree reminds us that God places His people in places to welcome others and puts His church in communities to be a blessing.

Discussion Questions

- What do you think it means to let our light shine in our local community?
- How as Christians can we seek the peace and prosperity of our neighbourhood?
- In what ways is Connect Church already blessing our community, and where could we grow?

7 - The Fig Tree (Fruitfulness/Multiplication)

Read 2 Timothy 2:1–2; Colossians 1:5–6 God's intention has always been multiplication; from the beginning He sent his people out to be "fruitful and multiply." Healthy disciples make disciples who make disciples.

Discussion Questions

- What examples of spiritual fruitfulness have you seen in your own life?
- Why is multiplication important in God's Kingdom?
- What are we reproducing in the lives of others through our example and influence?

APPLICATION

Take a moment to think of one person by name.

Who will you choose to bless this week?

What practical step can you take to encourage, serve, pray for, support, or share the love of Jesus with that person in the coming days?

Share your answer with the group and pray for one another.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for calling us to follow Jesus in the way of life. Thank You for inviting us into Your Garden, where we are grounded in Christ and nourished by Your Spirit. Help us to keep Jesus at the centre of everything we do. Teach us to be people of prayer, secure in our identity as Your children, committed to loving one another as family, faithful on the journey of discipleship, and determined to be a blessing to our community. Make us fruitful for Your Kingdom.

Help us to reproduce the life of Christ in others and to leave a legacy of faith for future generations. Today we commit ourselves again to live for Jesus, to follow His way, and to reflect these values in our homes, workplaces, neighbourhood, and church family. May Your Spirit empower us to flourish for Your glory. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.