WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CITY LIFE AND CAMPUS LIFE

KEY SIMILARITY 1
Both ministry models reach out to lost, un-churched youth.
Both City Life and Campus Life ministry models are designed to lead adults to desire to pursue loving relationships with un-churched youth to introduce them to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

KEY SIMILARITY 2
Both ministry models desire to raise up life-long followers of Christ.
Both City Life and Campus Life ministries strive to see the young people they have relationships with become life-long followers of Jesus.

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KEY DIFFERENCE 1
The Ministry Entry Point: Campus vs. Neighborhood
In many communities across the country, local schools are the center of the fabric of the neighborhood. In communities like these, unless a person decides to send their child to a private school, almost all of the students from the same neighborhood would attend the same high school or middle school. This community identity developed around a school campus is a key area of pride for the youth and families in that community. Becoming a trusted and known servant within a school is an instrumental strategy for building an effective Campus Life ministry.

In contrast, many people from urban communities identify first with the neighborhood that they live in rather than the school they or their children attend. Urban communities are often divided by geographical boundaries: rivers, train tracks, freeways, etc. and are divided when it comes to school attendance. Because of school choice or busing division, students who live on the same street in urban communities could all be attending different high schools or middle schools within a city district.

Because of this recent phenomena within city school districts and the emergence of charter schools, City Life ministries focuses on a specific neighborhood first. This might or might not include a school campus. If a school campus located in the community is populated with a majority of students from that neighborhood, one might consider a presence at that local school as a key component of their City Life strategy.

KEY DIFFERENCE 2
Holistic Ministry Expectations: Delivered One-on-One vs. Program
Campus Life ministries care about the whole person needs of the young people they reach. Yet, Campus Life staff can expect that the majority of youth they serve will have the basic holistic needs met by either their family or their community. While Campus Life teens can encounter lots of life difficulties, usually Campus Life staff can address these needs on a one-to-one basis. For example, if a student falls behind in school, a tutoring relationship can be arranged through a volunteer or through a community partner to assist the student with this need - there is no need for the Campus Life ministry to launch an entire tutoring program for their Campus Life students.

In City Life, staff expect that the majority of the basic holistic needs of the youth they serve will not be met by their families or their community. Often the majority of young people are struggling with significant whole person needs. In urban areas where the high school drop out rates can reach over 50% of the student population, it is no longer plausible to meet the needs of students through a one-to-one basis. It is better stewardship for the City Life ministry to expect to meet these needs in a large scale way with a community partner (if available) or City Life might need to launch a program to help both the young people and the adults who are serving the youth.

KEY DIFFERENCE 3
Indigenous Leadership Development: The Key to Excellent City Life Ministry
In Campus Life, students graduate from high school and then in a healthy way move on to attending college. Most students don’t stay in the community where they grew up during these formative years. Campus Life strives to develop life-long followers of Jesus, but post-high school, that development is often not centered on their existing community.

In City Life, many students do not attend college and do not move out of the community they grew up in. Therefore, City Life students have an opportunity to give back to the next generation in a significant way as young adults. In missiological terms, this is called indigenous leadership. Indigenous leaders are more effective in communicating the gospel message to their own culture than those Christian workers who are from another culture. Their ability to call young people to live a life dedicated to Christ is critical for young people to see a living example from their own culture of a life that has been transformed by a relationship with Jesus. While most Campus Life ministries see the majority of their students graduate away from the ministry, the City Life ministry strives to retain these students into adulthood as volunteers for the ministry.