

## **Building Community: A Bridge to Communicating the Gospel**

Community is something people want but often struggle to find. The events of the last two years have brought an increased awareness of the need for community, which presents an incredible opportunity for Christians with their unbelieving friends and neighbours. This workshop will share practical, creative ways to build community, enabling connections and opportunities to communicate the gospel.

**Naomi "Nay" Dawson** works with IFES Europe as their Regional Training Co-ordinator, training staff and students across Europe and working on the senior European leadership team for the charity. Naomi is the founder of Passion for Evangelism. PFE is a network of creative, public female speakers, helping hundreds of women grow in confidence in public communication. In addition, Naomi has also set up an initiative called Community in a Crisis. CIAC has been helping churches and charities across Europe get online during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **1. Why care about community?**

An increased awareness of community has been a phenomenon in lockdown. Whether that's clapping on doorsteps, collecting bread for an elderly friend or chatting over the fence. We've all become increasingly aware of who is immediately around us. But it's not just about immediate neighbours. Many have reported of getting in touch with old groups of friends, gathering whole families together or running quiz nights on Zoom. Into this increased sense of belonging and community there is an incredible opportunity as Christians. At the very heart of who God is we see the relationship of Father, Son and Spirit. We have the ultimate reason to believe in community. I think that community is something people want but are intrigued about how to get it. So how do we as Christians build community?

1 Thessalonians as an encouragement

*1 Thessalonians 1:4 and 2:8-10*

This letter is so rich and such a wonderful model for how we're to live in our communities.

### **2. Speaking clearly and loving dearly**

We'll look at what it means to speak clearly from these passages in Thessalonians. What does it mean to love those around you?

### **3. How loving and speaking can lead to others coming to know Christ**

We'll explore what this could look like for you in the community that God has called you to.

#### 4. Questions

- a. What is the community that God has called you to?
- b. Firstly, stop and start praying, invite other Christians in this community to pray with you.
- c. Once you've pictured this community. Which of these comes more naturally? Loving dearly or speaking clearly? Which do you need to be more intentional about?
- d. Next how can you love this community more?
- e. How can you share about and speak to them about Jesus?