



What to Expect of People in Faith Sharing

Identifying appropriate expectations for all Christians when it comes to sharing faith is important for two reasons. It helps us to know what to expect of each other, and also helps us to identify what 'training' to provide.

One way of thinking about evangelism for churches is to use the analogy of a football team. Inevitably, the analogy will work better for some than others, but it can be a helpful one. Think more local league or school team than championship league:

- Football is a team sport played by individuals.
- There are some baseline requirements for everyone on the team; for example, that they turn up when needed, can kick a ball, and are reasonably fit.
- People play in different positions, but everyone works towards the same aim, to score goals and stop the other team scoring goals.
- Players commit to training to help them improve their abilities and fitness.
- In the early years of playing, players may try several positions before they find their best fit.
- There is a player-coach who heads the team and guides it.

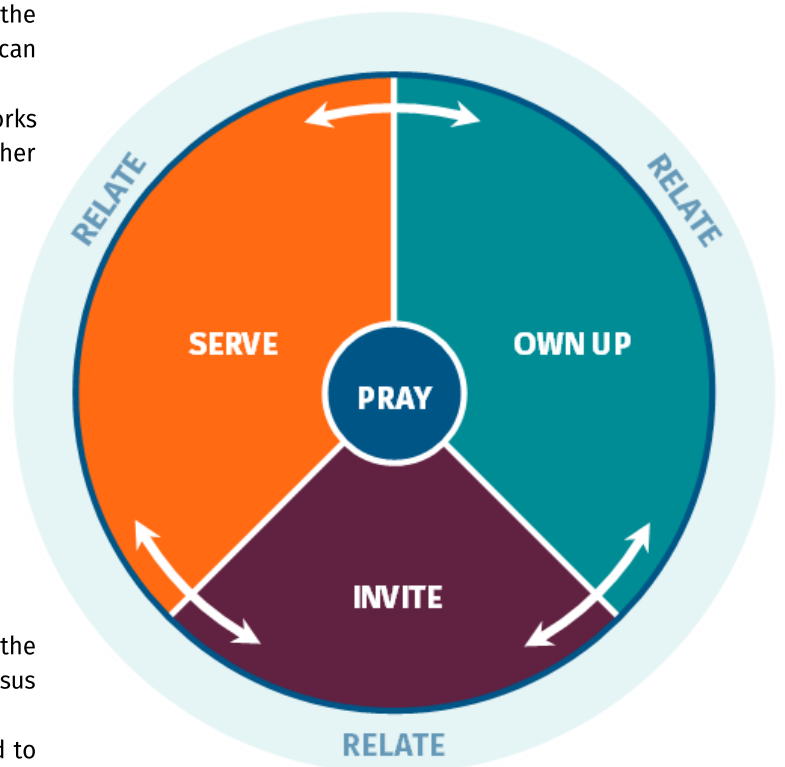
So too with evangelism in church life:

- Evangelism is a body ministry where everyone has their part to play.
- There are some baseline requirements for everyone on the Christian team, identified below.
- People play different parts, but we all work towards the same goal, helping people become disciples of Jesus (Matthew 28:16-20).
- We commit to training to help us get a little better and to

improve our overall 'readiness' for opportunities that come our way.

- We may 'have a go' at a variety of parts until we find our best fit.
- There is a player-coach, Jesus, who heads up the team and guides us.

So what are the 'baseline requirements' when it comes to sharing faith? Here are some suggestions. You don't have to agree with them, but you do need to be clear in your own context what expectations you have of ordinary congregation members when it comes to their witness in everyday life.



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PRAY

Prayer is the heart of the ministry of evangelism, as we know God's activity in other people's lives is somehow linked to our praying. In prayer we express our dependence on God, our desire for him to draw those we know to himself, and our recognition that ultimately God is the only one who can change people's lives. For more on how to pray, see Guide 2.

SERVE

We serve others by caring for people through kind words (there is a reason why the Bible has so much to say about the use of our tongues), offering to help others whenever we can (a willingness to go the extra mile), and sharing what we have (because ultimately nothing we have is ours, we are simply stewards of what God has given to us).

OWN UP

It is much easier to keep quiet about our faith, but God invites us to 'own up' to our faith in simple but significant ways. These include mentioning the fact that we go to church, sharing about the difference our faith makes in our daily lives, and being prepared to tell our story of how we came to faith.

INVITE

A relatively easy way to play our part is to invite people to things. Here are some suggestions:

- **To a connecting event** A coffee, a drink down the pub, a meal out, a meal in our home, a social event with others from church, an online gathering.
- **To join us in serving the needs of others** A foodbank, night shelter, lunch club, overseas mission trip, street clean.

- **To consider Jesus** Through giving them a gospel to read, or a blog post, article or book; inviting them to watch a film or YouTube video, or listen to a sermon, a spoken word or podcast; encouraging them to attend a service, event or enquirers' course geared for those who are not yet Christians.

We may also want to invite people to connect with Jesus themselves by talking with him in prayer.

RESOURCE PEOPLE

Whatever we decide our 'baseline requirements' are, that is what we focus on helping people to do, through consistent modelling, constant encouragement, appropriate training, and creative ideas.

Resourcing people in this way takes a long time, and is much more about low initial input and high ongoing support, than high initial input and low ongoing support, so perhaps plan your approach over a two to three year period, rather than a one off six week course.

Various resources to help with this are listed at the back of *How to Nurture a Faith-Sharing Culture* (CPAS).

