

St. Stephen's Shottermill | House Groups
OUT: Mission and Service

OUT: MISSION AND SERVICE

The Holy Spirit empowers us to fulfil God's purpose of reaching people who do not yet know him. It is important to remember that we are here for others and not simply for ourselves. We are to 'make disciples' as well as 'be disciples' – in fact part of the reason for being a disciple is to invite others to be disciples too.

- ❖ We are called to both 'be with him' and to be 'sent out' *Mark 3:14-15*
- ❖ We are all called to be witnesses: *Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8* The great commission
- ❖ We are also commissioned to care for the earth *Genesis 1:26-28*
- ❖ House groups are not just for Christians: they should also be able to include our not yet Christian friends – maybe through social events or practical care
- ❖ When Jesus called his first disciples he said to them that he would make them 'fishers of men'.
- ❖ People not-yet Christian should be able to become part of our house group life before they have made a definite commitment to Christ.
- ❖ We make an impact on our friends who don't yet know Jesus, by making it a priority to love and care for them, but also by the way we love and care for each other:

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35

- ❖ God has given each of us people that we are in a unique position to witness to – at work, at the shops, in the clubs and societies that we belong to, our neighbours, friends and families

Five Marks Of Mission (*adopted by the Lambeth Council in 1988, then adopted by the General Synod of the Church of England in 1996*).

1. To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of the earth

Five values for a missionary church (*From "Mission-shaped church" pp.81-82*)

1. **A missionary church is focused on God the Trinity**
Worship lies at the heart of a missionary church, and to love and know God as Father, Son and Spirit is its chief inspiration and primary purpose...

2. **A missionary church is incarnational**
It seeks to shape itself in relation to the culture in which it is located or to which it is called...
3. **A missionary church is transformational**
It exists for the transformation of the community that it serves, through the power of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit...
4. **A missionary church makes disciples**
It is active in calling people to faith in Jesus Christ...it is concerned for the transformation of individuals, as well as for the transformation of communities.
5. **A missionary church is relational**
It is characterized by welcome and hospitality. Its ethos and style are open to change when new members join.

Practical Ideas for house groups:

- ❖ Praying for those we want to become Christians – invite people to share about friends they have witnessed to or want to witness to
- ❖ Pray for boldness, strength and courage for each other
- ❖ Pray for 'God opportunities' or God-incidences
- ❖ Prayer walking in the area that your group meets in
- ❖ Social events that we can invite people to – be creative and think of events that they would enjoy
- ❖ Practical service – e.g. gardening, decorating, babysitting – acts of kindness
- ❖ Skills exchange – serving others with practical skills e.g. taking photos, mending a fence, putting up a curtain, food shopping, lifts etc
- ❖ Linking with local projects e.g. with the homeless, Soup runs
- ❖ Campaigning – writing letters to MP's etc, Open Doors, Stop the Traffic
- ❖ Linking with overseas missionaries – prayer, letter writing, practical support

Questions

- ❖ Look at the one or two of the passage mentioned earlier and discuss how you think they are relevant to us today
- ❖ What do you think of the 5 marks of mission?
- ❖ What do you think of the 5 values for a missionary church?
- ❖ How do I serve others?
- ❖ How often do I share my faith?
- ❖ Do I leave time for relationships with non-Christians?
- ❖ Do I do my bit to care for the environment? Look at Tearfund's Carbon Fast material
- ❖ Discuss what your outward focus could be for your house group e.g. ministry to care homes, praying for a particular street, other ways to 'bless the community'