

Together Notes: Sharing our faith - anything to declare?

A good way of sharing our faith is to tell people about our own spiritual journeys¹. People are interested in other people's lives. They can identify with us and learn through hearing about our experiences.

If we take a little time to prepare our story then we will be able to identify the important things to say and we can be more confident about taking the initiative to say them.

What to prepare?

We all have a different story to tell. Every story can help others, whether we are a new believer or cannot ever remember not being a Christian. It is helpful to prepare answers to the following five questions. There are tips on **how** we can answer them in an accessible way in the next section.

- 1. What was my attitude before I took Jesus Christ seriously?** The attitudes we share should provoke interest in why and how you came to follow Jesus and the difference he has made to your life. E.g. I was very selfish always putting 'my needs' first; I was a pleasure seeker; I wore different masks; I thought of myself as a 'good person'; I got to 30 and thought, is this it?
- 2. Why did I say 'yes' to Christ?** Summarise the thought-process, challenge, crisis or experience that led you to Christ. You might explain how you overcame barriers or found answers that satisfied you; or what motivated/motivates you to follow Christ? E.g. I met some people who cared for me in a way I'd never experienced before; I discovered that Christianity was about friendship with God, not about do's and don'ts; my dad's death made me think...
- 3. How did I say 'yes' to Christ?** Make it clear what you actually did to put Jesus at the centre of your life. This will be a process culminating in a choice to follow Christ. But if you cannot remember a single point when you decided to start following Jesus, you could relate one or two important examples of times when you noticed this process taking place. E.g. I admitted to God that I had been going my own way; I realized that God forgave me and gave me a fresh start, even when I couldn't forgive myself; I confessed that Jesus was God and that He died to restore my broken relationship with God.
- 4. What difference does Christ make to my day-to-day life / marriage / family relationships?** If you have been a Christian a long time and haven't thought much about this question, ask, 'how has Jesus had an increasingly important influence in my life?' E.g. I put my wife's needs before my own; I find I worry less about our teenage son; I don't feel the need to judge; I am less bothered about making money and more interested in people.
- 5. What is a Christian?** E.g. someone who has discovered a friendship with God by admitting that they need his forgiveness and by asking Him to be number one in their life; someone who realizes that trying to live life on their own terms means turning their back on God, and missing out on the love and power for living He offers.

How to prepare?

It is important to ask God in prayer to lead our thinking and give us wisdom ². As we prepare we should consider a few things that can make what we say more helpful and accessible to non-believers:

- **Answer in 'sound-bites'** because you might only have a few seconds to say something. In any case it's best to be brief and let the other person ask you questions if they are interested.
- **Be jargon free**, avoiding church language.
- **Be specific** about details.
- **Be honest about a struggle**. (N.B. if you want to share something sensitive about your marriage it's a good idea to check it with your partner first!)

Action points

- **Start by writing single words or phrases** that capture your attitudes; your thoughts, emotions, hopes, fears, ambitions etc.
- Make sure that the **answers you prepare 'stand alone'** because people tend not to ask these five questions at the same time or in this order, so you may not be able to say everything all at once.
- **Practise on a Christian friend** and ask for their suggestions for improvement
- Success in **sharing our faith is simply taking the initiative** to talk about Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God.
- Begin to **pray for opportunities** to share your answers with non Christians.

¹ Based on the Agapé course: *'Living and Telling'* - a course to equip you to share your faith as a way of life. The course is designed to be run with *'Sorted'* book, video or DVD. Agapé sales order line Tel: 0121 683 5090 (Mon-Fri 09.00-16.30). Or contact Agapé, Sales, Fairgate House, Kings Road, Tyseley, Birmingham, B11 2AA.

² James 1:5