



EVANGELISTIC
PRAYER TEAM
BOOKLET

SEMESTER 1 2018



CITY BIBLE FORUM
Ask the bigger questions

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Brisbane City Bible Forum– Our Vision for Brisbane

The City Bible Forum has a vision to share Jesus with the city of Brisbane by empowering city workers to share Jesus in their workplace. At the heart of this vision are Evangelistic Prayer Teams - God's people praying for God to work in the lives of their colleagues.

Evangelistic Prayer Teams Goals

Evangelistic prayer teams are aiming to disciple Christians in the following five areas. Prayer is at the centre of what we do.

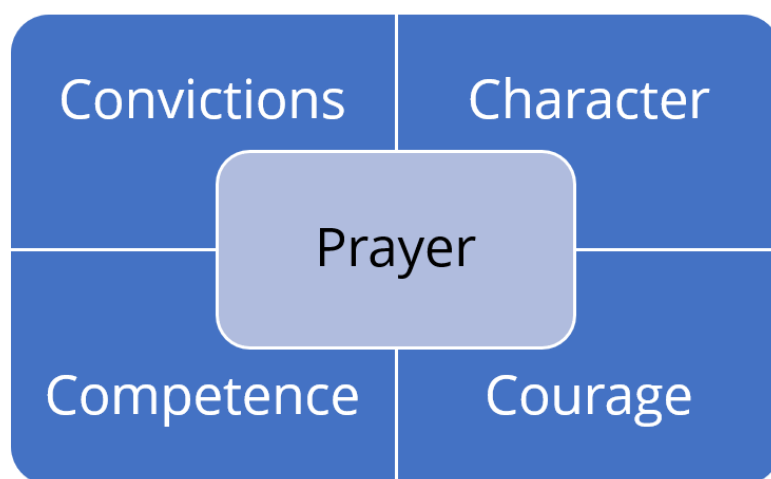


Diagram 1: shows the four components of growing your team as evangelists, overlaid by prayer

Prayer

EPTs are Evangelistic **Prayer** Teams.

We pray because evangelism is God's work from first to last; from before the foundations of the world were laid through to the death and resurrection of Jesus and into eternity. God works in our hearts and in the hearts of our colleagues, so we need to pray.

We pray because it brings joy to God our Father as we join with Him in the work closest to His heart.

We pray because sharing Jesus is hard work and we need God's strength and empowering.

Convictions

We need to be constantly convicted of the priority of sharing Jesus. Jesus' glory and the growth of God's kingdom should be foremost in our plans. We need to remind each other continually of this vital truth so we can be effective sharers of Jesus in our workplace.

Character

Our godliness is essential. If the Christian is acting in an ungodly way at work then their evangelism will not just be ineffective, it is likely to be damaging to the gospel. We want to encourage people in their godliness and service in the work place, challenging them about how they act, think, speak and lead where they work.

Competence

Some Christians would love to share the gospel with their colleagues, but they just don't know how. We want to give them some clear principles and clear methods so they can be confident to start to share what they believe about Jesus in the work place.

Courage

This is really a subset of Character but it is so essential in the workplace. There is a lot at stake in the work place in terms of career, relationships, and how we are perceived. These are important factors but they are not ultimate factors. God calls us not to be ashamed of the gospel before others and this includes those in our workplaces, even when this is costly.

Conclusion

Prayer should be at the centre of what we are doing in our EPTs. When we pray we are asking our Heavenly Father who is the creator and king of the universe to save people and to use us boldly in His saving work. With these sorts of prayers, He is well pleased.



GOD'S VISION OUR CITY

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God's vision, our city

(If this is your first week in an Evangelistic Prayer Team, you may like to start with [Praying for people](#) on page 49)

Vision is a vital aspect of any endeavour. A clear vision helps us discriminate between the good and the essential.

Coke's vision is "refresh the world", Disney's "make people happy". What's your company's vision?

Big Idea

God's vision is to bring every part of creation together under Jesus' rule.

Exploring the Scriptures

And he [God the Father] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. **Ephesians 1:9-10**

Key Truths

1. Everything in all of creation, throughout all of history has a single, stunning focus in God's mind – that everything everywhere is under Jesus' rule.
2. God's plan from 'before the creation of the world' (v4) is revealed to us in Jesus.
3. The centre of God's vision is Jesus' rule, there's nothing more important.

Application

There are so many things we can devote our lives to: improving the lives of others through practical help, building better systems, releasing capital for vital projects, loving and caring for family and the unloved. These are all good things. But vision is about discriminating between good and essential. In God's plan, there's only one focus – that Jesus is Lord of all.

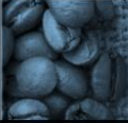


Our lives need to align with God's vision. What would you say is God's vision for our city?

If Jesus is to be the Lord in your workplace, those who aren't followers of Jesus need to follow him. They need to meet him and submit to his rule. Who will you invite to meet Jesus this year?

Praying

Who will you be praying for in your workplace?

Write down the names of people in the table below according to where you are up to with them. (You could use your favourite prayer app if you prefer)

 Coffee	 Dinner	 Gospel

*Where are you up to with your colleagues in terms of the Coffee Dinner Gospel schema?
Write their name where you feel they fall.*

Coffee – We’re just getting to know one another. They know I’m Christian.

Dinner – I know where they’re coming from, understand their worldview, maybe even what they think about Jesus. Have shared a bit about the Bible’s worldview.

Gospel – I’m starting to share Jesus with them – I’m going to invite them to meet Jesus for themselves in the pages of a gospel

**For further information on the Coffee, Dinner, Gospel approach, please see page 49*

Hope in hostility

The results of the same sex marriage plebiscite confirmed what many suspected; Australia is a post-Christian culture. What do you fear for the future?

Big Idea

Don't fear hostile unbelievers, instead set apart Christ as Lord in your heart and look for opportunities to explain your hope in Jesus.

Exploring the Scriptures

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame.

1 Peter 3:13-16

Key Truths

1. Do not fear those who can hurt the body, but not the soul, you are blessed if you suffer for righteousness sake – like Jesus did.
2. Instead determine in your heart to make Jesus the Lord of your life and be prepared to explain your hope beyond anything you may suffer in this life - Jesus.
3. Our sharing of Jesus must come with gentleness and respect; it undermines those who would accuse us.
4. In the end, we hope those who may slander us would turn to Christ in their shame.

Application

If Jesus is Lord, there's no place for fear of unbelievers. And many of us feel fear in sharing Jesus. In our fear we envision that we're surrounded by rabid atheists who will pounce upon our ignorance and ridicule our simple faith once we mention Jesus. Or else they'll reject us as bigots. The reality is only about 4% of the population are like that. Most of our colleagues are merely ignorant, and as high as 25% are warm to the idea of Jesus or spiritual matters¹.

Why do you think we fear sharing Jesus at work?

A colleague asks you "I've noticed you're a bit different to other people here, things don't seem to impact you as much. Why is that?" What would you say?

Pray

Pray that you would live such good lives that people would ask you for the reason for your hope. Go to page 49.

¹ Check out the details at mccrindle.com.au/the-mccrindle-blog/faith-and-belief-in-australia

Right place, right time

According to the great twentieth century philosopher, John Lennon, 'Life is what happens to you when you're busy making other plans.' We often look past the here and now with our eyes looking to the horizon. How true is this for you?

Big Idea

God has put us in the exact place and time we're in so that people might find him.

Exploring the Scriptures

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷ God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

Acts 17:24-28

Key Truths

1. God doesn't fit into our little temples, nor does he squeeze into our little plans. We fit within his grand schemes for all of history.
2. God has set out our exact times and places so that we might seek him, reach out and find him (though he's not far from any of us). This must also include when and where we work.
3. If God has set the places and times unbelievers work so they might find him, it follows that he has also set the times and places Christians work so that through us people might find him.

4. It is no accident that we are working with the people we are, it is part of God's plan to see unbelievers come to know Jesus.

Application

It's fair to say we all prayed for our job before we got it. There were certain things about it that meant we agreed to take it. Whatever they were, it probably wasn't to share Jesus with our now colleagues. But that was part of God's purpose. Now that we recognise God's purpose, how does it change your view of your colleagues? How does it change your prayers?

OR

On the wall of the City Bible Forum office is a sign that says "Arrange your diary around this fact that people are going to hell without Jesus." It's a bold statement! What would change in your diary if you adapted this idea?

Pray

Pray for a fresh perspective of your colleagues, that you would see them as God does – people who need to reach out and find him through Jesus. Go to page 49.

God and our stuff

The problem with successful people is they think their success is due to them.

Malcolm Turnbull once said "I don't believe my wealth... is entirely a function of hard work. Of course, hard work is important but ...there are taxi drivers that work harder than I ever have and they don't have much money." To what extent can we take credit for our success?

Big Idea

God doesn't need anything from us but gives us all things; when we give to support God's mission – we're not doing God a favour – it is a chance for joyful worship!

Exploring the Scriptures

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

Acts 17:24-25

Each person should do as he has decided in his heart-- not out of regret or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. **2 Cor 9:7**

Key Truths

1. God made everything and gives to everyone impartially.
2. God isn't short of cash – he doesn't need our service, or our giving.
3. God gives life, breath, and everything, there's nothing we can give to God that he doesn't already own.
4. When we give to ministry, we're not doing God a favour. It's a chance to joyfully worship in service.

Application

City Bible Forum exists due to the generosity of God expressed through his people. We have a national budget of just under \$3 million, and nearly \$305, 000 in Brisbane. More than 90% of our support comes from individual Christians giving regularly or at our appeals. It takes 50 people regularly giving to support one full time worker, Brisbane currently has 80 people giving regularly – we need to see that number up towards 170.

We know there are many great ministry opportunities to support, however we hope your involvement will lead to you also regularly financially supporting City Bible Forum as you see God working through your workplace.

How might you be able to support City Bible Forum this year?

Pray

Pray for the financial needs of City Bible Forum.

Pray for your unbelieving colleagues.



WHY PRAY?

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Prayer – the best thing we can do?

Many people in the busyness of this world are drawn to activism. They believe things get achieved because they do them. "If I don't do them, they don't get done". Does this resonate with you?

What effect can this have as we think about people hearing about or coming to Jesus?

Big Idea

God calls us to share the good news of Jesus with those around us but he is the one who works to change hearts. So, we must pray to God, the great evangelist.

Exploring the Scriptures

In the passage below, Jesus is in the middle of an argument with the religious leaders.

³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." ⁴¹ At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴² They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven?'" ⁴³ "Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. ⁴⁴ "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets: "They will all be taught by God." Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. **John 6:39-45**

Key Truths

1. No one comes to Jesus unless God draws them. People come to Jesus as they hear from the Father and learn from him. (v44-45)
2. A close relationship with a Christian is a good start for sharing Jesus, but it doesn't guarantee they will accept Jesus. The Jews who grumbled knew Jesus and his family personally and they still didn't come to Jesus.
3. No one is outside of God's ability to save, and everyone is someone we could potentially invite to engage with Jesus.

Application

How does it challenge us in our thinking that someone's salvation depends on us and the depth of our friendship with someone?

What changes, if any, do you need to make to your prayer life?

Pray

Prayer – will God work?

Sometimes we pray for things and God just doesn't seem to answer them. We start to wonder if God is listening or if we are praying the right thing. What about when we pray for the salvation of our colleagues? Do you expect God to hear your prayers?

Big Idea

God's desire is for people to turn to him and have life so we can pray with confidence knowing God hears our prayers.

Exploring the Scriptures

²³ Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live? ²⁴ "But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness he is guilty of and because of the sins he has committed, he will die. ²⁵ "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Hear, O house of Israel: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? ²⁶ If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin, he will die for it; because of the sin he has committed he will die. ²⁷ But if a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life. ²⁸ Because he considers all the offenses he has committed and turns away from them, he will surely live; he will not die [...] ³² For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!

Ezekiel 18:23-28 & 32

¹⁰ "Son of man, say to the house of Israel, 'This is what you are saying: "Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?"' ¹¹ Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?' **Ezekiel 33:10-11**

Key Truths

1. God is just and merciful. God punishes the guilty but forgives those who turn from their sin.
2. God takes no pleasure in anyone's death. God wants everyone to repent and turn from their evil.
3. God is quick to forgive and answers the prayer for forgiveness immediately.
4. We can have confidence that God is quick to show mercy and eager to see people repent. When we pray for forgiveness or for the salvation of our colleagues we are praying in line with God's desire.

Application

Think for a moment of a work colleague, friend or family member you know who seems completely hardened to God and the great news about Jesus. What does God desire for them?

Will God hear your prayers for their salvation?

Thinking more generally about God's desire for people, what confidence should this give us in our prayers for people?

Pray

Look over your list of unbelievers on page 49 or in your prayer app. Who else could you be praying for? Be sure to include even those that you think would never turn to God or Christ. Boldly pray for the salvation of each person on your list.

Prayer – Can God change hearts?

Sometimes we think some people are beyond saving, that they would never come to Jesus. Why do we think like that?

Big Idea

Sometimes we think some people are beyond the love of God. But if we trust God has the power and will to save we will never stop praying for someone's salvation.

Exploring the Scriptures

Read the passage below and see how it describes the Ephesians who became Christians.

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience- ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

Ephesians 2:1-6

Key Truths

1. Everyone stands dead in their sins without Jesus.
2. But God, in his great love, makes us alive with Christ. Only God has the power to bring life from death.
3. If death is no barrier to God, God could save anyone.

Application

If you trust that God has the power and will to save anyone, how might this alter who you pray for?

What changes should this make to what you pray for people?

Pray



WORK OF THE LORD

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The work of the Lord

Jerry Seinfeld used to say that there's a constant battle between "night guy" and "morning guy". "Night guy" always wants to stay up late. Getting up after only 5 hours sleep? That's "morning guy's" problem!

One of the hardest things in life is knowing what I should be doing right now in the light of where I want to be. So, for example, if you want to be well-rested and alert at work, the time you go to bed is important. Where else do you see this playing out in your life?

Big Idea

If Christians have an eternal home awaiting them, what we do now (and how we do it) have eternal consequences; our labour in the Lord is principally to share Jesus with the lost.

Exploring the Scriptures

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! ⁵⁸
Therefore, my dear brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour in the Lord is not in vain. **1 Corinthians 15:57 – 58**

Key Truth

1. The resurrection of Jesus is our victory over sin and death. The resurrection changes how we live now. The resurrection is our only hope – it is our friend's only hope.
2. The work of the Lord is declaring the good news of Jesus (*compare 1 Corinthians 6:10*)
3. So, in the light of our resurrection future, our labour in the Lord is principally sharing the good news of Jesus.
4. We are to excel in the work of the Lord; to help our colleagues meet Jesus.

Application

If the work of the Lord is principally about sharing Jesus it changes our priorities. For example, it is prudent to save money by not buying take-away lunch or coffees. However, the priority of the work of the Lord might mean you budget for coffees and/or lunches so that you may develop a relationship for sharing Jesus. What else might change for you because you desire to excel in the work of the Lord?

Pray



SEEING JESUS IN MATTHEW

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Never alone in the city

Have there been times when you've felt alone in your workplace? Why do you think you felt like that? Has it got something to do with being a Christian?

Big Idea

Through Jesus, God the Father has bridged forever the gap between himself and humanity. For those who know Jesus, they are never alone.

Exploring the Scriptures

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us."

Matthew 1:20-23

Remember where Matthew ends his gospel ... "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:20

Thinking it through

1. Jesus is fully God. He is *God* with us. When we know Jesus, we know our Creator. Even more importantly, he knows us. We are never truly alone.
2. Jesus came to save us from sin. The great isolating factor between us and God has been overcome by Jesus. God is *with us*. We will never be deserted.
3. Jesus is working now in those who follow him by the power of his Spirit (Matt 3:11; 28:19). God is *at work* in us even at our office desk.

Application

What could you pray to make you more conscious that God is with you and at work in you even at work? How could you remind yourself each day that you are never alone?

In what ways are you tempted to rely on your own strength rather than the strength of God, forgetting that he is with you? If God is with you, how might that give you courage?

Knowing that God is with you in all things and at all times, how do you think your life ought to be different to those around you?

Pray

In light of the above, move to a time of prayer. Pray that those you are praying for see that your life is different. Turn to page 49 or your prayer app.

Stand out in the city

We've all had our share of bland or boring meals. But we've also eaten some great stand-out meals. What is one amazing meal that you've had? What were some of the flavours? What made it distinctive?

Big Idea

The Christian life is to be distinctive and obvious to others. It is meant to be memorable – in a good way – like a great meal with amazing flavours. This difference springs from being followers of Jesus – not from bad clothes, bad breath and bad BO.

Exploring the Scriptures

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. **Matthew 5:13-16**

Key Truths

1. The call to be salty is the call to be distinctive – that is to “taste” differently to those around us. The context of the Sermon on the Mount tells us this distinctiveness is about a deep love of God that leads to deep godliness.
2. Those that follow Jesus are meant to be a light to the world. In other words, every Christian is a public Christian, by definition, for you cannot be a light to the world if others do not know you are Christian.
3. Fundamental to this distinctive life are good deeds – acts of service and love.
4. This distinctive life that shines out should result in praise of God in heaven.

Application

How can your life be distinctive in your work place? Are there things that need to change so that your life is distinctive?

To what extent are you 'public' about your Christian life? What are some things you could do to be more open about what you believe?

What good deeds – acts of service and love - can you do in the office environment that would bring praise to God?

Pray

Move to a time of prayer in your Evangelistic Prayer Team.

An oasis of calm in the city

What gets you anxious and all worked up? Big deadlines? Work pressure? Concerns about your future career? The amount of savings you have? Your children's education?

Big Idea

Our anxiety springs from our desire to control the future; but if God is good and powerful and cares for us we can trust him with our future and rest in his kindness.

Exploring the Scriptures

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? ²⁸ "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.

³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Matthew 6:25-32

Key Truths

1. People who don't know Jesus run around obsessing over many things. Christians are not to be like them.
2. Worry is the energy we expend trying to change the future. Birds and lilies of the field trust in the care of God; they are fed and look amazing!
3. God values us more than grass, lilies, and birds. How much more should we trust him?
4. Do not worry. God's got it!

Application

Do you think God wields his power for your good? What should this look like for you?

Knowing that God is with you in all things and at all times, how do you think your life ought to be different to those around you?

How might you seek freedom from anxiety in light of the loving care of your heavenly Father?

Pray

In light of the above, move to a time of prayer. Pray that those you are praying for see that your life is different. Turn to page 49 or your prayer app.

Relationships in the city

Can you remember a time when you really sought something – a promotion, a degree, a husband or wife – what did that involve? How much of your life was shaped by this ‘seeking’, this obsession?

Big Idea

Jesus says his number one priority for our lives is that the great news of his saving Lordship will go out through us and that we will live under this great news.

Exploring the Scriptures

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. **Matthew 6:33-34**

Key Truths

1. The word *seek* is a strong word: It implies deliberateness, directness and single-minded heading towards a target.
2. Jesus says to seek *first*. This is the priority that tops all others.
3. The thing we are to seek is the kingdom of God. As we come to the end of Matthew's gospel we discover that the kingdom of God is the rule of Jesus over the world. Jesus' kingdom advances as people are taught the good news about him and his disciples make disciples of others.
4. We can single-mindedly seek Jesus' priorities because we are confident that God takes care of the rest of life.

Application

A critical way we can seek first Jesus' kingdom and righteousness in the city is to change how we view relationships. In the city we can, like the world, view these relationships through the prism of how they might benefit us; Is this person someone who will help me in my work? Is this a client who will bring in lots of money? Is this someone I want to spend time with because I enjoy their company?

But seeking *first* the kingdom of God ought to profoundly change how we view these relationships. If we are seeking *first* Jesus' rule then these relationships are all opportunities to make Jesus' saving rule known. The relationships are not about us, but about Jesus.

The key question is – how can I love and serve this person and so seek Jesus' saving rule in their life?

Pray

Revisit the list of relationships from earlier in the year. (Page 49 or your prayer app)

What can you do to seek Jesus saving rule in their life?

Creating capacity in the city

The management gurus tell us that the critical issues in work (and life) are about vision and ownership. If someone has caught the vision and then owns the vision they create the capacity in their lives to make the vision happen. The resource question always comes last.

Have you ever taken on something that was so important to you that you had to 'just fit it in' even though you were already busy? How did you do this? Why did you do it?

Big Idea

We create space in our lives for the vision that has captured our hearts. Jesus' vision for our lives is to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

Exploring the Scriptures

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. **Matthew 6:33**

Key Diagnostics

1. Have you accepted Jesus' vision for your life as your own personal vision?
(What might be stopping you?)
2. Do you personally own Jesus' vision for your life? If not, what's stopping you?
3. What needs to change in your week to create capacity for Jesus' vision?

Application

Once we've changed our vision there are surprising ways to rethink what we are already doing in order to make capacity. Here are two ideas below.

Rethinking the caffeine hit

Most of us would buy a good number of coffees a week in the city. Let's say that twice a week you went to the same coffee shop and prayed for the opportunity of having a 5 minute conversation with the café staff where you were able to connect with them, care for them and eventually share Jesus with them.

What impact would that have? Let's consider the maths: 10 minutes conversation x 50 weeks of the year is 500 minutes of conversation. Over 3 years this is 1500 minutes of conversation.

Rethinking the caffeine hit in the city with a friend

Another idea is to set aside time for one coffee catch up with a friend every two weeks. Most of us could fit this in! The agenda is just to have coffee and deepen your friendship with a colleague or a client, talking about everything but shop talk.

What impact would this have? 30 minutes of coffee chat every 2 weeks is 520 minutes of conversation. Again, multiply this over a number of years and we are talking about hours and hours of conversation and shared life.

What else could you do to find capacity for Jesus' vision for your life?

Pray

Famous last words

It is said that when Marie Antoinette was beheaded during the French Revolution she accidentally stepped on the foot of her executioner. Her last words? "*Pardonnex-moi, monsieur*" (Pardon me, sir!). Sometimes people's last words don't amount to much, but Jesus' last words reveal his intention for our lives.

Big Idea

We are commanded by the highest authority to make disciples who make disciples.

Exploring the Scriptures

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ 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

Key Truths

1. The disciples were sent by Jesus before they were sure; doubt is not a disqualifier from disciple-making.
2. Jesus, the risen saviour, has **ALL** authority in heaven and on earth. (ALL means ALL!) And he is with us always! We serve the highest authority and he is always with us.
3. Nerdy Greek-reading people tell us the command is *make disciples*. The *going*, *baptizing*, and *teaching* are descriptors of what making disciples looks like.
4. There are no drive-by disciple-makers. Jesus describes a long-term activity, baptising and teaching them to obey everything Jesus has commanded.
5. "Everything I have commanded you" also includes Jesus' current command to make disciples! We are disciple-makers who make disciple-makers, who make disciple-makers, who make disciple-makers, who...

Application

We have the support of the highest authority, who has commanded us to make disciples who make disciples. The last words of Jesus to his disciples gave us a job to do. Who are you praying for? Who are you seeking to invite to meet Jesus in the pages of the Bible?

Pray



PRAYING TOGETHER

EVANGELISTIC
PRAYER TEAM
BOOKLET

TERM 2 2018

Praying together

When you pray for other Christians what is the most important thing you could pray for them?

Big Idea

In Ephesians when Paul prays for Christians his prayer is focused on them understanding the great news about Jesus with incredible depth.

Look at the prayer below.

Exploring the Scriptures

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,
¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, *may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,*
¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you *may know what is the hope to which he has called you,* what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,
¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1:15-23

Key Truths

1. Paul constantly thanks God for and prays for the Ephesian Christians:
v17 Paul prays that God will give them that a spirit of wisdom and revelation.
v18 so that they understand the hope that a Christian has.

v19-23 The certain hope a Christian has is twofold:
1) a glorious inheritance in God.
2) God's power is at work in the believer.

2. This power is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead and placed him over every other authority in the physical and spiritual realm, apart from God.

Application

One of the most important things you can pray for a Christian friend or colleague is that God enables them to deeply understand the gospel and the hope it provides. Pray they understand the hope of a glorious future with God and the hope that God's mighty power is at work in them.

Have there been times when you've felt alone in your workplace? Why do you think you felt like that? Has it got something to do with being a Christian?

Pray



TALKING ABOUT GOD

EVANGELISTIC
PRAYER TEAM
BOOKLET

TERM 2 2018



Talking about God

Adapted from Article by Phillip Jensen – School of Christian Ministry training paper. Used with permission

Have you noticed that the way we speak has shifted? We no longer speak about mankind, but about humanity; it's not chairman, but chairperson. More recently we had a debate about marriage equality, not gay marriage. And have you noticed the recent confusion over non-gender specific pronouns (ze, zir, hir, etc)? What's going on?

Big Idea

If we want to raise the subject of God in post-Christian culture, we need to find a natural way to speak of God's involvement in our everyday – God talk.

Thinking it through

1. The women's and LGBTI movements have rightly identified that the way we speak impacts the way we think. To change our language is to change our beliefs and our culture. Every time you stumble over a word because it's sexist connotation, or you change the gender of a pronoun, you've been reminded that the way you think needs to change.
2. Christians also have a way of speaking. It's just that we haven't properly understood the power of speech and haven't insisted on speaking Christianly in the same way feminists, or other activists have. Christian speech has a number of different forms
 - a. Speech content: Christians should have no "obscenity, foolish talk or course joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving." (Ephsians 5:4) Instead they should speak "the truth in love." (Ephesians 4:15) Our speech should be "full of grace, seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6). Out of our mouths we should "praise our Lord and Father". (James 3:10)
 - b. Christian words: Our culture is still awash in Christian words and phrases (sin, glory, trinity, hope etc). But there are also Christian concepts that permeate our culture; people speak of creation despite not believing in the Creator, they speak of justice and rights, despite not believing in absolutes, they speak of persons despite believing we are only biological machines.
 - c. "God talk": God is living and active in our lives as Christians. We believe God sends the rain and every good gift comes from above (James 1:17). We can speak with thankfulness to God for his kindness to us, or speak of our

dependence in prayer on God's provision. Did something good happen? Why not thank God out loud? Are you anxious about something? When you speak about it, why not declare that you prayed about it? This is God talk.

3. Why don't we speak with God talk? It feels so natural at church or in home-group, but why do we shy away from God talk before our unbelieving colleagues?

It may be that we believe that people don't want to hear our God talk. We fear being seen as a religious fanatic and so adapt our language to suit the hearer. Otherwise we have seen American politicians or sportspersons phonily declare "Praise the Lord!", together with a false piety that masks an immoral life. As a result, we are suspicious of people who wear their faith on their sleeves, we don't want to be thought of as superficial and hypocritical.

But perhaps more profoundly, we don't use God talk because we are wary of attributing reasons and motives to God of which we can't be sure. That is, we've seen it when someone declares that God has particularly blessed them with success or has brought disaster because of a particular sin. Speaking on God's behalf when he has not spoken is false prophecy. It is God talk that detracts from God's glory and is dangerous for the speaker. So, we shy away from being definitive about God in our speech.

4. But what happens when we don't use God talk? When we don't make reference to God in our day-to-day life, we give ground to a secular, naturalistic world view. If God is only mentioned to our private conversations, then we're conceding that he doesn't belong in the public sphere. If we truly believe God is at the centre and foundation of our lives, it makes no sense to leave him out of our speech. If we're to naturally introduce Jesus into our discussion, we need to speak more naturally (and deliberately) of God in our day-to-day lives. We need to refuse to concede that God is a taboo subject. But perhaps the most insidious result of not speaking of God publicly, is we stop thinking of God publicly; we tacitly agree that God doesn't belong at work.

5. So how can we naturally speak of God in our public lives?

- a. Live authentically godly lives. Our speech must harmonise with our actions. Are you fearful of speaking of God because your life doesn't match your words? Repent, right now, and start speaking of God publicly.
- b. Accept that initially this is going to feel strange, it always does when you stand against a social convention. But it's just a cultural thing; a friend who grew up in Malaysia once commented that Australia was strange because you couldn't mention God – people in Malaysia speak of God all the time.

- c. Start simple. When speaking of future plans, why not say that you are praying about it? When speaking of the weekend, why not mention what you heard in the sermon at church? Is someone having a tough time, why not offer to pray for them? (You could even do it right then and there if it suits) Has something great happened, why not thank God for his kindness?
- d. Start safe. Why not practice with other Christians first? Start at church and EPT, but aim to start introducing God talk at work soon!
- e. Call out assumptions. If someone is seeking to get you to agree with their viewpoint that assumes God doesn't exist, why not state the assumption? "Well, yes, if you assume God doesn't exist I would agree with you, but..."

Applications

1. Do you speak of God in your everyday? If not, why do you think you don't?
2. What do you fear could happen if you were to start?
3. What will you inject into your speech this week to start God talk?

Pray

Pray that your speech will reflect your belief that you depend upon God for all things

Talking about yourself to talk about God

Talking about yourself is not something you would want to do all the time, but there does come a time when it's helpful to speak about your own experience.

Big Idea

Every Christian has a story about how God has been at work in their life. Here are 7 tips about making your story as compelling as possible.

Thinking it through

1. **Short & Sharp** – this isn't a sermon. You have about 1 minute, or 100 words. So you want sharp and concise.
2. **Natural language** – You want your friend to relate to what you say. Using jargon will alienate them, so kill the jargon and use normal, everyday language.
3. **Truthful** – It may be obvious, but don't make stuff up! Jesus is impressive to those he is calling, you don't need to change anything to make yourself (or your story) interesting.
4. **Interesting** – Think about your angle. Think about your words. How can you add a little pepper to what you have to say? How can you draw them in? How can you get them wanting to know what happens next? One evangelist use to say – you have to hook 'em, hold 'em, humour 'em, hang on to 'em, and hit 'em.
5. **Plot** – A story usually has a situation, a complication that creates tension, and a resolution. What is your plot? What was the situation you were in? What was your problem that Jesus solved? How was Jesus your answer? What is different now?
6. **Conclude it** – What happened? How are you different now? Why does Jesus "work"?
7. **Question** – Jesus demands a response, what question could you ask of your friend?

Working it out

We're going to spend some time working on our stories now.

Rough it – Write out how Jesus has affected your life right now, don't worry about being sharp or snazzy, just jot down a paragraph or two of major points.

Rearrange – What's important, what needs to go? Is there a clear plot line? Is there a helpful structure? (ie Headline – a sentence that grabs or explains the big idea, Then: Before Jesus, After Jesus. Future...)

Reword – Get rid of confusing bits, the unnecessary details? Is there a more interesting way to say this? Am I being too vague?

Spend some time sharing with your EPT

Pray

Pray for an opportunity to share your story.

Talking about tough topics

Big Idea

Christians have something helpful to say concerning the topics about which we feel the most pressure to be quiet.

Thinking it through

Most issues that we Christians discuss at work are uncontroversial. A Christian's take on a balance sheet, affidavit, or building standard is unlikely to raise eyebrows. But there are some topics where we feel whatever we say it's likely to be misconstrued as ill-informed or bigoted or worse!

Two topics such topics are homosexuality and transgenderism. We're going to look at one of these two topics today.

Both topics carry a lot of emotion, and both topics are heavily covered in our media and the public largely have a strong opinion regarding them. We need to recognise that the issues involve both information and emotion, we need to address both in any answer.

Both topics also pick up key issues concerning our culture: identity, freedom, gender, and sexuality, nature versus nurture, the nature of sex, the fundamental make up of our society, to name a few.

There is a way forward.

1. *Why is this a hot topic?*

Stop to consider what makes this topic so controversial. Why do people have such strong views on it? Is this a personal issue or is it abstract?

2. *What is the wider category?*

Our hot topics sit within a broader frame of discussion. Homosexuality sits within sexuality and relationships. Transgenderism sits within gender. Both are to do with identity. This helps us because the Bible says little about homosexuality, and less still about transgenderism. These wider contexts allow us to consider what God has to say about these topics in a fuller way.

3. *Think widely across the whole Bible*

If we just look at the passages that mention our topics, we'll have very little helpful to say to our colleagues. So, we need to look at the wider scope of the Bible to see what God has to say: (choose which topic you'll cover)

What passages correspond to these ideas? (fill in passages that fit)

Homosexuality

Topic area	Key Question	How does it relate to the topic? Sexuality?	Specific Bible passages
Creation Nature of the world	What is creation? What is humanity's place in creation? Is it good or bad or...	Physicality is good. Bodies are good.	
Humanity	What does it mean to be human? What is God's view of humanity?	Human beings are made for relationships. We long for them. It isn't surprising that even when we get this wrong it is still very powerful. Our sexuality is part of our identity and it is part of God's good design for the world. Our sexuality was part of God filling and subduing the world.	
Sin & the Fall	What is nature of sin?	All human beings are broken sexually. Sexual sin is very powerful but it isn't a greater sin than others. Adultery / prostitution / pornography are all part of our sexual brokenness	
Jesus and his saving death	Who was Jesus? How did he act? What does his death and resurrection mean for us?	Jesus treated all people with dignity and love. Jesus loved even the sexually broken such as the woman at the well. Jesus died for his all people, including those practicing homosexuality.	
Eschatology	What future is God bringing us toward? When does it arrive?	No person will achieve sinless perfection. This will only come when Jesus returns. In the mean time we will all struggle with our sexual brokenness.	
Scripture	Any specific passages regarding the topic?		
Nature of God	What does God's nature teach us about the issue?	Human beings are made for relationships. Reflects the Trinitarian nature of God.	

Transgenderism

Topic area		How does it relate to the topic? Gender & Identity?	Specific Bible passages
Creation Nature of the world	What is creation? What is humanity's place in creation? Is it good or bad or...	All people are created in the image of God. We are created with dignity. We are created male and female.	
Humanity	What does it mean to be human? What is God's view of humanity?	Humans are created with binary gender, male and female.	
Sin & the Fall	What is nature of sin?	All human beings are broken. Our experience of who we are can be impacted by the effects of sin. Gender dysphoria is an indication of the impact of sin upon our gender identities. Gender dysphoria is the feeling of being born the wrong sex. (It is best not thought of as sin itself, but rather acting upon this feeling by transitioning)	
Jesus and his saving death	Who was Jesus? How did he act? What does his death and resurrection mean for us?	Jesus treated all people with dignity and love. Jesus called upon his followers to love another. Our churches should be places of love and acceptance, where male and female roles should be observed. (We should own that churches are often not) Jesus died for his all people, including those struggling with gender dysphoria.	
Eschatology	What future is God bringing us toward? When does it arrive?	No person will achieve sinless perfection. This will only come when Jesus returns. In the mean time we will all struggle with our brokenness. We live in hope that gender dysphoria will no longer exist in the new creation.	
Scripture	Any specific passages regarding the topic?		
Nature of God	What does God's nature teach us about the issue?	God has made all things good, including our gender identities. Mercifully God has not let us become as sinful as we could be, however he does give us over to our sinful desires in his judgment.	

4. *Apply the gospel*

We can't ultimately understand any topic Christianly until we apply the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus. When we apply the gospel to homosexuality and transgenderism we discover:

- As we are all broken, we all need the great news of Jesus to deal with our sin and brokenness. Only Jesus can give us hope for freedom from our brokenness.
- All of us are in rebellion against God so a Christian does not stand and cannot stand on a moral ground, over and above another person, whatever the nature of their rebellion against God. *But God demonstrates his love for us in this, while we were still sinners Christ died for us* (Romans 5:8)
- The gospel shows that God loves even those who live out their sinfulness in an overt way. 'For God so loved the world...' John 3:16 He loved in a costly way.
- Sin and wickedness matter. Jesus had to die to put them right. He had to face destruction because sin is so destructive for us, now and ultimately before God.
- If God loved the world in all its broken human sexuality then so can we!
- Christians are those who have been shown great love, and so we can love people enough to walk with them through the difficult walk of same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria.
-

5. *Formulate an answer*

Thinking back to step one start to formulate some things you could say that recognize why this area matters to people, that Christianity affirms.

Thinking back to step one start to formulate some things you could say that our Christian thinking critiques.

Start to formulate some points that you'd like to get across in a conversation. Share what you might say about one of these topics.

Pray

Pray you would speak the truth in love when the next chance arises.



PRAYING FOR PEOPLE

**EVANGELISTIC
PRAYER TEAM
BOOKLET**



CITY BIBLE FORUM
Ask the bigger questions

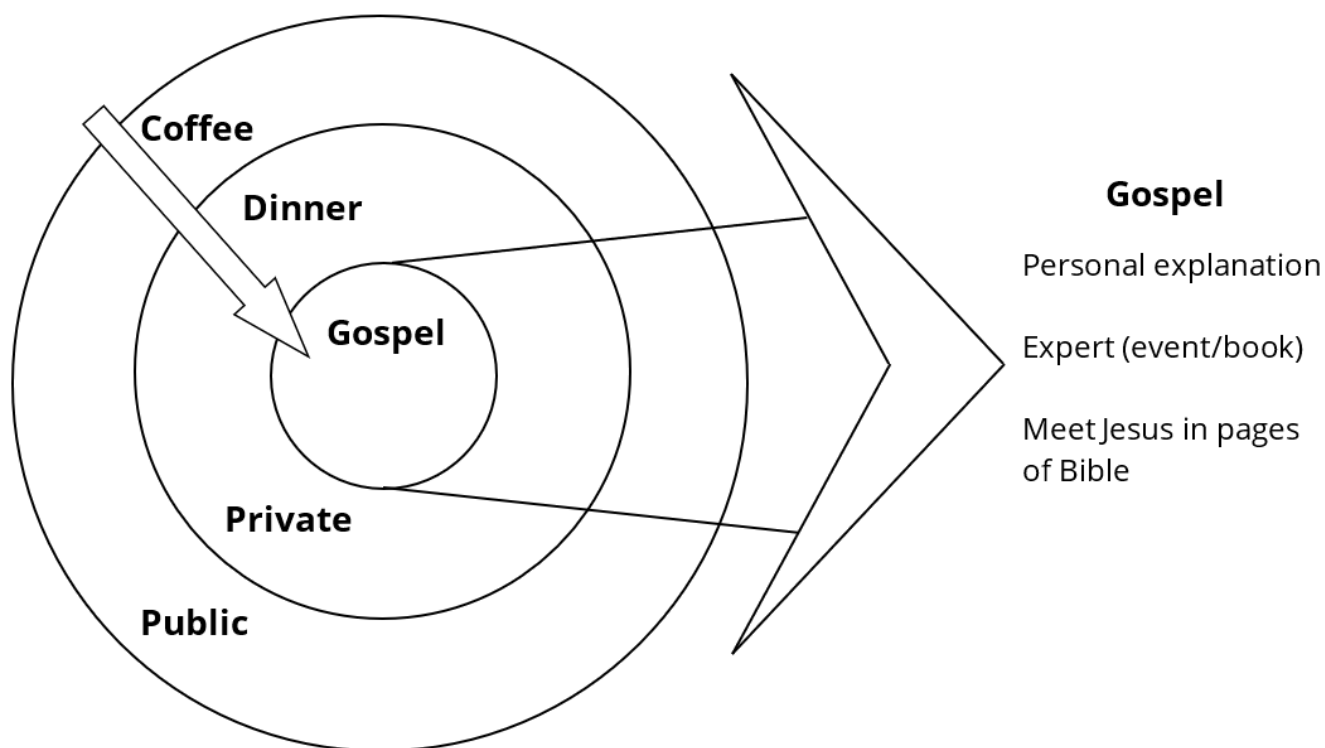
Praying for people

The following section provides a place to write names of the people you want to pray for

City Bible Forum seeks to reach the world through the workplace with the good news of Jesus.

In our EPTs we aim to do this by prayerfully seeking to see 100 people meeting Jesus in the pages of the Bible.

It's helpful to think of how relationships in our culture work towards sharing Jesus. We use the Coffee, Dinner, Gospel schema. Think of it as concentric circles moving from the outside – who we are in public, to the inside – who we are privately. The gospel impacts us at our deepest point – our autonomy. By “gospel”, what we mean is sharing Jesus – it is a verbal message that we convey². This happens in three main ways – we can personally explain in a short message (like Two ways to live or Bridge to life, or a personal testimony), involve an expert (an evangelistic event, book, church), or help them meet Jesus for themselves by reading the Bible with them (one-to-one or in a small group).



² The way we live our lives, the way we treat others are all important, but it is the message of Jesus that we convey verbally that is what we mean by sharing the gospel, or evangelism.

All three methods are equally valid and have their strengths. However, some work better than others in our day and age, with fewer people being familiar with the Bible or key biblical concepts, and lower levels of trust in experts (we live in the age of fake news after all).

Coffee, Dinner, Gospel could be broken down into the following steps:

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1. Personal Conversation - We have shared a personal conversation.
 2. Knows I'm a Christian - They know I'm a Christian.
 3. Socialised - We have spent social time getting to know each other.
- D
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4. World view - I know their worldview.
 5. Bible's worldview - We have had a conversation using the Bible's point of view.
- G
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6. Gospel - They have heard a clear presentation of the gospel.
 7. Bible Study - They are regularly reading the Bible.
 8. Become a Christian - They have accepted an invitation to become a Christian.
 9. Church - They have joined a good church.

Stuck for names?

If you are stuck for people who you can pray for, consider the point of Jesus' parable of the Samaritan man. Who are we to show mercy to? To those God brings along our path – who do you need to pray for this year?

3 suggestions:

1. **Who is close to you?** Those who sit closest to you, or who you work most closely with may be a good place to start. What are their interests?
2. **Who is closest to you?** There are people in the workplace with whom we naturally click. It makes sense to develop relationships that are easiest work.
3. **Who is difficult?** There are going to be people who make work tough, they need particular prayer (and you need prayer in being godly with them too)



Why not download Prayer Team from Google Play or Praymate from Appstore or Google Play to help keep track of your EPT's prayer points



Praying for people

Remember to pray for the next relational step

