



CELL GUIDE 2016

Theme	Sharing Christ Beyond Church and Country
Topic	Cultivating a Heart of Community Outreach
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Message Summary

Cultivating a Heart of Community Outreach

Community pastoring is not an easy and comfortable job. In fact, many people are jaded by this ministry whether they have participated in it before or not. Through the example of Jesus feeding the 5000 (Matt 14:13-21), one can learn and be encouraged by His compassion and follow in His footsteps in reaching out to the community.

Matthew 14:13-21

Matthew 14:13-21 is the well-known story of Jesus feeding the 5000. In this account, Jesus departed to a deserted place by Himself but the multitudes followed Him. Having compassion for them, He healed those who were sick till it was late. The disciples then told Jesus that the multitudes should be sent away to find their own food. Jesus however told the disciples that they were to provide for the people. Through the five loaves and two fish He blessed and gave out, everyone was fed. This account brings out three points that are still applicable today: many of us are jaded by the ministry of community pastoring, Jesus is our model for this and we should make another move.

Modelling Jesus in Community Outreach

(1) Jaded by ministry

Nowadays many of us lead a crowded life. Furthermore, there is an overstretching of resources especially of manpower for the overwhelming needs of the community. The quantity, variety and complexity of the needs and situation faced particularly over a long period of time can lead to one feeling exhausted and therefore jaded with the ministry. This jadedness however affects the community and individual negatively – the needy are turned away while the individual loses heart for community outreach and eventually lack a heart of compassion. In order to prevent these from happening, we must first acknowledge the overwhelming needs and our limitations. We must guard against giving a pious response for when we do, we may end up not appreciating God's miracle when it happens. Also, we must learn how to rest and renew ourselves in God.

(2) Jesus is our model

Even Jesus experienced exhaustion from serving the people. Still, He knew how to manage jadedness. Jesus did this through having time alone with God so that He could bond with His Father and restore His spiritual strength. This shows us how sufficient rest is important. It is alright to redraw so that we can renew our inner man through rest and spending time with God; it keeps us spiritually healthy. However, solitude *must* lead to service. We must have the discipline to redraw and then go back to serving the community after being



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strengthened. Our time alone must also be balanced with a willingness to allow intrusion just like how Jesus was always prepared to minister even when he was resting (Matt 14:13-14, Mark 1:35-37). Another thing we can learn from Jesus is that we need to make our life and church ministries attractive just like He did. Besides responding to those who come to us, we should reach out to the residents. We must become attractive so that people who are scared to step into our church will be able to overcome this fear.

(3) Just make another move

We need to remember the basics of community pastoring. Firstly, we must reach out to the community instead of waiting for them to come. We need to be moved by compassion for the community. Secondly, just like how Jesus cared holistically for the people, we need to be sensitive to the various needs of the community and meet them. Reaching out to the community is not just about preaching the gospel. Lastly, we should carry His presence. When we do, there can be miracles. We should therefore take risks and exercise faith!

Questions

What is the one thing we need to be filled with for us to be sustainable in community pastoring? Why? What lessons can we learn from Jesus to be continually filled with it?

(Fill In Answer Here)

Jesus showed us that rest is good for us and it should lead back to service. He also showed the importance of being attractive to the community. Why is rest important? What does it mean to be attractive in our life and as a church to the community? How can we be continuously attractive?

(Fill In Answer Here)

Reaching out to the community is more than preaching the gospel. In what ways can you meet the needs of the community holistically?

(Fill In Answer Here)