

What Is Evangelism and Whose Job Is It?

Our Board of Directors here at St. John congregation has a Director of Evangelism with an evangelism committee or, as we call it, an 'Outreach Team'. Barb McIntyre has done a great job and has some good plans for the future. However, is this task only for a few select people within the congregation, or should it include more? What is evangelism anyway ... and whose job is it?



Let's begin by saying that the word 'evangelism' is a Biblical Greek word that means "good news" or "good message." The act of evangelism is simply sharing the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That's easier said than done however. I would say that not everyone finds it so easy to share their faith. It can be a scary thing, especially because evangelism has, at times, had the reputation of something like making cold calls in sales. But sharing your faith is not a sales job. Remember what Peter and John said when they were commanded to stop sharing the Good News of Jesus. They said, *"We cannot help but speak about what we have seen and what we have heard"* (Acts 4:20 NIV). Sharing your faith is something you want to do and it's something you get to do. It's something you can be excited about.

It's similar to sharing any good news in your life. Not to be trite or crass here, but if you find a great plumber, you tell your friends that you found a great plumber. If you enjoyed a movie, you share that with people. You're excited to share good things in life with others. And, remember, the word evangelism is about good news, the **best news you have ever heard**. In fact, in modern terms, God's good news went viral at a time when there was no technology, no phones, computers, printers, internet, or TV. In fact, it went "word of mouth" viral enough to reach us.

I mentioned Peter and John, Jesus' handpicked disciples. Some folks have the idea that evangelism is only the job of pastors, or a select few volunteers in the congregation. The truth is, the whole church is the evangelism committee! Think of what Paul said in 1 Thessalonians chapter 1: *"For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we, Paul is saying, we need not say anything"* (1 Thessalonians 1:8). So, it wasn't just a pastor or merely a committee that was spreading the Word about Jesus. Every believer *"sounded forth"* the Good News. And remember what Peter wrote: *"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have"* (1 Peter 3:15 NIV). Isn't it great, we all get to be His witnesses and evangelists?! If Jesus is our Savior, how can you not tell people about the great hope you have in Him?

So, how do we go about doing that? Where do you start? This is where it's so important to remember that the Gospel spreads, in large part, through relationships. And the first relationships people experience are in family. I think we sometimes forget that in sharing the Good News of Jesus, it doesn't require us to travel away to a far off country. It begins with us at home. Home is our first mission field. Just think, if everyone shared with their family members the message of Jesus Christ crucified and risen, our refuge and strength, the source of our new way of life. I'm not talking about having Bible lectures. I'm talking about word and deed: **telling** of Jesus' love, **showing** His love, **living** a life of prayer, and **finding refuge** in God's Word **together**. So, family is a great place to begin.

I know we have many family members who do just that; they're praying for their other family members who don't yet know Jesus. Prayer is the foundation of evangelism. Prayer focuses us on God's Word and another's need, so pray and watch to see what relationships and conversations God develops for us.

Beyond family members, it's important to look for opportunities in all of your relationships. Again, not so much opportunities to preach, but opportunities to care, to listen, to offer prayer, to share the reason for the hope you have--to share the blessing of Jesus with people in need. It's also helpful to have a Bible verse that is special to you; have it handy. God's Word is living and active and you can pass along that precious gift. In fact, God wants you to pass along His precious gift. Our Outreach Team at St. John is always ready to welcome more members to help in their efforts to spread the love of Christ in word and action. Pray about it and give Barb a call.

That's the View from Here!