

The Dearest Place on Earth (14)

An Evangelistic Community

A. Introduction

1. The local church is a community of God's people.

2. What kind of community should we be?

When people look at this local church what should they see?

3. A fourth mark is that a local church should be an evangelistic community.

A community of people who reach out with the good news of who Jesus is and what He has done and who call people to flee from the wrath to come by repenting of their sins and trusting in Jesus to save them.

B. Why should we be an evangelistic community?

1. Jesus commands us to be.

The Great Commission is a clear command from Jesus about what we should do.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" (Matthew 28:16-20)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

2. The early church was.

"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went." (Acts 8:4)

3. It's God's means for saving people.

"for, Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:13-15)

4. To love our neighbours.

5. This is one way in which we can glorify God.

6. The need is great.

Approximately 20,000 people lived in this community of Banstead.

C. How can we be an evangelistic community?

1. By Praying the Gospel

The starting point is always prayer as it is the Lord who saves.

"Salvation comes from the Lord." (Jonah 2:9)

"The Lord added to their number those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47)

We should pray for unbelievers to be saved.

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

We should pray for gospel workers.

"Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:38)

We should pray for opportunities to speak the gospel.

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains." (Colossians 4:2-3)

We should pray for unity within this local church.

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (John 17:20-23)

We should pray for fearlessness and clear words.

"Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should." (Ephesians 6:19-20)

"Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should." (Colossians 4:4)

We should pray for regularly (ask and keep asking).

2. By Promoting the Gospel

By socialising with unbelievers – Jesus regularly spent time with "sinners".

"While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him." (Mark 2:15)

"When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them." (Luke 7:37-38)

"All the people saw this and began to mutter, He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner'." (Luke 19:7)

By the way we live – being a good neighbour, being faithful to God.

"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

"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." (1 Peter 2:12)

"But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself in this way." (Daniel 1:8)

"...and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive." (Titus 2:10)

By financially supporting the work of the gospel – giving money as well as time.

"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." (Philippians 1:4-5)

3. By Proclaiming the Gospel

Not everyone is an evangelist but we all are witnesses.

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15)

We should all be able and willing to share the gospel whenever the opportunity arises.

There are different ways of being a witness – be who you are.

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us." (Romans 12:6)

Confrontational (Peter in Acts 2:14-39 & Acts 3:12-26).

Intellectual (Paul in Acts 17:17).

Testimonial (Blind man in John 9:25).

Invitational (Philip in John 1:43-46; Woman at the well in John 4:28-30).

Service (Dorcas in Acts 9:36).

Hospitable (Levi in Luke 5:29-32).

Corporately (1 Corinthians 14:23-26).

With a pen (Luke 1:1-4).

Con conversationally (Colossians 4:6 & 1 Peter 3:15).

We should witness with honesty, clarity, urgency and joy.

4. By Baptising those who trust in the Gospel.

Those who respond to the gospel by repenting of their sins and trusting in Jesus should be baptised.

"Peter replied, Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

D. An Evangelistic Community in Action

1. How are we as a church currently seeking to reach out with the Gospel?

Church Gathered (Sundays/Thursdays).

Praying the Gospel – corporate prayer.

Promoting the Gospel – the church family in action.

Proclaiming the Gospel – from the pulpit, through the words of the songs, in individual conversations.

Baptising those who trust in the Gospel.

Church Scattered (throughout the week).

Almost all our midweek ministries are focused on either Promoting or Proclaiming the Gospel.

Toddlers – Jelly Tots.

Children – All Stars, Kids Zone, Holiday Bible Club, Assemblies.

Youth – Impact, Beacon Impact.

Ladies – Kraftee Ladies.

Seniors – Evergreen, Services in Care Homes.

Other community events – Cake stall, Carol singing, Apologetics evening, leaflet drops.

In addition, there is our individual witness to friends, neighbours, work colleagues, and family members.

2. How could we as a church seek to reach out with the Gospel?

Open Air Preaching in the High Street.

Regular distribution of tracts to the houses of Banstead (inc. inviting prayer requests).

Door to door visitation / High Street presence.

Evangelistic dinner parties.

Seeking new ways to bless the community.

Intentionally getting to know members of the community.

Evangelistic services.

Evangelism training sessions / Constant encouragement of personal witness.

E. Conclusion

1. Remember the need.

Thousands in Banstead are heading to a lost eternity.

2. Believe the promise.

Jesus will build His church.

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” (Matthew 16:18)

Jesus will be with us by His Spirit as we witness for Him.

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)