

Personal Evangelism

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[0 : 00] So, I'll give you the book plug first. There's nothing to do in Lewis in the winter, in the evenings, so instead of wasting your life on Facebook, you can sit and read this book, *The Mission of God*.

Slightly intimidating book by size maybe, but actually an easy read and just fascinating in terms of how it sets out the theology of mission. So, you know, get it, read it, digest it, you'll love it. And then there are two books by Steve Timmons and Tim Chester, one's called *Total Church*, another's called *Everyday Church*. *Total Church* is really about trying to think about what does it mean for the church to be a community of God's people gathered around the gospel on mission together.

Just thinks that out in fairly practical ways. And then this is, again, *Everyday Church*. Same authors thinking through what it looks like when you're a marginalised community on the fringes of society as believers are, what it's like to live as a Christian on the margins and still try and influence your culture and influence people towards the gospel.

So, both make books that I've read many times. And then this one I just got recently. I was asking around for good books. Somebody recommended this to me. And *Nine Arts of Spiritual Conversation*.

[1 : 34] So it's just an easy, very easy read to just start thinking about how do we engage people in talking about the gospel. So, well worth a read. When I was 16 years old, I was sitting in church.

I was at a free church camp in the Black Isle. We were sitting in church. And it was a hot, sunny day. So all the boys were sticking to the varnished pews, which was causing quite a lot of laughter. And the church doors were open. And what happens? What walks into the church during the middle of the sermon? A dog. Okay.

So this dog walks in, up one aisle, round the back, down the other aisle. And there are 60 boys all turning around, staring at this dog. And the minister went berserk and started shouting, Have you never seen a dog?

Anyway, there was a very pious young man there called Kenny Eye. And Kenny Eye came out of church and he saw the minister's wife and thought, Well, I should engage this fine lady who had a bit of a formidable reputation.

[2 : 40] So he went up to her and said, Well, isn't that terrible? He says, It must have been the devil that took that dog into the church. To which the minister's wife said, What do you mean? That's my dog.

So Kenny Eye puts his foot in it again. So the church is a community of transforming power.

I think David was highlighting that for us today with some of the quotes about the early church and evangelism in the early church. And it is a remarkable thing that from a small group of people in 38 AD, within three centuries, the whole Roman Empire had been turned on its head.

Not by people who had power or influence, but by people who did indeed live in the margins. But whose life together was an incredibly powerful statement of the reality and the truth of the gospel. And so when we think about church, church has to be something that evidences that the gospel is true, it's powerful, and it changes lives.

[3 : 51] In 1 Peter chapter 3 there are very well quoted words when it comes to evangelism. In your hearts, set apart Christ as Lord.

Lord, always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. So we all read that and think, OK, I need to be well equipped and apologetic, and I need to be ready to speak when people ask me questions, so I have to live a really nice life so that people will ask me questions about my faith. The thing about these verses is they're written not to an individual, but to a congregation or to a collection of people. It's their life together that provokes questions.

So Peter has said to them, he said to them, always live in harmony with one another, be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you are called. So it's that life as a community of humility, compassion, gentleness, sympathy and love that's so different from the way that people normally relate to each other that provokes questions.

[5 : 20] And Total Church quite often it quotes John 13, 33 and 34, by this will all men know that you are my disciples by the love that you have for each other.

So that's the same idea, isn't it? People will see that we love each other in a way that's different. And when they see that, it's persuasive and it's attractive.

But in Total Church, the point they make is that most people can't see inside the church to see the quality of relationships that there are. And so we need to just make the church more kind of permeable.

You know, it's hard for people to break in at the church. We've got hard boundaries a lot of the time. So we need to make the church more permeable. And one of the ways of doing that, of course, is that as we go out and meet with people who aren't Christians, we just make the effort to introduce them to other people from our church.

So we do this a lot at Cornerstone. I say, you know, if you've got a friend and you're the only Christian they know, then invite them round for dinner with some more Christians. So they know four Christians or five Christians and they hear the gospel from different people in different ways.

[6 : 29] So I just want to encourage you, I'm going to speak quite a lot about what we do individually and how we think individually. But at the same time, you always need to be thinking we're a body. We are a body for a reason.

You know, the way they describe it in total churches, you know, some people are really great at hospitality but not very good about speaking about their faith. Some people are really good at making friends but they're a bit inarticulate about their faith.

But as a body, the person who's really good at making friends with people can bring them along to the person who's good at hospitality for dinner and the guy who actually can't make any friends but he's quite good at explaining things can be there for dinner too.

And so you've got a body doing evangelism together and it removes this kind of pressure on you as an individual. I have to do this all myself. I have to rescue this person.

So think body, think corporate. In 1 Peter chapter 2 as Peter's writing about the remarkable life of this community, you know, he picks up in the language we saw from Exodus, you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.

[7 : 43] You are a people who are amazingly distinctive, a holy nation, who abstain as aliens and strangers, back to the stranger word, in this world to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul.

So here is a community who are really distinctive. How do we live among the pagans? We live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Is that not incredible? That people who are hostile to the Christian faith, sceptical about Christianity, that they can be brought to the point where they say, well, you know, I don't really think much about Christianity, but actually, if it's anything like these people, then maybe it's got something to it.

And that's the power of the Christian community in its life. So what that means is this. Your life and our life together have to be eye-poppingly, jaw-droppingly different.

We really have to shock people into thinking that there is something extraordinary about Christianity. And that's only going to come as we relate to people with love and humility and kindness and generosity and as we introduce them to a community of people who don't gossip, who don't speak badly of others, who don't repay evil for evil, but who are full of humility and love and compassion.

[9 : 22] Now, how do we create that kind of community of people? How can we be people who when others meet us, they think, wow, I wish I had some of that.

Well, you're not going to be that person just by plastering a smile on your face and trying really hard to be a nice person. Because that will just creep everyone out. Okay?

They'll think, Neil's been really weird today. So it has to come from a place of deep humility and powerful personal change.

So that people don't say, Neil's been really weird, but Neil has really changed. And that often happens in the nitty gritty day to day difficulties of life at work, in the home and in the community. Because in those situations, people will provoke you, stab you in the back, speak badly about you and do all kinds of things that you might feel entitled to respond to with anger or rage or all different kinds of really harsh responses.

[10:32] And yet, James and Peter are both saying in their two letters that Peter is saying be sympathetic, be compassionate, be humble, be loving.

How can we be this kind of person? Well, as he says in chapter 2, you are now the people of God. You had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

It's only as we live in the power of the gospel that we can live out the power of the gospel. As he tells slaves, so here's a work situation where people are treated very, very badly and provoked. But what does he say? Slaves, submit yourselves to the masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and consistent, but also to those who are harsh. How is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it, but if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable.

How do we keep on being patient, kind, loving, sympathetic in the face of provocation and mistreatment? To this you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.

[11:49] When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate. When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body in the tree so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness by his wounds you have been healed.

We are healed from anger. We are healed from bitterness. We are healed from pride. We are healed from self-righteousness by and how by the wounds of Christ.

He bore those sins in his body on the tree. It's only the transforming work of the cross that enables us to live out the new life of the gospel.

So I wanted to start in that place. I am not recommending a program, a mechanism or a technique to you. All I am recommending is that you live at the foot of the cross before Jesus Christ crucified and let that change you and if that changes you others will be changed through you.

I could stop now really but being a minister I'll keep going. So I'm going to go through some slides. Okay, so this is how a lot of people feel about evangelism.

[13:06] You say the word evangelism and immediately hands thrown up in horror. Please, no. You're just going to guilt trip me now. So we don't want to motivate people through guilt.

As Christians we are motivated by the power and the beauty of the cross of Jesus Christ. As the cross melts our heart and teaches us to love Jesus then we are moved to love others.

So it's the cross. So, you know, how do we feel when other Christians speak to us about the need for evangelism? Give me a shout out a few answers. Let's keep this slightly interactive so you're not all asleep in ten minutes.

How do you feel when you hear about evangelism? Guilty. Others, come on, speak out. Eh? Can't do it.

Challenge. Challenge. Oh, Mr. Positive over there. Excited. There you go. You see, these are the people that intimidate the rest of us who feel like they're failures and we just can't do it.

[14:15] You know, so we all have a lot of mixed feelings when the word evangelism comes up. It's actually not a word you find in scripture a lot. The biblical idea is much more about making disciples, helping people to learn about the Bible and become followers of Jesus.

And one of the great things that's happening to Snout in a lot of places is a program called Word One to One where people have just been asked, have you ever read the Bible?

Will you sit down and read it with me? People read the Bible one to one with each other and that's been really fruitful for a lot of people. It's a guy in the city of London that started it with his colleagues, Word One to One.

But that's what we're doing. We're teaching people to read the Bible, learn about Jesus and obey him, follow him. So what kind of activities do you think about when you think about evangelism?

Give me some of your, what do we do when we evangelise? What kind of activities might you think of? Gossip the gospel. Gossip the gospel. Good. Any more?

[15 : 21] Giving out tracks. Giving out tracks. Door to door. Social media. Oh, you're not only a great example but you're trendy and on the moment as well.

Okay. So you can't read this because it's too small but I'll read it for you. So the top left slide is a guy walking through the park practising his pitch for sharing the gospel with whoever he's going to be.

So he says, Jesus loves you and he forgives your sins. He died for you. Then he walks up to a guy on a park bench and he blurts out you're going to hell and it all goes wrong.

This happened to me once. There was a girl when I was in fifth year that I was quite besotted with who wasn't a Christian so I thought well I need to get her on board so I can start dating her. So I sat her down and explained that she was a hellbound sinner we're both still traumatised by the conversation and the romance didn't go anywhere.

And actually we do find some of us maybe find it easy to talk about our faith and to be open and real with people. Others of us find ourselves intimidated and awkward and sometimes because we're afraid of straining a relationship that's important to us.

[16 : 42] And we think if I say the wrong thing or if I talk about this it's just going to be really awkward and mess things up. So it's important and this is what this book Nine Arts of Spiritual Conversation is all about. It's important just to learn to talk about things in a way that is really easy and simple and to build bridges for truth into people's lives.

So this is called Napkin Evangelism so this is about you know I'm going to take you out for a coffee or lunch and I'm going to get in the napkin and I'm going to draw out a little gospel methodology for you and explain how Jesus died for your sins and he's the bridge in the middle there.

So evangelism is not a technique there's the ABC of evangelism an easy plan for training anyone to witness. Well we're not here to do that for you this afternoon. Evangelism is not only for evangelists that's Louis Palau I believe and sometimes we just think that's the job of a certain person.

Evangelism is not a solo project there's the street preacher out on his own doing his thing and evangelism is not about special events like Christianity it's for. So David talked about this stuff you know that it's kind of bolt on stuff you know things aren't going well what's working for other people okay I'm going to bolt that onto my church and maybe it will work for we heart somebody once called that to me the sideways glance of the Christian church you know we look around at other churches what are they doing why are they going I'll try it here but we all work in different soil and different climates and not everything is transferable so you've got to work out what's going on in my situation how do we do ministry well where we are with the people we've got in the situation where we are instead of just sticking on events so evangelism is making disciples for Jesus helping others to become followers of Jesus so here's the broad context that we talked about again this morning so 8% of Scots attend church regularly so 92% don't that's probably about 4.5 million people in Scotland or slightly more than that another 20% are kind of church but 70% of people in the United Kingdom say they have no intention of ever going to church in the future what does that tell you it tells you this you can run all the really great events in your church that you want but people won't turn up 70% of people it just won't occur to them to go to your church to whatever you're running so you can't just run stuff in the church you know say Kevin Costner field of dreams if you build it they will come doesn't work in evangelism

Jesus didn't give us that idea he sent us out 75% of people in the UK do not believe in a personal God so you can't read that slide I've just realised I might try and change that if I can to this and then that nope right give me a second okay you can probably see that a little bit better so what I want to say is when we speak to people about the gospel when we get the opportunity we normally speak to them in terms that assume that they're almost about to become a Christian if we just explain a little bit more about Jesus and what he did they will be ready to be converted so in other words we speak to most people as if they're an 8 or a 9 if 10 is I'm being converted and I'm committing my life to

[20 : 34] Jesus Christ in faith 1 is total unbelief and the way we do evangelism and speak to people most of the time we assume that they're an 8 or a 9 but they're not people are much further away than you think people are far more likely to be a 1 or a 2 they just don't get it they just don't understand it they've no idea what you're on about and they're not even interested in it it's a very nice thing for you we're in still a tolerant liberal culture where you do your thing I'll do mine if it makes you happy who am I going to complain so most people are much further away from the gospel than you tend to assume so you have to start much further back with people and explaining

Christianity to them so that means if I just go back it takes a long time to move people from 1 or 2 to 9 or 10 so one evangelistic encounter is not going to move people from 1 to 10 except in the most exceptional circumstances it happens it doesn't happen much most people in the UK who become Christians it's a series of small steps and small decisions until they ultimately come to faith as their doubts their objections are gently taken away from them and the different world view of the gospel is introduced and they begin to think it through and work out its consequences so that takes a long time I remember Fergus MacDonald who was a retired free church minister even in the 1980s he used to do a lot of statistical analysis and stuff even in the 80s the average time from first hearing the gospel to becoming a Christian in the UK was four and a half years and I think this was a statistic from the UK people had to hear the gospel from the US sorry people had to hear the gospel 42 times before it began to make sense to them so it's just you're changing the whole way people think it takes time that means you've got to be committed to people for a long time and you've got to be extremely patient with them and you've got to keep going back and back gently gently and be the most loving kind loyal friend that they have you have to invest your life in their life so total church says this that evangelism is long term low key and relational ok it's not the spectacular it's the ordinary it's low key it's just getting to know people making friends building bridges with people that will bear the way of truth so David again alluded to this we didn't collude before we came here but we have crossed paths a number of times so if you ask people who've become Christians what's the single most important factor not the only important factor but the single most important factor it's a relationship with another person 90% of people will say the key thing in them becoming a Christian is another person who is committed to them either a family member or a friend who has loved them and shared the gospel with them over time so relationships are absolutely key if you want to understand evangelism you've got to understand relationships you've got to be committed to relationships and in our context people will not listen to what you've got to say unless they know you care about them if they think that you're just treating them as some kind of evangelistic fodder or you're recruiting for your church or whatever it is they will walk away from you so there needs to be real integrity and genuine friendship in your relationships with people so we are to live among the pagans as it says in 1st Peter 2 we cannot separate ourselves away and so we spend our time making friends with them so again if you're at the back you might not be able to read this but this I was walking up

Mooringside Road five years ago and I saw a church with this advert in its window and it says join us for our special shoebox appeal thanksgiving service sunday 13th november 2011 what's wrong with that there's many things wrong with it but it doesn't have the time on it for a start if you're observing but it assumes that people will know what a shoebox is it assumes that people will know what a thanksgiving service is it assumes that people are actually thinking about coming to church so that congregation died sadly but in their kindness and grace they gifted us that same building so three years ago when we were starting a church in Mooringside this church was closing down and they gifted us their building and one of the first things I did was took down all the notice boards and I didn't make a website didn't do anything like that because the only people who look at church websites and notice boards are Christians and I didn't want

Christians coming to my church I wanted non-Christians coming to my church and the only way you could come to my church is if somebody brought you so some of the older people used to get on at me every week when are you going to put a notice board up and I'm saying I'm not doing it the only people who will come are Christians we want non-Christians so go and bring some go and make friends with your neighbours and bring them with you and so we started this church a few years ago with 12 of us there's now just over 100 and we don't do anything fancy at all we do two things we do Sunday worship as well as we possibly can in a way that is meaningful for people who are not Christians and then we do kind of community discipleship having a meal together reading the Bible together that's all we really do two very simple things because I don't want busy Christians in my church I want Christians who aren't running around servicing lots of Christian activities and running clubs for this and that

[27 : 11] I want Christians who are out there spending time with people who are not believers and loving them in the nooks and crannies of everyday life so I can't afford to tie my people's time up in church activities the only church people will come to so if we get to reach beyond our immediate audience to the 70% who have no interest we need to be pushing all our people out into relationships because that's where the action is so people are not thinking about coming to church

maybe some are in your community still I don't know if you still have that kind of pool in your communities but for most of us people are not sitting there thinking well I might go to church next Sunday it's just it's not on the radar I used to walk across the meadows in Edinburgh to work every day and every day I passed a bowling club this happened for four years one day I stopped to look at the sign on the bowling club and found out that it was a Scottish national croquet centre who knew four years

I walked past no idea guess what it never occurred to me that I might go along for being a croquet one night now most people are the same way about church they walk past it they don't see it it's invisible to them they're not thinking about it and they're certainly not thinking I might go there one day that would be real interesting the only way they're going to go is if they're drawn in through relationship with Christians so how do people see church there was a terrible program called Rev a few years ago the Guardian reviewed it what did they say quite deliberately though with little fanfare Rev also gets to the heart of the modern church by exposing it as both a source of much goodness and a complete irrelevance this is comic genius so that's the cultural understanding of the church nice people completely irrelevant so most people will not come to church events or services that means you need to go to them that's why Jesus sends us out and the good thing is when Jesus says go you're always going anyway you get up in the morning you go to work or you go to school or you go to uni or you go for a game of football or you go to the gym or you go for a meal or you go and visit relatives you're always going places

I know you are and you just go with the purpose of making disciples you go as an ambassador of Jesus so the going part is not the hard part we're always doing that it's going with the intention of making disciples that's hard for us to remember and we it's because they want quick and easy conversions so we don't really bother because we think that's not going to happen but conversions come through long painful processes of change and that's that's where the cost is because often those long term friendships require a lot of self sacrifice and opening your home giving up your spare time sticking with people when they're difficult to stick with that's mission that's evangelism so go and make disciples because as

I've said already becoming a Christian you know Nelson Mandela the long walk to freedom all those years victim of injustice imprisoned and so on but for most people becoming a Christian it is a long walk to freedom they are shut up in darkness they are imprisoned in their sin and they are slaves to sin and it is a slow journey for them to come to freedom so I think in this art of spiritual conversations book it talks about one guy who said whenever I make friends with a non-Christian I know that I have to commit at least five years of my life to them before I'm going to see real spiritual change that's a huge commitment to make to people but if you make that commitment to two or three people you don't need to make it to ten people or twenty people nobody can sustain that but if you make that kind of friendship commitment to two or three people and you persistently love them speak to them about

Jesus share your faith introduce them to other Christians over time you will win many of these people for Jesus Christ so evangelism is ordinary Christians living ordinary lives with gospel intentionality it happens in community and through community and it means speaking and sharing the gospel word naturally and frequently and as we evangelise people people it's just keeping in mind this that they're probably a one or a two when you get to know them and if you can just bump them to a three or a four then that's great and they might meet another Christian through you or through someone else who bumps them to five or six and then God might work in a different way that a crisis in their life that opens them up divorce bereavement illness suddenly they're at seven or eight and that can be a process over many years so don't feel like

[32 : 53] I've met Neil he's a complete pagan he knows nothing about the gospel he's a one but I've got to get into ten as fast as I possibly can that's not your responsibility and it's not likely to happen it's much more likely that you will incrementally shift people closer to the gospel over time because how are people converted well one you're not going to save anyone that's the joy of being a good Calvinist you do not feel the weight of responsibility in this you know that God alone saves so the doctrine of the election is a great thing when used correctly but a harsh thing when used incorrectly and we must rejoice and rest in the sovereign providences of God and God's own sovereign saving purposes so it's not your job to save anyone but it's your job to help them move closer to the truth so remember people will take a long slow journey to faith in general but if you can help move them gently along the path just think about it

I'm going for a very long walk with somebody and just showing them the scenery and explaining things to you as you go along and so on and conversing about life and learning about them and sharing your life and getting to know each other better as you walk along this path so what should I do what should you do okay well Jesus noticed people and asked them questions so we know that don't we the woman at the well or the man by the pool or the gentleman under the tree or the gentleman up the tree you know he noticed people didn't he whatever they were oh there you are and then he would approach them and very often just ask them a question can I have a drink do you want to get well yeah so he just he observed who's in front of them he didn't have a technique he didn't have a sales pitch he just saw there's an individual a human being created in my image and I will relate to them as a human being created in my image and I will speak to them with dignity about who they are and what's going on in their life so there you go

Jesus noticed people and asked them questions so be curious about people you know I'm a completely uncurious individual you know I could wander through life and not notice anything like the croquet club for instance after four years suddenly it dawns on me oh that's a croquet club so I'm not a particularly curious people it's something I have a person so I need to learn to take more interest in other people part of my sinful nature is to be kind of wrapped up in me David was laughing at my screensaver on my laptop earlier on this morning because it's a picture of me that I have on my computer not my wife not my children just me my favourite person as I often say so but it is so easy to be really wrapped up in ourselves and our own little world and our own little problems and our own concerns and frustrations that we're just not noticing other people and what's going on with them so I like this Jesus values small things a cup of cold water

Jesus thinks is a wonderful thing to give to somebody so two fish and five loaves it's not extravagant but Jesus he used it so Jesus values small things so it's not that you have to do great things just do small things for people little things that make a difference in their life small kindnesses day by day how you speak to people give them your sandwich at lunch time don't go away and sit on your own at work and read your bible and ignore your colleagues but sit with them and share your chocolate biscuits or whatever it is you've got or buy them all a cappuccino just be that kind person in your work environment do the small things and then share truth as best as you can in the different situations that come up you don't need to steal the deal so sharing your life to share the gospel so notice people pray for people so let me ask you this question how many non-christians do you pray for every day every single day of your life are there any non-christians that you get in your knee every day before God and just plead with God for that person in their soul is there even one person in the world that you would do that for you know if there's two or three people that you will pray for every day that's a great thing so notice them you know they might be the person with the cross next to yours or down the road or they might be the person in the office at the desk over from you or the person you see at the gym you know but notice who's there and start and start to pray for a few of them that God would connect you to them that God would soften their hearts to the gospel that God would awaken them spiritually that God would open their hearts to hear the truth of Jesus Christ so pray really nice simple thing to do if you don't know what to pray for that's a very nice clear thing to do connect with people so find connecting points say hello talk to them find out about them and listen so you know if you're in evangelistic mode and feeling I must share my faith then you're generally thinking about this is what I need to say I need to say this I need to say that so you're not thinking about the other person you're thinking about yourself and what you feel you need to say that's not a good way to go about anything in life especially interpersonal connections and interactions so instead of going to somebody thinking this is what I need to say to them just go and listen to what they're saying to you and I think because we're inside the church and people outside the church are so far away now that makes listening even more important how are we going to work out where people are and what they think if we're not listening carefully and picking up on what they say and the cues and the ideas that they're latching on to so really be a great listener you know people in churches especially in church leadership talk much more than they should so you know listen 70% of the time talk 30% of the time that's quite a good balance so you listen seven times more than you are talking three times that doesn't make any sense in that but anyway you know what I'm trying to say ask good questions assume nothing about people so I think we heard about [40 : 13] Archie and Callum this morning so imagine a gay couple did move into the crock next to yours or the house next to yours you'd probably have a huge number of assumptions about them and many of them probably aren't true they may not hate the church they may not hate religion they may long for spiritual reality and be very confused about their sexuality their lifestyle how it

connects to the truth of the Bible how do you know if you don't ask and don't find out so never assume anything about people take time to find out what's going on ask good questions what do you think you know what do you think that's one of the most simple questions in the world what do you think of us what do you think of that why don't you like church what do you think is wrong with the church if people have got those kind of issues just ask them what do you think why do you think that and so on don't generalize you know that's the same kind of thing often we'll just talk in broad sweeping terms about how awful this is or how awful that is and so on we speak about certain groups of people in certain ways let's not generalize about people don't offer unwanted opinions ok

Christians have been historically very good at telling other people what they think of them even when others don't want to hear from us what we think of them so offering your opinion if it's not solicited is generally just rude and aggressive and will probably really put people off so be smart about that don't make assumptions and do connect people to other Christians it's not a solo task so sharing your life to share the gospel here are some simple things how many meals do you eat a week some of us 21 some of us more and a few of us less so if you eat 21 times a week then there's a church called Grace Church Leith in Edinburgh one of the newer churches in Edinburgh so when they started off with two people it was the minister and his wife and then there were three people because they had a baby and then a few more people came along who were Christians who wanted to be part of this new church and one of the practices that they decided to adopt as a new church was we will all have a non

Christian to dinner once a week so we will find a non once a week so I eat 21 meals a week one of them I will share with somebody who's not a believer so that's just a simple routine to have in your life every Wednesday night I'm going to have somebody round for tea who's not a Christian you know you eat a lot so you might as well do it with other people work in public places so I don't know if you are e-commuters and that you work in your in your croft shed on your own over the internet I don't know if that is a myth about the crofters of the modern world or not but some of you probably do work at home that's rubbish isn't it if you're working at home you're not meeting non-Christians so if you do have that kind of work at home job like a minister for instance get out go and sit in a cafe with your laptop and prepare your sermon where you're going to meet people and it's really helpful because as you prepare your sermon you're seeing real people going about real life and you can connect your sermon to them so you know have lunch out and about work in public places be a regular go to the same hairdresser all the time so they get to know you or the same motorbike salesman or the same agricultural supplier or whoever it is that you're going to go see but just be a regular get to know people so I live in

EH10 very wealthy very snobby and after seven years of living there people in the local shops are starting to admit that they actually know who I am seven years it's really slow but after seven years of going to the same shops and the same cafes people will finally admit yeah okay I know you and it's worth it because once that happens there's a great connection join in with what's already going on so sometimes when we're in church we think right I'm going to start a youth group then I'm going to start something for the hungry and the poor then I'm going to start something else and actually these things are already happening in your community there is a good youth group there is stuff helping the poor so it's much better sometimes to join what's already happening than to start it as a Christian endeavour because it means you're out there with non-believers working alongside them serving the community getting to know them so that's the missional way to do it join what's already happening not start your own thing leave the house in the evening if you dare

I don't know if you get a good go in the evening but it's very easy in modern life we get home at the end of the day we're tired the weather's terrible it's dark outside I'm going to have my dinner I'm going to put on the telly I'm going to veg out and I'm going to have some me time because I love me and me needs more of me so there you go it's very easy to isolate yourself socially just slowly over time withdraw so make the effort to get out there go to the gym play football boxing I don't know crafts and all that kind of stuff whatever's happening in your area go and do it serve your neighbours of course so my mother moved house about 25 years ago and there was a wee man called Mac who lived next door to her and for 20 years every summer once a week he would jump over her fence and cut her grass without ever saying a word to her he wasn't a

[46 : 25] Christian but he served his neighbour very lovingly and I personally was very grateful to him for his labour it saved me a lot of hard work but what are the small things you can be doing in your community to help people to serve them to make their lives easier I'm sure you're doing many

of these things so be encouraged that you're doing them because they're good things to do and if you love people well it'll pay off over time but do it with the intention that you want to win this person for Jesus do it prayerfully that as you serve them cutting their grass or shearing their sheep or mending their fences or getting their shopping or giving them lifts or whatever it's doing you're doing do these things with a gospel heart prayerfully because you want to woo that person for the Lord Jesus Christ hang out with your work colleagues I've said that to you already don't isolate yourself at work share your passions do you love music do you love football do you love sports love movies then you've got something to offer to the world you know and people need to see that we love God's good world and

God's good gifts that we're not miserable about everything you know Scots have a hang up about Calvinism you know Calvinism is to blame for the weather for our addictions for our depression for everything and when I about six years ago I had a guy who used to coach me so he was teaching me a few things work related and he was from a church called Soma in Tacoma and Tacoma is a city just outside Seattle and my coach's name was Caesar Caesar Kalanowski and he used to talk about his church and he said when we started this church we decided we would be the most celebratory community in Tacoma because we are Christians and we have more to celebrate than anyone in Tacoma and I just thought wow how counterintuitive that is for so many people in Scotland who think we're all about gloom and doom and misery and taking the joy out of life when we know where the joy in life really comes from and we live in the joy of the Lord as our strength and so we have so much to rejoice in and to be glad in the Lord every day and you please let people see your joy and see how good God is and just share your passions for God's world the life you have walk you know I used to coach a minister so this is a guy I spoke to every month and he was doing a church revitalization project that David described last night and he lived in a fairly small community and he never walked anywhere he took the car everywhere he went he never met anyone nobody knew who he was all he had to do was get up in the morning take a walk down to the local shop buy the paper walk home again and see 10 15 people there's a guy called Norman Mackay how's my time okay I'll stop in two minutes or five but Norman Mackay is planting G51 church in Govan so Norman decided when I go to Govan I'm going to talk to everyone who's got a dog okay so this was how he made friends and lots of people in Govan is he just walks around Govan he sees everything about a dog he walks up and he pats the dog and goes you know what that's the nicest dog in Govan you know that's just if you've got the best dog in Govan I've never seen a dog like your dog you know walking the dog really simple way to meet people so just work out how can I meet people just walking around being visible being seen being part of community life and as you walk pray pray around walk around your village now and then and just pray for the houses as you walk past them pray for the people who live in the houses pray for the community it's not a weird thing to do to walk and pray at the same time okay we pray continually and without ceasing and so it's just a lovely thing to do to pray for people as you pass their house as you walk around the village as you cruise around town in your souped up car or whatever you like to do just pray for the people that you're passing okay I am finished there you go so two slides who are the non-Christians that you see regularly who are the non-Christians that you're praying for what ideas do you have for developing meaningful friendships with non-Christians write down some of the ways that you could serve them or be a blessing to them think about how you can connect them to other Christians and then this one's about questions what kind of questions should we be asking people what objections to the people you have that you don't have to the gospel if you're not a Christian what kind of things would attract you to the gospel so it's been a few minutes pick out one or two of those and then we'll go on to the next slide and pick out one or two of those but just for five to ten minutes really not for long okay so you don't even have to discuss the first couple do you you could just write them down write down the name of three peoples that you see regularly that you're praying for and then who how can you serve them and who can you connect them to so take five minutes just write down some names people that you want to pray for share Jesus with connect to your community