

Week 5 – Outreach in the Vineyard



Leader's Note

Last week we spoke about making disciples and focussed mainly on what we do after someone comes to Jesus. Another major aspect is reaching out to people so that they can be introduced to Jesus. Our churches policy is that we seek to disciple and care for our people, but ultimately we exist to reach out to those who are not following Jesus. In everything we do and in all our groups we want to have an open chair policy. That is, no matter how full we are, there is always room for an outsider to come in.

We all know that not everyone is an evangelist, but we can all reach out in ways that suit our personalities and characters. Today's study aims to give your people a chance to explore what these may be.

For instance, my brother is not very good with words. He always knows what to say about 5 minutes after he should have said it; it drives him mad. For this reason he is not good and talking to strangers about his faith, so traditional evangelism on a street is not for him. Where he is strong however is attracting friends. Every single one of the best friends he has had in his life has made a commitment to Jesus. The reason why is that he is trustworthy, so they always come to church with him when invited. God does the rest and my brother picks it up at the discipleship stage. He may not do 'evangelism', but he does reach out!



Learning Session

Read Matt 5:13-16 and 1 Peter 3:13-16

Tease out the fact (from these passages) that when we live life as true worshippers (John 4) we will get noticed, even if we are not doing evangelism. From this get your folk to discuss the following questions (in smaller groups):

- Are you able to approach people to talk about your faith or are you someone who struggles with communication?
- Does the way you live your life get noticed?
- How do you respond when someone challenges you, or asks you, about your beliefs and practices? How should you respond?
- When you meet someone and feel that God might like you to invite to some church activity, what holds you back from doing so the most?

Bring everyone in again and be sure to tease out the following:

- Fear is not a reason to avoid something, if that is the only reason, maybe you should take a step of faith. Pray for wisdom in this part of the discussion (it is justifiable if someone has poor communication skills, or is a bit flaky, to not be doing evangelism on the streets and so on. But be diplomatic as this is discussed. Some of you folk need to just face their fear and get out there because they are good at communication, and others are more awkward communicators who are better placed in service and reaching out to their friends.)
- Don't be ashamed, even if others think you are foolish. Nothing Jesus did is shameful. It is an honour for someone to be invited into this aspect of your life. You should act like you're extending an honour and not like you are violating someone's space.
- Don't feel you need to fight a losing battle, if someone is just out for an argument back away, unless God gives you a Word of Knowledge.
- Always try to focus on what the Father wants to do in relationships. The things He leads you to do and say will surprise you.

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