

'do the work of an evangelist'

2 Timothy 4:5 – thoughts on evangelism

Here are a few ideas on what this might involve.

1. Keep prayer for those aren't yet followers of Jesus central to church life

What we pray for tends to reflect what we value, hold as important. Ensuring that in our prayers we continually pray about our sharing of the faith and pray for those who don't know Christ will help keep evangelism central. How about training all those who lead intercessions on a Sunday to do this well. Or having a slot in the PCC or home group or children's group to pray for this every time you meet?

2. Lead by example

In my work as an evangelist it was sadly rare the number of times those in overall church leadership brought people to evangelistic events I was speaking at. Part of our role is to lead by example, to 'do the work of an evangelist' (2 Timothy 4) even if we aren't evangelists. I know it isn't easy, but that is the point. If we are having a go at playing our part in God's ongoing work of evangelism in his world we will much more easily understand the struggles others are having as well. And what people see us do they will see as important.

3. Tell honest stories

It is great to hear stories from those who have come to faith, and we need to tell these as often as possible to encourage people God is still at work drawing people to himself. But it also helps to tell honest stories of when things didn't go as we hoped: the person we invited to Alpha who said they would come and didn't turn up; the spouse who we've been praying for over many years who seems no closer. These stories told will help people to know it isn't easy, but we persevere none-the-less. Why? Because at some point in our own lives God wrote people into our stories who he used to help us come to faith, and he longs to do the same through us.

4. Teach people how to show and share their faith

Most Christians feel lost for words. Most are fearful of not knowing what to say. I think we can help people play their part in God's work of evangelism by ensuring they know the answers to three questions:

- What is my role in evangelism?
- How do I fulfil that role?
- How do I keep motivated?

How each church answers these will vary, but our role as leaders is to ensure there is a clear answer for each and that we equip people in the light of these answers. Then everyone can play their part. There are a range of resources around to help equip people to share their faith, and even a simple approach can bear fruit. One vicar I know laid on two evenings a month apart where she covered some basic ideas on faith sharing, and was so encouraged by the stories that were told at the second evening about ways God had been at work already.