

Essentials of Discipleship 8: Telling the World

Thinking and talking about mission and evangelism can be difficult for people. Usually because of bad experiences in the past, people sometimes think that they are going to be pressurised through guilt into activities (like door knocking or open air preaching) that they find embarrassing and ineffective. In mission as in life nothing succeeds like success and people who have seen good models (Alpha courses, friendship evangelism) that are not naff and do work encourage us to have confidence that God can change people's lives. The point of what follows is to blow away a few cobwebs and emphasise that mission stems from loving community.

Part 1: Talking about Mission

- What do the words 'evangelism' and 'mission' mean to you? How do you feel when you hear talk about these subjects - are you excited, worried, confused, or what?
- Do you think that all Christians should evangelise? Should we all engage in mission? Should we all 'witness'? Why?

Part 2: Thinking about the early Church and Mission

Read Acts 2.42-47; Acts 3.32-37

- What do you think made the early Church attractive to non-believers? (Or was it just the message about Jesus that was attractive?!)
- What can we learn from their example for our cell? What makes Jesus and his Church attractive to people today? What are we good at and where do we need to improve?
- Some people think that 'believing comes before belonging' in mission, others that 'belonging comes before believing'. What role does drawing people into community play in seeing people come to Jesus? What would a missionary Church of today look like?

Part 3: Motivations for Mission

Read 2 Corinthians 5.11-15

- What motivations for telling people about Christ does Paul mention in this passage?
- What reasons have you heard for why we evangelise? Make a list. What do you think are good and bad motivations? What motivates you to tell people about Jesus?

Part 4: Our Cell and Mission

It often takes quite a long time after formation (12-24 months) for cells to be really ready to draw new people in. But here is a short discussion exercise just to get us thinking in a more outward-looking way.

- What would people new to (our form of!) Christian faith make of a typical cell meeting? Would it be it accessible, easy to be part of? To what extent should it be?
- Ask each person to imagine the friend, neighbour, work mate or fellow student, that you can most easily imagine showing some interest in Christianity. What would be the best way to engage them in stepping closer to faith?

Part 5: For Further Study

Read Romans 15. 15-24: Paul's Missionary Commission

- In what sense is Paul saying that his missionary work is a 'priestly' activity?
- In 15.18-19 Paul describes the missionary methods he uses to conduct his mission.
- What are they and what does he mean by the description he uses? How good are we at each of these?
- Why does Paul say that he wants to press on to Spain to evangelise? (He never got there, incidentally). What implications might this have for our vision of where and how we contribute to God's work of mission?