

Session 5 - The Essential Practices of Mission and Evangelism



Mission involves the outward expression of the church and is an essential part of God's work in the world. John 3:16 tells us that God loves the world and 1 John 4:12 states that God's people display the very character of God by the way we love each other. Holding these verses together encourages actions that leads to the church's engagement with the world in the name of Jesus.

How do you define mission?

How do you define evangelism?

Is there a difference between mission and evangelism? If so, what is the difference?

Some additional thoughts to consider:

Mission is concerned with the overall task that God has given the church for the salvation of his people throughout the world. It includes medical and educational work, and everything that Christians do to advance the gospel and build Christ's kingdom. Jesus implies that in John 20:21 – "As the Father has sent me, so send I you." Mission involves intentionally joining God's work in the world.

Evangelism is at the core, heart, or center of missions. It consists of the proclamation of salvation through faith in Christ to nonbelievers, whatever their religious background may be, calling them to repentance and faith in Christ, announcing the forgiveness of sins through Christ's saving work, inviting them to become vital members of Christ's church and begin a life of obedience to Christ their Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let's Think about Mission

Christopher Wright, in his book *The Mission of God*, summarizes mission this way: "Fundamentally our mission (if it is biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation."

In effect, we join God's purpose and plan for the world. Jesus gave his disciples, and all Christ-followers, the Great Commission and the Great Commandment in order to engage the world for Christ. Each New Testament Gospel includes the emphasis of Christ sending his disciples on mission. **What does Jesus tell us to do in these verses?**

Matthew 28:18-20

Mark 13:10, 14:9

Luke 24:44-49

John 20:21



Jesus also emphasized the Great Commandment. In Matthew 22:34-30, we find “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and your neighbor as yourself.*” This command merges the worship of God with everyday relational actions. Jesus displayed this truth in vibrant color through his life and so should we.

What stands out to you in Matthew 22:34-40?

How do these verses give direction for the mission of the local church?

Small Group Discussion – The following Scripture passages instruct our understanding of mission. In your small group, study one of the passages and be ready to share what the Lord is teaching you about pursuing God's mission each day.

Matthew 5:13-16

Luke 4:18-21

Matthew 9:36 – 10:20

More thoughts – Read Acts 14:21-23 and see how it offers a three-legged stool of church’s gospel mission. Through the missionary work of the Apostle Paul, the early church aimed for:

- New converts (verse 21)
- New communities (verse 23)
- Nurtured churches (verse 22)

Why are these three parts of gospel mission so important?

How does your local church engage the world for Christ?



Let’s Think about Evangelism

Opening Thoughts - Evangelism is telling people about Jesus. Sharing our faith and beliefs. Spreading the “good news.”

Evangelism is sharing the Gospel in order that non-believers would respond in faith and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

To evangelize is “*to make known by word and deed the love of the crucified and risen Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that people will repent, believe and receive Christ as their Savior and obediently serve him as their Lord in the fellowship of his church.*” (p. 47 The Living Church, John Stott)

Acts 1:8 is another verse telling us what Jesus said before he ascended. “*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.*”

Here Jesus tells us that we are to be his “*witnesses.*” What is a witness? How have you witnessed God’s work in your own life? Has the Holy Spirit come on you? (see Romans 8:9-11) Where are we to be witnesses? How could this verse be rewritten to represent where you live today? Where is your Jerusalem?



The Greek word for witness is *marturion* from which we get the word martyr. Witness involves living a life that points people to Christ. **Do you know what this picture represents? Why is this story important for today's church?**

Small Group Assignment – In Acts 13, 14 and 17, we find the Apostle Paul proclaiming Christ in different locations and to different religious backgrounds. Each group will be assigned a passage so that they might understand how evangelism takes place under the leading of the Holy Spirit. The passages are: Acts 13:13-43; Acts 14:5-20; Acts 17:16-34. Use the following questions to unpack these passages. Be ready to share your insights with the large group.

- What was the religious background of the people in the passage?
- How did Paul introduce the gospel to the people?
- What was the response of the people that heard the gospel message?
- What insights did you learn about evangelism that will help you proclaim Christ?

In what ways should the church practice evangelism?

More thoughts - Evangelism plays a key role of the church. This means reaching out to a lost world with the Good News about Jesus. Since people often have questions or doubts about Christ and Christianity, knowing the truth and being able to defend it (apologetics) is also part of the role of the church.

More than just reaching out with the gospel, the church must also personally demonstrate compassion and mercy by helping others. In following Christ's example to love others, the church must seek to make a real difference in the world while not neglecting to share the message of Christ.

How can you practice evangelism?

Final thoughts – God's people are on a mission. Sent by Christ into the world, our words and our lives should point people to Jesus. Proclaiming the good news of the gospel is what the church is called to do. Living lives directed by the Holy Spirit gives validity to the gospel message. In so doing, Christ-followers become agents of God's reconciliation in a broken world. Now, read and take time to reflect of 2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2. **In the space below, write a brief paragraph stating your commitment before God to be this type of person where you live.**

Session 6 - What is Your Place in the Church?

Read the following passages, underline and then discuss those things that you think are important to understand how a church is to function.



Romans 12:3-8 ³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31 ¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸ And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.”

1 Peter 4:10 - “as each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

Ephesians 4:11-12 - *“and he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”*

Now that these Scriptures help us see how the church should function, what about you? Where do you fit in? Read and thoughtfully answer the following questions by yourself. Then gather with two or three people (preferably that know you) and share and discuss your answers.



How has God uniquely gifted you? What passions and interests has he put in your heart?

Which “essential practices” (teaching, preaching, discipleship, fellowship, care, worship, prayer, evangelism and mission) inspire you to ministry?

Are you drawn to any of these practices? Do you sense that you may be “called to do that?”

Have you had any previous experiences in any of these areas that may encourage you to continue to invest your time and energy in them?

Have any of these practices bring you a sense of joy and fulfillment?

Has anyone encouraged you to pursue any of these areas of ministry?

In which of these areas do you feel that God may have gifted you? Why? What strengths or gifts do you bring?

Are there any that you feel least gifted for in your ministry? Why or why not?

In what ways can someone help you and others engage in the mission of your church? What can you do to help others?

Final Thoughts – The people of God, his church, are on a God-given mission. Personally, and corporately we are to live to honor him and to make him known. In order to function effectively as one body, we need to embrace the essentials of the church both personally and corporately. Each essential practice needs to be done and each person needs to find and practice his or her part. Should we lose this balance we may falter in our God-given task. Thankfully, God has uniquely gifted us and called us to join in the mission he has placed before us. Join in the excitement of seeing God at work through you and his church!