

talking about...

Jesus



HOME GROUPS

Autumn 2010

Week Beginning...	Session on...
Monday 11 th October	LOVE
Monday 18 th October	UNDERSTAND
Monday 25 th October	PRAY
Wednesday 3 rd November	PRAYER MEETING
Monday 8 th November	CONNECT
Monday 15 th November	INVITE
Monday 22 nd November	TALK
Wednesday 1 st December	ADVENT REFLECTION

INTRODUCTION



Think of the people you meet everyday... your friends, your family, your neighbours, your work colleagues, your club members. Think of the mother pushing the buggy, the man walking the dog, the children playing in the park. Some you know well, others you don't know at all. Do any of them not need Jesus?

As Christians we know that everyone needs Jesus but many of us don't find it easy to talk about him. It just doesn't seem to come naturally. We can talk about the weather, the weekend, the sports results even the price of petrol but when it comes to talking about Jesus we seem, well... eh, lost for words.

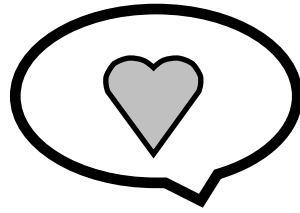
Talking about Jesus is designed to help us do just that! Over the six sessions we'll be thinking about the whats and whys, the whos and hows. Together we will learn the importance of praying and saying, of knowing and loving those who need to hear about Jesus. May we be those who God would use in answering the Lord's Other Prayer:

*The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.
Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out
workers into his harvest field.*



Matthew 9v37-38

LOVE



Welcome

Who are the people you love? Why do you love them?

Worship

Reflect on the love that God has for us using the words of **Psalm 103**.

Praise God for his fatherly compassion on his children.

Word

It is spoken in many languages. It is one of the most common of words we use. It is a powerful word. It changes lives. But it can be a word that is hard to pin down. What does it really mean? What is 'love'? If you asked everyone who you met today what sort of answers would you have got?

I love is...

Ultimately it is God who shows us what love is in the giving of his son Jesus (1 John 3v16). Through his life and death Jesus shows us what it means to love. Let's learn from his model of love for others.

Read: Matthew 9v35-38

1. How did Jesus view people (v35-36)?
2. How does that compare with how we view people?
3. Why does Jesus tell his disciples to pray (v37-38)?
4. How is our praying for people connected with our loving of people?



When it comes to talking about Jesus the first step has got to be sharing his heart for the lost. If we fail to see people as Jesus did (hopeless and lost), then we will have no reason to tell them about Jesus. We need to ask God to help us to see people as Jesus did and so have compassion. Only then will we want to be talking about Jesus.



Read: 2 Corinthians 5v10-21

1. What do we learn about the Christ's love in v14-15?
2. What did God achieve through Christ's death (v17-21)?
3. What does this mean for our attitude towards other people (v16, 20)?
4. From this passage, what do you think is our core motivation for reaching out to other people with the message of Christ?

Work



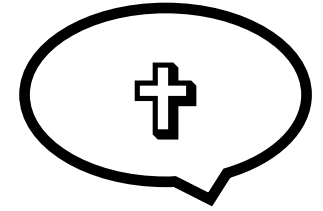
- ☞ What do you think you have you learnt about love from Jesus?
What do you need to do in order to love like Jesus?
- ☞ How strongly does “the love of Christ” currently figure in your motivations for reaching out to others? How could you increase your appreciation of the love of Christ?
- ☞ What are you hoping to learn from these six sessions on talking about Jesus? Share something of your own experience of talking to people about Jesus.
- ☞ Divide into pairs and spend no more than two minutes telling the other person about how you became a Christian. (It doesn't have to be clever, or dramatic or even clear. Just describe as best as you can how you came to know the love of Christ for yourself.)

Pray...



- ☞ Use the Lord's Other Prayer as a basis for prayer (Matthew 9v37-38).
- ☞ Thank God for the love he has shown us in Jesus.
- ☞ Ask God to fire you with love for the people around you.

Understand



Welcome



Who was it that first explained to you the good news of Jesus?
How did they do that?

Worship



Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1v12

Praise God that he has not left us in the dark but he has made himself known to us through Jesus! Thank God for those who first explained the gospel to you.

Word



“Never forget where you're coming from” the lyrics of a famous Northern boy band. As Christians we can easily forget where we've come from before we knew Jesus. We ought to remember so that we can humbly rejoice in the salvation which came not through our efforts, but through God's grace in Christ Jesus. That's surely something we should never forget!

Read: Ephesians 2v1-10

1. How do people who are not Christians view themselves?
2. According to verses 1-3 what condition are people in before they become Christians?
3. Humanly speaking is there any hope for people in this situation?
4. What has God done for Christians (v4-6)? What motivated him (v7)?
5. Verses 8-10 speak of salvation as a free gift of God.

What should people do in response to this gift of grace?

What shouldn't people do in response to this gift of grace?

“ When it comes to talking about Jesus we need not only a love for people but a love for the gospel of grace. This love ought to give us a desire to know the gospel and remembering it - not just for our own benefit but for others. For when we know this gospel we will surely want to tell it to others! ”

Discuss...



Francis of Assisi is alleged to have said: 'Preach the gospel always; if necessary using words.' Is this what the Bible teaches about evangelism?

Understanding Jesus: The 4 R's

There are many ways to remember and explain the gospel. We can use Ephesians 2v1-10 as a foundation. Look again at the verses under these headings, how might you explain the gospel in your own words?

① Rebellion v1-3	③ Resurrection v6-7
② Rescue v4-5	④ Response v8-10

You could remember this outline and keep it in mind when talking about Jesus. You could even open up this passage and show them. Or if you want to try another outline turn to Appendix 1 to find *2Ways2Live* a helpful outline with pictures, big ideas and bible verses.

As you may have discovered already, not everyone will want to hear this 'good news'! We need to be ready for mixed bag of responses.

Read: Acts 17v1-9, 32-34

1. What responses do we see to the gospel in Thessalonica and Athens?
2. What responses do you think you would receive from people if you explained the gospel? How do we deal with these responses?

Work



☞ What does the gospel message teach us:

- about God?
- about ourselves?
- about other people?

☞ Divide into pairs again (with different people from last week) and have another go at sharing your story of how you came to be a follower of Jesus. Again it does not need to be slick or clever, just use your own words. This time, see if you can do it in one minute.

☞ Plan to remember. If you don't plan understand the gospel then you won't be able to remember. Plan a time over the next week to sit down with Ephesians 2v-10 open or *2Ways2Live*. You may not be asked to rehearse it next week, but one day it may come in handy!

Pray...



- ☞ Use the Lord's Other Prayer again (Matthew 9v37-38).
- ☞ Ask God for his help in understanding and remembering the gospel.
- ☞ Pray that you would be able to talk about Jesus more naturally.

Pray



Welcome

Why do we ask God for things in prayer?

What sort of things should we ask him for when we pray?

Worship

'What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sin and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.' Thank God that we are able to '*approach the throne of grace with confidence*' (Hebrews 4v16).

Word

When it comes to talking to people about God we need to be talking to God about people. Let's see how these are connected in evangelism.

Read: 2 Corinthians 4v1-6

1. What is God's part in evangelism?
2. Why can people not see the truth of the gospel? How should this reality shape our prayers for them?
3. What is our part in evangelism? How should we go about that?

Read: Acts 4v8-35

1. What had Peter and John been forbidden to do in v18?
How would you have responded? How did they respond?
2. As the believers prayed together about the situation they remembered Psalm 2 and what happened to the Lord Jesus (v25-28).
Why might they have done this?
3. What did they ask the Lord for in their prayer meeting (v29-30)?
4. How did they see God answer their prayer (v31-33)?
5. Even the apostles needed to pray for boldness. How is that an encouragement to us? How ought it shape our own prayers?



Talking about Jesus never was easy. Like the apostles we need to be playing our part by praying and proclaiming. Evangelism and prayer go hand in hand as we work together

with God. How we need to ask God for boldness! How we need the Holy Spirit so that we can speak the word of God bodily!



Discuss...



How often do we pray like this?

What could God do through us if we were devoted to praying like this?

Work



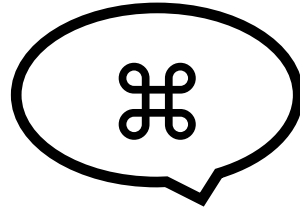
- ☞ Divide into pairs again (with different people again). This time, rather than focusing on how you became a Christian, try to explain (in a minute or two), what it means to you to be a Christian today. What difference does it make in your life? How has it changed your life?
- ☞ Plan to pray: if you don't plan to pray for people it won't happen. Plan some time over the next week to pray for three of your friends or family that don't know Jesus. Ask God to open their eyes to see Jesus and ask God to help you speak about Jesus Christ as Lord.
- ☞ Plan to pray: together next Wednesday, 3rd November at 7:45pm.

Pray...



Pray to the Lord of the harvest for three people who you know who don't know Jesus. <i>"Enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness".</i> Acts 4v29	1
	2
	3

Connect



Welcome

Look around the room. How did you all get connected with each other?
When did this happen? Who's responsible for connecting who?

Worship

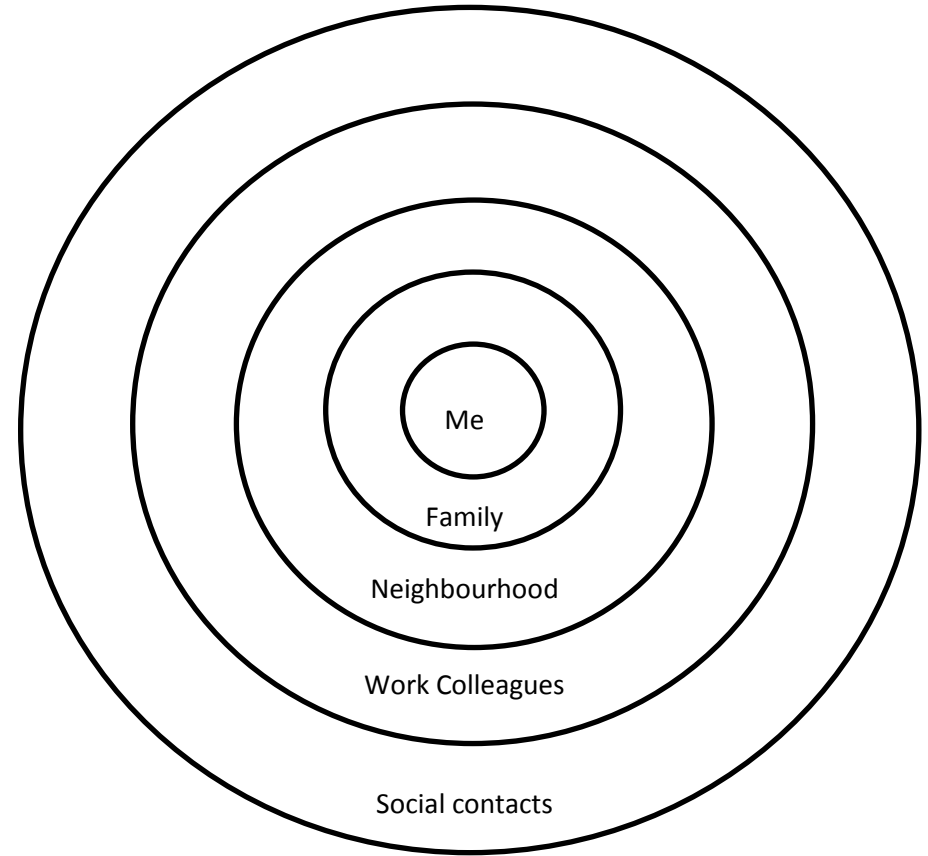
God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

(2 Corinthians 5v19)

Praise God that we are connected us to him through Christ Jesus and that he has committed to us the joy of connecting others to him.

Word

So far we have covered our need to **love** people (as our core motivation); to **understand** the gospel (as we seek to explain it); and to **pray** for people (as we work with God). But sometimes we find it difficult to think about who and how we can **connect** with people. Take a moment to think about all the people you come into contact with throughout an average week. Think of your world as a series of concentric rings and jot down the names of people who don't know Jesus in each category.



Discuss...

Think about all these people you meet - perhaps more than you realized?

- What does the Bible have to say about the way you should relate to them?
- What should be your attitude to others and how should that affect your actions?
- How do you feel about talking about Jesus to them (be honest)?

“ For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You should love your neighbour as yourself.”
(Galatians 5v13-14) ”

Discuss... 

- Who is your “neighbour” and how can you love them as yourself?
- How is loving them connected with talking to them about Jesus?

Read: 1 Corinthians 9v19-23; 10v31-11v1


1. Paul says he is “free from all” (1 Cor 9v19) and that Christians are “called to freedom” (Gal 5v13). What do you think he means by this?
2. If Paul is free, why does he make himself “a servant to all” (1 Cor 9v19)? What goal or purpose is motivating his actions?
3. What did this mean in practice for Paul? What might it mean for you?

“ The best way to serve someone is to connect them with Jesus. We will follow the example of Paul who also wrote; *‘We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well?’*
(1 Thessalonians 2v8) ”

Work 

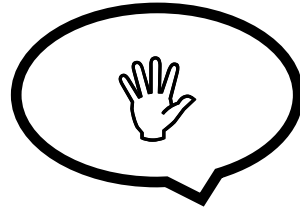
☞ List of some of those people you come across in an average week and make a few notes on the sort of relationship you have with them. Jot down a couple of practical steps you can take to get to know them and serve each person better.

Name	What sort of relationship do you have with the person? What do they know about Jesus?	Practical steps to take
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

Pray... 

☞ Spend time praying for some of the people you listed asking God for opportunities and boldness to talk to these people about Jesus.

Invite



Welcome

Share in the group some of your experiences of either inviting someone to a Christian event, or being invited yourself. What was it like?

How many people in your group became a Christian because someone invited them to church; to an outreach event; to read a Christian book?

Worship

“Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”

(Revelation 19v9)

Praise God that he enabled you to respond to his invitation and thank him for those he used to do this.

Word

The Bible tells us that all Christians are called to testify about Jesus as his ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5v18-20). Everyone has a role in evangelism. The Bible also tells us that God has gifted his church with different gifts (Ephesians 4v11-16). There are different ways to communicate the gospel. You will probably find that you are more comfortable with some than others.

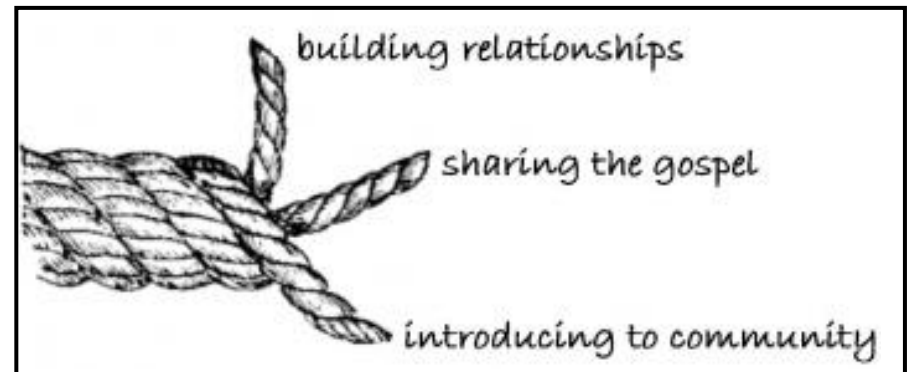
Discuss...

Which of these styles of evangelism describes you best?

- **Confrontational** E.g. Peter in Acts 2v14-40
- **Intellectual** E.g. Paul in Acts 17v16-31
- **Testimonial** E.g. Blind man in John 9v1-33
- **Interpersonal** E.g. Levi in Luke 5v27-29
- **Invitational** E.g. The woman at the well John 4v4-42
- **Serving** E.g. Dorcas in Acts 9v36



The Bible makes it clear that there are many, many different ways in which we can evangelize. We all have our own skills, temperaments and experiences that make us uniquely able to tell others about Jesus. Evangelism is a **community project** we need each other as we complement one another. Some people are good at building relationships with new people, some are great at hospitality, some at initiating gospel conversations. We are stronger when we pull together like a cord of three strands.



Read: Philippians 2v1-11

1. What attitudes does Paul encourage his readers to have?
2. How is Jesus the ultimate example of these attitudes?
3. How will these attitudes affect the way we go about inviting people to read the Bible; come along to church; attend an outreach event?

Work



- ☞ Many Christians think “evangelism” is the work of gifted speakers who are able to explain the gospel and persuade people about Jesus (few have been gifted in this way, Eph 4v11). But as we’ve seen we all have a role in evangelism. For most of us it is low-key, ordinary, day-to-day work which goes unseen. It involves ordinary people doing ordinary things with *gospel intentionality*. What role will you play?
- ☞ Think back to the people you’re connected to and use the table to help you plan the practical steps you can take. E.g. invite them to:
 - read a book explaining Christianity (see Appendix 2 for suggestions).
 - do a Bible study with you (perhaps on Ephesians 2).
 - join you for on a Sunday for a service (or Carol Service: Sun 19th Dec).
 - come to an outreach event (why not plan one in your group?)
 - come to a *Christianity Explored* course (hopefully starting New Year).

Name	Event/activity/book etc.	Practical steps to take
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

Discuss...



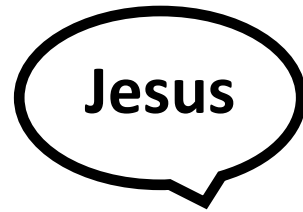
- When inviting someone to church or an event what should you do and what should you not do? (Turn to Appendix 3 for help)
- If you have time, choose one or two people to share their one-minute story (of how they became a Christian) with the whole group.

Pray...



- ☞ Spend time praying for any events which are coming up at church.
- ☞ Pray that God would give us boldness and confidence as we invite people to find out more about Jesus.

Talk



Welcome

What do you love talking about? Why?

Worship

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3v16)

This verse been described as 'the gospel in a nutshell'. Commit it to memory and turn it into praise to the God who gave us his Son Jesus!

Word

Read: Colossians 4v2-6

1. What prayer request does Paul make for himself and Timothy?
2. What instructions does he give them about the way they should act?
3. What do you think Paul meant by *'let your conversaton be always full of grace, seasoned with salt'* (v6)?
4. What can we do to make our speech more gracious and salty and our answers more appropriate to each person?

Discuss...

- Discuss some of the advantages of using a gospel outline to tell people about who Jesus is and what he has done (like the 4 R's or *2Ways2Live*). What are some of differences between a 'good' presentation of a gospel outline and a 'bad' presentation?
- Discuss some of the advantages of using your own story of becoming and being a Christian as a starting point for talking to people about Jesus. What are some of the traps to avoid? How might you modify the version you've been trying out in pairs each week?

Read: 1 Peter 3v13-18

1. When it comes to talking about Jesus what or who might we fear? How should we respond to such fears (v13-15)?
2. What does it mean to *'set Christ apart as Lord'* (v15)?
3. What is *'the reason for hope'* that we have as Christians?
4. Do you feel more *'prepared to give the reason for the hope that you have'* now than a couple of months ago?
5. How should we speak of this hope (v15-16)? Why is that important?

Work



- ☞ Think of an issue that has been in the news recently. What does Jesus have to say about that issue? Discuss how, as a Christian, you might contribute to a conversation about the hope that you have?
- ☞ What have you been challenged about in our six studies? What has been the biggest lesson you have learnt? What do you think you need to work on? How are you going to go about putting that into practice?
- ☞ What would you like to investigate further in order to help you in talking about Jesus? How might you go about doing this? (See Appendix 4 for further reading).

Pray...



- ☞ Spend time praying for the people God has laid on your heart who are not Christians.
- ☞ Pray that God may open a door for you to proclaim Jesus clearly and confidently. Pray that you'd make the most of every opportunity in the weeks and months ahead.
- ☞ Thank God for the things you have learnt over these last couple of months and pray for his help as you seek to put them into practice.

Appendix 1

2Ways2Live

1. God is the loving ruler of the world. He made the world. He made us rulers of the world under him.

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."
Revelation 4v11

But is that the way it is now?



2. We all reject the ruler - God - by trying to run life our own way without him. But we fail to rule ourselves or society or the world.

"There is no-one righteous, not even one; there is no-one who understands, no-one who seeks God, all have turned away."
Romans 3v10-12

What will God do about this rebellion?



3. God won't let us rebel forever. God's punishment for rebellion is death and judgement.

"Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement." *Hebrews 9v27*

God's justice sounds hard. But...



4. Because of his love, God sent his Son into the world: the man Jesus Christ. Jesus always lived under God's rule. Yet by dying in our place he took our punishment and brought forgiveness.

"Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God." 1 Peter 3v18

But that's not all...

5. God raised Jesus to life again as the ruler of the world. Jesus has conquered death, now gives new life, and will return to judge.

"In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Peter 1v3

Well, where does that leave us?

6. The two ways to live:

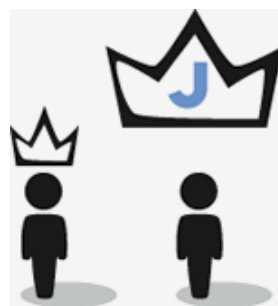
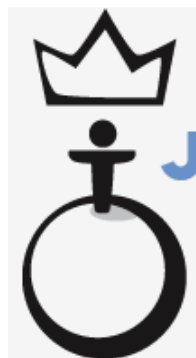
a) Our way: reject the ruler God; try to run life our own way. Result: condemned by God facing death and judgement.

b) God's new way: submit to Jesus as our ruler; rely on Jesus' death and resurrection.

Result: forgiven by God, given eternal life.

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life for God's wrath remains on him." John 3v36

Which of the ways represents the way you want to live?



(Source: www.twowaystolive.com)

Appendix 2

Resources

These are just a few books that you could use with non-Christians or enquirers. This is by no means an exhaustive list, maybe you could add your own? Look out for these on our Advent Bookstall (from Sunday 28th November), ideal for Christmas gifts!

- *2Ways2Live* - (as shown in Appendix 1) available in booklet format, ideal to give to a friend as a clear concise explanation of the gospel. Available in a many formats including children's version.
- *If you could ask God one question* - this book reveals the results of the 12 most frequently asked questions about God. But this isn't just a book about questions. There are answers too!
- *Christianity Explored* - the course in a book! Drawing from Mark's Gospel the book explores who Jesus was, what his aims were, and what it means to follow him. Concise, entertaining and honest, it's an ideal book for anyone with little or no experience of Christianity.
- *A Fresh Start* - J. Chapman gives a straightforward explanation of the problem before God, his solution, how we can know it is all true, and what we should do about it.
- *The Gift* - J. John reminds us of the true meaning of Christmas and how to embrace life in all its fullness. The perfect Christmas gift!
- *Why Jesus?* - This little booklet, by Nicky Gumbel from the Alpha Course, is great at explaining Jesus to new or non-Christians. It briefly but clearly answers many of the questions people ask about God.

Appendix 3

Practical Tips

Here are some practical tips for inviting people to church or an outreach event. Some might sound obvious but may just be worth the reminder!

- ☞ Be *intentional*. If you don't plan to invite people it won't happen! Plan to invite people to events and be prepared for unexpected opportunities. Keep invitation/flyers with you. Be thinking about who you can ask along and don't leave it to the last minute!
- ☞ Be *confident*. It's easy to talk yourself out of it: 'they won't come', 'they'll laugh at me', 'it's not their cup of tea'. Remember God is at work! Don't keep talking nervously and start making excuses for them; offer the invitation and then wait for the reply!
- ☞ Be *attractive* in your language when describing the event. If you don't sound enthusiastic about the event, then don't expect them to be! Don't overplay it and be upfront when it's a Christian event.
- ☞ Be *realistic*. Expect more knock-backs than acceptances. For every event plan to invite more than one person - look back to all those people you are connected to, who can you invite?
- ☞ Be *persistent*. Just because someone turned down an invitation once doesn't mean that you should never invite them again. It takes multiple invitations for some people to say "yes". For others, it may just be that that particular event wasn't convenient.

- ☞ Be *hospitable*. If possible link your invitation with a meal or a coffee. If you're inviting people for a morning service, then ask them to come over for lunch afterwards, or you could always go out for a Sunday Carvery!
- ☞ Be *clear*. Make sure you are clear in the details of the event - date, time, location, what the event is about, cost (if any), what to wear etc. If people are uncertain about anything then they either won't say yes, or won't turn up. Having an invitation/flyer handy is helpful!
- ☞ Be *reminding*. Give them a phone call, text, email or use facebook to confirm the details before the event. This is particularly worthwhile if your friend is disorganized and might have forgotten!
- ☞ Be *bringing*. Don't just tell them you'll meet them there. If you can, go to their house first and go together. If you can't, then meet them outside the venue (and then turn up on time!) No-one wants to walk into an unfamiliar environment alone.
- ☞ Be *attending*. Still go even if no-one you invited is going. A half-empty room says that what is happening isn't really that important. Also, there will be other guests you can talk with and make them feel welcome. (And you can tell your friends what they missed out on!)
- ☞ Be *praying* for the people you plan to invite. This is something we need to be constantly doing otherwise it's a waste of time.
- ☞ Be *loving*. The reason you invite someone is because you love them and want them to know the love of God displayed in Jesus Christ! Remember 1 Thessalonians 2v8. 😊

Appendix 4

Further Reading

These are just a few books that you may find helpful in your own reading to help you grow in confidence and clarity in sharing the gospel.

- *Know and Tell the Gospel* - this book deals with questions like; Just what is the gospel anyway? Is it my job to explain it to people? What is God's role and what is mine? Where does the church fit in? Why is evangelism so often hard? And how can we train ourselves and others to be involved?
- *Questioning Evangelism* - this book is concerned not so much with using the right methods but how to overcome the brick walls we so often face in conversations about faith. "Ask a question," Randy Newman says. It is after all, what Jesus died. This "questioning" style of evangelism is without formulas, without answers to memorize, and you don't have to have a Ph.D. in theology to use it!
- *Out of the salt shaker and into the world* - evangelism is a way of life and this book will help you relax, show you how to practically engage in a conversational style, how to give reasons for your faith and show you the role the Christian community has in witness.
- *Promoting the gospel* - a practical guide to the biblical art of sharing your faith which offers a refreshing insight into the ways that all Christians can and should be involved in spreading the good news of the Gospel. J. Dickson writes a biblical, practical, warm and encouraging book that does exactly what it sets out to do: equips Christians to promote the Gospel.