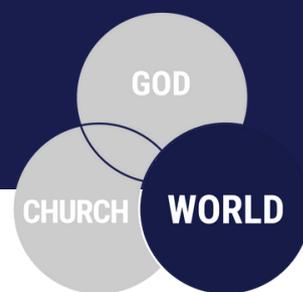


ENGAGEMENT

I welcome others into my life and intentionally participate in theirs.



WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

In the 16th chapter of the book of Acts, we read an interesting story. We read of a time when Paul heads down to the river near the city of Philippi with his companions, looking for a place to pray. When they arrive next to the river, they begin to have conversations with the women who gathered there.

Listen to the description found in verse 14. “One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.” Interestingly enough, this is the first documented conversion to Christianity in Europe.

Paul and his companions take Lydia up on an offer to stay at her home, after her conversion. In fact, after Paul and Silas’ experience in prison, they return to Lydia’s house to speak to the believers prior to Paul and Silas leaving. It is believed by many, that Lydia’s home became the gathering place for the early church in Philippi. Paul and Silas stepped into the world of Lydia and simply had a conversation by a river. Afterwards, they accepted her invitation to be a part of her life, by staying at her home. The result of this engagement was astounding.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Don’t have ulterior motives – As you participate in the twelve rhythms of Three Relationships Discipleship, you will notice that many of them seem to connect, or even overlap. That is one of the beautiful aspects of the rhythms. However, there are times when we need to be careful about working on the right rhythm. While, we desire to participate in the rhythm of sharing, don’t skip past the rhythm of engagement. When you welcome someone into your life and intentionally participate in theirs, the focus remains on developing an authentic relationship with them.
- Engagement should lead to other rhythms – Now this might seem like a contradiction to the paragraph above, but it isn’t. Ultimately if we have developed a relationship with someone and they are a part of our life, and we are a part of theirs, than we will earnestly desire to share the gospel with them and be a blessing in their life. But the motivation will flow out of our love and care for them, not because we want to check off a task on our list
- Don’t forget that it goes both ways – The first part of the definition of engagement is huge. Sometimes, we can be very willing to participate in the lives of others and even be a blessing to them. However, it sometimes is difficult for us to invite them into our life. Part of engagement is inviting someone into your good aspects of life, your bad aspects of life and all of the aspects in between. Engagement takes humility and vulnerability.



PROCESS

Think through what you have learned and summarize it on your own words or write out how you would explain it to another person.

PRAY

- Pray that God provides an opportunity for you to welcome someone in your life and also allows you to participate in theirs.

LOOK

- Read Acts 1:8. Jesus sends us, his disciples, out into the world to make disciples, who make disciples, who in turn, make more disciples. We do this empowered by the Holy Spirit. How can the Holy Spirit help us with Engagement?

RESPOND

- Find your “riverside” setting. Paul and his companions went down to the river and met Lydia. Identify a setting in your community that would be optimal for engagement and then step into that setting.