

Small Group Discussion

Pt 7 - OUTREACH

“We are to pursue the transformation of the human heart of those far away from God, by taking them Jesus’ message of faith, hope and love. “

In **Luke 10:1-12**, we have an outline of some instructions Jesus gave His disciples as He sent them out to reach their local communities. Jesus wants us out in the public making a difference for Him.

1. Be a Blessing to People in your Community

Notice that the first thing they were to say was, *“May God’s peace be on this house!”* (**vs 5-6**) They were to be and bring a blessing to people they were reaching out to.

Notice Jesus didn’t tell them to say, *“Turn or burn!”* The Gospel is meant to be good news. We are to seek peace and blessing for all people. Wish people well. Pray for their family and their world.

We are to love our neighbour, as ourselves. We are to seek good for them. May we as Christ’s followers be a blessing to every place that we go – always seeking people’s good.

Our very predisposition to people far from God is to do them well – not to bring them judgment or condemnation. They are already under that. They need the good news of God’s love towards them (**John 3:16-17**).

2. Build Relationships with People

Jesus then told His disciples to eat and drink together with the people they were reaching out to. (**vs 7-8**) He wanted them to spend time with those who needed God. They were to love them and reach out to them with genuine interest and care.

Over a meal you can get to know a person and build a relationship with them. Jesus Himself was described as a *“friend of sinners”* (**Matthew 11:19**).

He took time to be with them. He treated people as valuable and important. They saw His life and heard His words, felt his heart. This was His approach to all people, not just the nice or good people.

As Christ’s followers we are to be relatable to people in our world. We aren’t called to be so different that we become *‘weird’* and therefore unattractive to people.

We need to be different, but not weird – able to relate to people in our culture in a meaningful way (see **1 Corinthians 9:19-23**).

May our church community be a place where people can truly come *‘as they are’* and then allow the saving grace and love of Jesus to change what needs to be changed. May we never become a community that says to people far from God, *“When you get your act together ... then you are welcome around here!”*

Note Jesus’ attitude towards Zacchaeus (**Luke 19:1-10**).

3. Meet People's Needs

Jesus goes on to tell them that as they are building these relationships, they should then look to meet any needs that are there. For instance, He tells them to *'heal the sick'*. (**vs 9a**)

Jesus wants His followers to seek to meet the immediate needs of those they are reaching out to. God cares for people and is interested in their hurts and needs. Remember, Jesus went about *'doing good'* (**Acts 10:38**).

We are to demonstrate God's love in practical ways, with *'no strings attached'*. Find a need and meet it (**Luke 10:25-37**).

Jesus wants His followers to be passionate and excited about doing *'good works'* - not in order to earn their salvation but as an expression of their gratitude for the love God has shown to them (See **Matt.5:16; Eph.2:10; Titus 2:13-14; 3:8, 14; 1 Pet.2:12**).

4. Share the Good News about Jesus

Only then, does Jesus tell them to preach the gospel. (**vs 9b**) This is because there are now open, and have receptive hearts ready to hear. For Jesus, steps 1-3 precede the actual preaching of the gospel.

Pre-evangelism is important. Unfortunately, many Christians tend to start here. It is easy to reverse the order by starting to preach before we even have earned the right to be heard and gained an audience.

This is not some manipulative process. We are to love people just because it is the right thing to do – whether they become followers of Christ or not.

However, we should also move beyond simply building relationships and helping people, to seek to talk about what is most important – their spiritual condition and their relationship with God.

Discussion Questions

1. Read **Jeremiah 29:4-7**. What relevance does this have for us as we live in an increasingly secular world?
2. Jesus calls His followers to be *'in'* the world but *'not of'* the world (**John 17:15-18**). The dangers are at the extremes – we either become so *'not of'* the world that our isolation results in irrelevance OR we become so *'in'* the world that we are no longer different which results in no impact. How can we avoid this?
3. Discuss some ways your Life Group could apply the principles gleaned from Jesus' instructions in **Luke 10**. Include in your discussion ways to reach unchurched friends, to serving the local community, as well as involvement in foreign missions.
4. Read **John 4:1-42**. What lessons can we learn about mission from this story of Jesus having a conversation with a woman who he met by a well?