**SERIES TITLE:** **Being Gospel-Ready (4 of 4)**

**SERIES OBJECTIVE:** To motivate members to reach out, while equipping them with a clear knowledge of what the gospel is and how to share it.

**TITLE: How to stand tall together** (Equipping Message)

**TEXT**: Mark 6:6-13

**OBJECTIVE**: Through reflection on Jesus’ sending out of the disciples in pairs we

consider how we could become effective through learning to utilise one-anothers strengths and abilities, then concluding the series with an encouragement to try a few things in the next month.

**Introduction**: This is the final week in a series. 1 Peter 3:15. We have considered the only motive that has any real hope of moving many of us to share our faith - love! But also what the gospel is and how to share it concisely when opportunity arises. Today we discuss how to work together, utilizing each other’s strengths in our outreach.

**Encouragement**: Did anyone have an opportunity to encourage someone toward faith this week? What happened?

**READ: Mark 6:6-13**

**1. Together we can sustain our focus v7**

Why were they sent in pairs? Two are better than one.

* Ironically, we all know this, but teamwork doesn’t happen automatically. Human nature is naturally independent.
* Regarding Christian witness, many of us find sustaining a focus on personal outreach efforts especially difficult.
* However, if we worked more intentionally in teams, this could change. e.g. If there were 2 or 3 Christians in a workplace, they could gather to pray.

**Personal story**

[Preacher: Share a personal example of perseverance in doing something difficult / challenge that was enabled by the encouragement of a team - like in a sports team...]

Two are better than one!

**2. Together we can meet each other’s needs V8-10.**

* Where did their provision of food come from, or a place to stay? From others! The vision came from Jesus - and help from God’s Spirit. While they went in pairs, God’s team in their mission was bigger.
* In the spread of the Christian message, we have different roles to play.
* In an outreach event some will... organise, MC, clean, buy, pay, serve, preach…
* Some organise the small group social, others prepare food, another shares their testimony – and all invite friends. Together, Christ is shared.
* To be effective, we need each other. Without teamwork, very few can sustain a focus! [ONly those who are especially focused and motivated for outreach will remain effective - and even they will still not be as effective as they would have been were they to be working with a team!).

**3. Together we have more courage when facing opposition V11**

* Matt 10 has a fuller account of Jesus’ words on the opposition they could expect.
* Handling oppositions was probably one of the key reasons Jesus sent them in pairs!
* As in Ecclesiastes, ‘two are better than one. A cord of 3 strands is not easily broken’!
* Note that they were not to leave in a spirit of defeat. That takes confidence. Most of us would not feel that way by ourselves – but as a team...

What has been said thus far explains to us the importance of our small groups and prayer partnerships in our workplaces, schools and neighbourhoods.

**4. Together we have greater discernment and courage for spiritual things V7, 13**

* We are anointed for miracles to accompany the message
  + (True - not everyone is healed. I don’t know why. But it remains that if we do not pray for those with needs, we will not see answers to prayers - and God does answer prayer).
* When we work alone we cannot always see all perspectives of a thing. Can be overwhelmed, or intimidated. We all have weaknesses.
  + When in a team of like-minded people, different ones will have different gifts, and see different things.

There can be vision, faith, discernment, boldness, words, love – and practical necessities like hot coffee!

**[Note that… ...**there are more than 50 ‘one an other's’ in the New Testament. Love one another, pray for one another, encourage one another, even rebuke one another, etc. (see a concordance).

* From the very start of the Church God has intended that we work all TOGETHER.
* To be effective in witness – while we can all do something alone – our greater effectiveness will come as a result of us all working together. ]

**How does this apply?**

If we are to do this together (as in this message’s title) our church small groups are going to be key!

* In our small groups we can
  + **Revise** what the core content of the Gospel is, so everyone remembers.
    - We can revise how to share the gospel, so everyone knows.
    - Some members will share Christ more often because of this regular ‘reminding’ of these foundational skills
  + **Pray** for those we desire to see come to faith
    - Praying for them, and for opportunities
  + **Reach out** by noting the interest of those we want to reach out to, and then organising activities together that THEY will enjoy, and inviting them!Then when
    - Then when friends visit an activity or church program, group members proactively get to know their church friends’ friends!
    - We have different personalities and abilities because GOD made us different! When working as teams, this can become a blessing to others!

**Closing story of someone who came to faith** (because this is what it is all about)

[Preacher: You could use a videoed testimony if you prefer]

**Response:** *“Lord - I want to be used by you to help others come to know you!”*

* Pray for those who respond to say they agree with this prayer.

**- SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION -**

**SERIES: Being Gospel-Ready**

**How to stand tall together**

**Week four**

**Leaders note:**

This session aims to revise what has been learnt, and then to help the group make a practical plan that will *help this focus on outreach to be sustained a little longer*. Many will forget what they have learnt quickly. If we fail to plan, we plan to fail!

As the leader, please therefore bring your small group planning calendar, as well as the dates of any events coming up in your Church (which you could invite friends to).

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Testimonies: did anyone have a chance to talk about spiritual things with someone? At the end of last week we were going to go out to initiate conversations, to practice the skills. Did anyone do this? How did it go?

2. How have you found the series? How has it been helpful?

**(A) REVISION**

Today we are going to focus primarily on revision. (How well do you think you will do?)

1. Re the core of the Christian message (10mins)

* What is the basic gospel content
  1. and what is meant by each point? (Ask for an explanation)
  2. Can anyone think of a Bible verse for each point?
  3. Can anyone think of an illustration for (i) why we might need forgiveness, (ii) and why God’s judgement is just?

2. Re knowing how to share it simply at any time (15mins)

* Can anyone remember/show us the basic gospel drawing? (5min)
* Practice this in pairs (10mins)
* Assess: Was the whole gospel communicated simply. and in just 2-3 minutes within the conversation? Was an invitation to make a response given, if appropriate?

**(B) IDENTIFYING OTHER AREAS (RELATED TO OUTREACH) IN WHICH YOU COULD LEARN AS A GROUP**

Here are 4 simple survey questions to see where we might next focus on learning, to become better at reaching out [Ask these questions in quick succession – asking for a show of hands]

* 1. How many of you feel that you could now share the gospel clearly, were an opportunity to arise?
  2. How many think you might need better conversational skills - because you actually struggle to get relaxed two-way conversations about spiritual things going with non-Church people?
  3. How many feel you feel that you really would need to be part of a like-minded team if you were ever to sustain your focus and efforts in outreach?
  4. How many of you are put off from engaging in spiritual conversations because you feel you would struggle to answer questions about things like hell and judgment and Jesus as the only way?

Comment: Thanks for that feedback. While we will revise what we learnt in this series later this year (so it goes into long-term memory), there other areas here we could look at in future. Thank you!

**(C) FINDING YOUR IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS**

**(Personal and group planning)**

LEADER: Give members a copy of the article, **“10 ways to share faith – 8 of which do not involve words”,** to read and reflect upon before doing the below planning exercise.

* The purpose is to help them see a range of smaller steps they could take.

**To apply this…**

i. Note when your next Church-wide outreach events or services might be

* *Who could you invite? When could you invite them? Is there anything you could do that might make inviting them easier? (What about a meal before or afterwards with your small group?)*

ii. What could you do as a small group in the next 6 months that non-believing friends could join you for?

* The goal here is to socialise with each others friends, to help those friends to become comfortable in a Christian group - so they might feel free one day to consider some spiritual questions - while authentically caring for them also!
* As friendships and trust develop, they could be invited to other things, and conversations can take place naturally.

iii. What could you do individually in the next 3 to 6 months to (a) get to know your friends better and (b) engage a conversation about faith-things?

**Pray**

- …for those you love, like those listed in your discussion two weeks ago.

- …for your group, to be able to sustain a healthy outreaching focus.

- …for each other, that you will individually, and as a team, become more effective in serving your mission.

**10 ways to share your faith**

**8 of which don’t involve words.**

By Dave Mann, summarised from http://www.shininglights.co/mobtraining-10\_ways\_to\_share\_faith.html

When God called us to be His witnesses He did not call us to have to change our personalities at the same time!

While we want members to be able to share the faith for themselves, it’s just a reality that some will remain too timid to do this. But this doesn’t mean they can’t do it by some other means!

**Here are ten ways your members could share their faith!**

**1. Share the gospel yourself, with evidences to support**

This is the most basic and obvious way: We talk with people. Ideally all believers should be equipped with simple ways to share their beliefs. But what if you are really timid? What else could you do?

**2. Share a well-crafted testimony**

Telling personal stories is always easier than telling what might feel like a more ‘formal’ (less natural) message.

We all have a faith-story. These (a) encourage faith, and (b) if we tell about how we came to faith we can indirectly share the gospel too.

**3. Invitation to small group event where someone else shares**

Imagine your small group has a Christmas BBQ, and you invite a few friends. Someone could share what Christmas means to them just before dessert….and, just like that, the Christian message is shared (and those who invited their friends didn’t even need to talk)..

**4. Invitation to Church or para-church event**

Then they hear that their pastor is going to preach a clear gospel message at Christmas – so they invite all their family to the service before the family gather for Sunday lunch… and again, without needing to say it themselves, the message is communicated (...after which you ask your friends what they thought about it, and why).

**5. A tract**

The Church then gives out a tract as a part of a small welcome pack at that event. The visiting friend reads it at home, and hear the message yet again, but through a different media…

(Note: Some tracts are ‘old school’ - but some good newer ones do exist. Look around for them - then buy a supply for yourself!).

**6. A booklet**

Where a ‘tract’ can share only a very short thought, a booklet can share more of a message - like an article (but easier to read). Our friends might have particular doubts or questions about the Christian faith. We can find booklets that address these, and can also give away really good booklest with Christmas cards.

In New Zealand, 3 booklets were gifted to nearly every home in 2014 to 2016, and church people personally gave away more than 200,000 additional copies of each of these booklets. When a resource is good, it’s not so embarrassing to give away!

**7. A book**

When my wife and I got married, we shared our faith at the wedding. We gave gift packs to our guests, which included:

- A book (*The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren)

- A DVD (*7 Miracles and a Martyr* by Reinhard Bonnke)

- A ‘magazine’ (*Jesus* by Campus Crusade for Christ Asia).

One of my wife’s friends came to faith a month or so after the wedding because of this pack!

**8. A DVD**

There are many Christian DVDs on many different topics, for example, by creation.com, Lee Strobel, Reinhard Bonnke - and many others.

**9. A Sunday morning Christian TV program**

Some of our NZ Sunday TV programs are really good! Have you noticed this also?

**10. A website**

Check out [www.lookingforgod.com](http://www.lookingforgod.com/) or [www.jesus.net](http://www.jesus.net/) or [www.10daychallenge.co.nz](http://www.10daychallenge.co.nz).

Many such websites exist - and the social media ministry YesHeIs have a ‘5 day challenge’ that can train you how to reach out online utilising social media! It’s amazing!

Even posting a good video on FaceBook at Christmas and Easter could result in another person (or many) hearing and considering something of the Christian message.

The above show a variety of ways we could be active at outreach. Is there something you could do for those you love?

**An encouraging story**

Catherine has been a secretary in a Church for 25 years. She’s cheerful, but sometimes quiet. She’s not the kind of person to share her faith too directly with people, but she prays, loves and encourages!  Her dad died around the year 2000, and this ‘woke her up’ in terms of her need to share her faith by one means or another.  Since then she has prayed for relatives (siblings, and her many nieces and nephews), inviting them to outreaches in her Church or small group that she felt could be relevant. Also, she was born in a leap year, so she holds a birthday party every 4 years. Each time she invites a friend or pastor to come share a devotion (the gospel).  **As a result of these efforts – extending invitations with love and encouragement, she saw 10 relatives come to faith in the those 10 years!**

When we work as a part of a wider TEAM, more is possible than when we just work by ourselves.