

ETHOS OF WALKING THE WAY (1): STUDY MATERIAL

INTRODUCTORY NOTE: As group leader, you will need to decide how to structure this study. What sections should be included and which are less relevant. What's more, as the session unfolds, do all you can to draw out the views of each group member ensuring that no individual dominates. Where there are questions asked, resist the temptation of answering them yourself. Let the group do that, and only input answers if no one else has an answer to give. Ensure that the answers shown in red are brought into the discussion.

OPENING DISCUSSION

Q: When you hear the word "CHURCH", what immediately comes to mind?

Encourage each group member to share which churches they have been a part of over the years. What drew you to them?

What were they like?

EXPLANATION

At this point in the study, explain something more about "Walking the Way" as a whole.

In a nutshell:

"Walking the Way... living the Life of Jesus today"

is an ethos rather than a fixed programme

it has no start and no finish

it is to help churches redefine who they are and what God intends them to be

it is about re-discovering the fact that Jesus calls us to whole life discipleship not

something we simply do on a Sunday. The [diagram](#) produced by LICC is a very

useful visual aid to show that we are church (the red dots) when we gather,

but equally are church (still the red dots) as we scatter.

THE BIG MISTAKE

All too often Churches have fallen into the trap of simply gathering on a Sunday and then waiting and hoping for unchurched people to come to them. This has resulted in congregations decreasing, and many Christians becoming despondent. In contrast, we find Jesus going to where people were, and what's more, sending the disciples **out** to declare and demonstrate the love of God. This is the heart and challenge of "Walking the Way".

READ: John 20: 21 - 22 and Acts 1: 8

Q: What are the key points from these verses?

{A: God gives his followers the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit gives power and confidence

The Holy Spirit gives peace

We are called to be witnesses

Where? Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth}

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WITNESSES

Q: Think of a court situation, what do witnesses do?

{A: they speak about what they have seen, heard, experienced}

COMMENT: They don't make things up and they don't have to try to give clever answers. They simply tell of what they have personally experienced and personally know.

COMMENT: All too often people have thought about the "sending out" in terms of something very specific, going to a specific place or into a specific context. HOWEVER we need to re-think this: Jesus actually wants us to be his witnesses simply wherever we go rather than limiting it to a particular activity.

READ: Luke 9: 1 – 2 and Matthew 28: 19 – 20

Q: As the disciples are sent out, what are they instructed to do?

*{A: 1. Preach the good news of God's Kingdom
2. Heal the sick
3. Cast out demons
4. Make disciples}*

(NOTE: It is important that people understand that the word "preach" is not confined to what we experience from a pulpit on a Sunday. The word comes from the same word as "Herald" and a herald in the first century was someone who went around the Kingdom declaring the King's message.)

READ: Matthew 25: 31 – 46

Q: What else is expected from us as we "Live the life of Jesus today"?

SO WHAT?

Encourage the group to prayerfully consider:

What does all this say to "me"?

What does God expect from me as a consequence of what has been discussed?

PRAYER

Spend time praying for each other in the group, that the Holy Spirit would enable them to "live the life of Jesus" no matter where they go or who they are with in the coming days.

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