



FAITH *Shared*

SESSION 6: IDEAS FOR OUTREACH



In our outreach we can often feel a tremendous sense of urgency to do everything now! Not only that, but we can feel like when we do anything, we have to do everything, so the BBQ you run to get to know the people in your neighborhood must also include an alter call. The parent and toddler group you set up must include a worship slot, and the comedy evening you set up should have a God slot.

And so on, and so on.

It is important that we remember something important when it comes to our outreach;

We don't need to do everything.

There is a prayer from Shane Claiborne's Common Prayer which says,

'We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing this.

It allows us to do something and do it well. It is a beginning, a step along

The way, an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.'

This sums up perfectly what it means to do mission. We are not running events and services and asking God to be present. God is standing with us, looking at the world, and saying to us, 'Let's do something about that.'

That is the poetic idea of outreach, but what does it mean in practice? That is what we will explore in the rest of this session.

INTRODUCING

Last session we explored the Five Marks of Mission and how our churches are already connecting with those outside the church. This session we'll think in more depth about putting those ideas into practice.

Before thinking about what outreach your church could engage with now, what new things you could start, it would be good to spend some time reflecting on what previous outreach you have done as a church community and thinking about how it went, and the lasting impact of that outreach.

- Over the last five years what outreach events has your church done?
- How did it go? How did the church engage with what was going on? What engagement was there from the local community?
- What was the lasting impact?

This could be a difficult activity for the church to engage with, especially if members have been around for a while and needs to be approached sensitively. It could be fruitful to approach this as a celebration for the things that have been done over the last few years, and exploring where God wants to lead you next.

It is important to clarify that the aim of this is not to make the church feel down about its past outreach, but instead to get them to reflect on their past outreach to be able to take the good and leave the less good.

EXPANDING

Video exploring some key questions to help think about ideas for outreach.

EXPLORING

Split the group into four and give each one a season (Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter).

First have each group mindmap the overall impression they have of that season.

Second, have them think about what festivals, both religious and secular, go on in that season.

Third, have each group narrow their thoughts down to ONE event/activity/focus that your church could have for that season.

- The aim here is to develop a pattern of activities/events for the church that allow it to have a manageable, achievable focus for it's outreach to the community.
- REMEMBER: You don't need to do everything at each event, but try and keep whatever invitations to become part of the church community in line with the type of event it is. For example, you wouldn't go to a BBQ and expect someone to give a speech so try and avoid a God slot. Sometime low key, like a leaflet on exit, or a stand with church info, would be more appropriate.

PRAYING

Using the audio prayers on the Faith Shared webpage, give the group some time and space to reflect on the ideas that you have been exploring through this session.