

# Week 2 – Living in 3D

## Introduction

- Last week we looked at how we are called to be witnesses for Jesus
- This is going to involve us stepping out of the 'Circle of Comfort' and to 'walk across the room' into the 'Zone of the Unknown'
- But all we need to do is to take the first step and then co-operate with the Holy Spirit in doing what he asks us to do
- This week we are going to look at how we can become engaged with the lives of people around us – this involves 3Ds
- **Developing friendships**
- **Discovering life stories**
- **Discerning the next steps** based on the Holy Spirit's promptings

## Develop friendships

- The life cycle of most Christ followers is that the longer a person has been a Christian the fewer non-Christians they know and the less they share the Gospel with them
- Seeking to develop friendships which one day may involve leading that person to God's grace

## Discovering life stories

- We need to find out where people are at, not start by telling them where we are
- The importance of proximity – we need to be where non-Christians actually are (which is not likely to be in church by the way)
- We need to be authentic – to be ourselves – to be true to our personal natural 'style'
- We need to be sensitive
- We need to be prepared to take risks

## Discerning next steps

- Reading the signals that people give about their needs
- What resources do you have to give?
- The 'Be With' factor
- Focus on helping people on the journey, rather than over the finishing line
- But be intentional

## Group Response – Develop Friendships

1. For some people the longer they walk with Christ the fewer are their interactions with people who don't. It is easy to find ourselves trapped inside a safe Christian 'cocoon'. For others the opposite is true - the longer they walk with Christ the more their love for others increases and they connect with them more. Share with the group if your own life shows more of a 'cocooning' or 'connecting' pattern.
2. Bill suggests that we need to stay intentional about rubbing shoulders with people far from God, in the hope that we might be able to point them towards faith. If you find yourself veering towards a cocooning pattern, how might you be able to move towards connecting again.

## Discover Stories

3. On the video Bill's friend Dave mentioned various aspects of his story which were significant in his walk (away from and ) to God. Can you relate to any of them? Can you remember experience in your own life or in the lives of your friends or family which have caused people to move away from or close to God?
4. Once you decide intentionally to connect with those outside of the Christian faith which is it so important to understand their stories before trying to engage in spiritual discussions with them?

## Discerning Next Steps

5. Bill says that *"everyday, seemingly insignificant things can become divine, life altering tools in the hands of compassionate Christ-followers"*. What role did the following 'everyday things' play in Dave's journey towards 'God'?
- Books/tangible resources
  - Time
  - Recreational interests

6. The simple expression of a heartfelt emotion at the right moment also played a pivotal role in helping Dave come to faith in Christ. How did it strike you when Bill told Dave, *"I'm not going to heaven without you, Supe"*? (If you don't think you could ever say something like that to a friend check out bullet points 3, 4 and 5 under *Discovering Life Stories* on page 1 of this week's notes.)
  
7. Have you ever felt this way towards someone in your own life? If so, did you tell them about it? If not, why not?

## During the next fortnight

8. Think about one of your 'Brians' or 'Daves'. At what stage of living in 3D do you think you are in with this person right now. Put his or her name on the next line and then go through a review of where you are at with this person.

Person's name \_\_\_\_\_

- Developing friendships – we are just establishing common ground.

*How can I continue to practice a bottom-value of love towards this person, regardless of whether they ever make a faith decision for Christ or not?*

- Discovering Stories – I'm in the process of unearthing his or her life story.

*What one question could I ask to understand their life journey better?*

- Discern next steps – I've taken a few steps to help this person find faith in God.

*What resources is God prompting me to provide for this person – a book or CD, a listening ear, an invitation to an event or special service, or a few hours engaged in a shared recreational activity?*

9. Prayer – whatever stage you are at with the person you have identified, the relationships that already exist in your life can serve as a great opportunity for God to use to help people move forward on their journey towards him. Ask the Lord for clarity as you try to assess where you are with each person, for wisdom as you seek to point people towards hi, and for guidance as you take action. Remember

- The Holy Spirit is here to empower us to be witnesses (Acts 1.8)
- If we lack wisdom all we need to do is to ask God for it (James 1.5)

10. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus talks about us as being salt and light. Salt gives flavour to all it touches. Take a look at your relational circles. Where is your impact the most ‘God-flavoured’ and where is it the blandest?

Mark your response with an X on the lines below.

|                           | Bland | God-flavoured |
|---------------------------|-------|---------------|
| My family                 | _____ | _____         |
| My circle of friends      | _____ | _____         |
| My recreational groups    | _____ | _____         |
| Among people I don't know | _____ | _____         |
| My church community       | _____ | _____         |
| My work colleagues        | _____ | _____         |
| My neighbours             | _____ | _____         |

11. Think of one way you can reach a neighbour this week?

12. Look at Psalm 139, especially verse 14. The Psalmist says that people are ‘fearfully and wonderfully made’. With each person you come across try to think of them as marvellous, God-designed creations. Make a note of your responses to people through the week when you began to look at people in that way.