

Genuinely Loving Your Neighbour

What does it mean to love our neighbor, and why is it important? Nothing can replace relationships that enable people to see the plausibility of our faith as a first step towards faith. In this session, we will examine how genuine and caring relationships are the key for evangelism in our secular world.

Stephen McQuoid grew up in Ethiopia where his parents were missionaries. He then lived in Ireland where he qualified as a nurse before going on to study theology, gaining a variety of degrees including an MTh and PhD in theology. He is the author of 16 books on subjects such as discipleship, evangelism, apologetics, and church discipline. Stephen is the general director of Gospel Literature Outreach, a missionary organisation based in Europe. He is married to Debbie, and they along with their three children fellowship at Liberty Community Church in Bellshill, where Stephen is a teaching elder. His interests include motorbikes, football, boxing, MMA, and Politics.

Descriptor: Many Christians have very few close friends who are unchurched. This is clearly a problem because in order to begin reaching people for Christ we need to begin by having relationship with people. There are many reasons for this but at its heart it is because we do not want to develop authentic and deep relationship with our neighbour.

In this workshop we will look at the many reasons why we don't love our neighbour. These include our priorities, our wrong understanding of scripture and fear. We will then reflect on how loving our neighbour can revolutionise the church, make it more effective and help it to grow. The question also need to be asked, Who is my neighbour? This will be answered and we will look at different ways in which we can express real love to our neighbour and how doing so will also enrich both our own spiritual lives and our outlook on the world. We will also ask what makes love genuine and how to maintain our authenticity in doing so.

1. Unmasking the problem

Most Christians have very few Non-Christian friends. It means friendship evangelism doesn't take place. Vicious circle. Why:

- Wrong view of scripture
- Wrong attitude to non-Christians
- Wrong view of holiness
- Fear

2. Who is my Neighbour

- The person next door
- The person I am in natural contact with
- The person I can establish a rapport with

Christians are friendly but they don't want to be your friend.

3. Finding ways to express love

- Taking an interest
- Talking on the street
- Using special occasions (Christmas Easter)
- Community events
- Local campaigns
- Responding to a crisis
- Being there for people (children/ old people etc)

4. Opening up your home

- Bible and Hospitality
- Hospitality styles
- Barriers to Hospitality
- Reading the room
- The power of a smile
- The challenge of an open home
- Key principles
- Practical issues