

the other person matters, they're important to you. With 'Dwelling in the Word' it encourages you to 'listen that person into free speech'.

This week why not invite Jesus to lead you to four people who you might listen into free speech. Listening to four people that they are listened into life, into being welcomed and felt valued.

You might like to practice listening to each other in your group of four; let the other person talk, ask them about what they

said, being focused on them. Seek to give them centre stage; seek to listen them into free speech.

Using a story out of Jesus' life could be a good starting point. Listen, so you might share what you heard the other person say. Listening is welcoming.

You don't have to over complicate the four by four initiative; it is just a tool to help us be doers, to be intentional, because I don't want your life to

be a good idea, I want it to be God's love in action, pulsating through your veins, infecting the world around you.

This week reflect on God's welcome in Jesus. This week let that welcome flow through you to those you meet; practice with your group of four. This week see who God brings across your path that you might listen them into life; into feeling welcomed, valued a person of worth.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

2 February 2020

WELCOMING—1

1 Corinthians 1:18-31



In the month of January we focused on the theme of 'Commitment' and seeking to give that commitment living expression as we formed four by four groups. I hope you've been finding some traction in this endeavour.

Over this month we're going to look at how commitment is expressed through being welcoming. We are committed to welcoming people in Jesus. Jesus came to welcome people into his kingdom.

Unfortunately not everyone wants to be welcomed into Jesus kingdom. Many people want Jesus to do what they want, seeking to force him to meet their desires; otherwise he's not welcome.

That's what we heard from Paul in his letter to the people at Corinth; "Jews clamour for miraculous demonstrations and Greeks go in for philosophical wisdom, we go right on proclaiming Christ, the Crucified. Jews treat this like an *anti*-miracle – and Greeks pass it off as absurd." (1 Cor. 22,23) That says to me; we want Jesus to dance to our tune, to put on a good show, otherwise he's not welcome.

But Jesus has a different attitude toward us. If Jesus insisted on me putting on a good show to please him, I'd be in trouble! That's not the basis of Jesus acceptance of me.

It dawned on me that acceptance is an important part of being welcoming. Jesus acceptance is based on his love for me; not because I'm loveable. I'm sure there are plenty of times I'm anything but loveable. I've been known to be grumpy, selfish, arrogant, resentful, bitter and just a plain pain in the backside at times.

Jesus acceptance is a reflection of who he is, not of who I am. Jesus love for me is a reflection of his personality. I love this simple statement from John's letter; "God is love". (1 Jn 4:16) To love is Jesus nature, and he will always live true to himself.

"God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and

only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love – not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.” (1 Jn 4:9,10)

So being welcoming starts with who I am.

In Jesus I am loved, so what can I now give? It doesn't depend on how the other person performs; are they intelligent, do they put on a good show. Remember Jews clamoured for the miraculous and Greeks went for intelligence; that was the basis of their welcome. In other words if you didn't come up to scratch you were rejected.

Jesus acceptance of others is based in who he is, and that was lived out in his crucifixion. Jesus nature was revealed through his crucifixion. “We go

right on proclaiming Christ, the Crucified.” (1 Cor. 1:22).

“Take a good look, friends, at who you were when you got called into this life. I don't see many of 'the brightest and the best' among you, not many influential, not many from high-

Jesus first step; he comes in person.

society families. Isn't it obvious that God deliberately chose men and women that the culture overlooks and exploits and abuses, chose these 'nobodies' ... Everything that we have... comes from God by way of Jesus.” (1 Cor. 1:26-31)

Everything you have and everything you are comes from God by way of Jesus. With this attitude Jesus is seeking to free us up, to

welcome the person, even if we don't agree or even like what they are doing. After all Jesus was accused of welcoming sinners. He never welcomed sin, but he certainly loved the person, and sought to bring his life and light to all those he meet.

Jesus is God's welcome to life with him, living in the light of his presence, living together with him as friend. In

Jesus we are gifted life; life lived in God's presence as friend, as a loved child.

This shows me that being welcoming involves me taking the risk of coming in person; of me being personal. That isn't always comfortable, but that's Jesus first step; he comes in person.

Do you notice that it is always Jesus who takes the initiative; he came in person. Jesus invites

personally, that we might follow him; that means live like he does as we share life personally with him.

Jesus is inviting you to have a welcoming attitude; that is treating the other person as a person of worth. After all Jesus has been crucified for them, seeking to redeem them for life lived to the full with himself.

Jesus is inviting you to have a welcoming attitude, that you greet people with a smile, not because of what they might offer you, but because it is who you are. In Jesus you are a welcomed child of God the Father. We live under Father's smile, so we are empowered to welcome people with a smile. Never because they deserve it or need it but simply because that is who you are in Jesus.

So this week as we seek to let Jesus find traction in our lives, let's seek to be welcoming. Show Jesus welcome to four other people, with a smile, a greeting, an invite, simply saying 'G'day how are you, and then listen.

Let's not over

Listening is a powerful way of welcoming.

complicate this four by four idea, it is just a tool to help me be focused on living out my relationship with Jesus. He's welcomed me, so now I'm empowered to welcome others as a loved child of God. Let's put this wonderful truth into action, that way we become a blessing to others and we'll also be growing as the person Jesus has given his life for us to be.

As I was thinking of ideas you might like to try in your group of four I was reminded of 'Dwelling in the Word'. That simple act of finding a passage of scripture, reading it together and then listening to the other person, followed by a time of sharing and prayer.

That would be a good way to meet this week.

The part that caught my attention when it comes to being welcoming was listening to the other person. What a great act of welcoming; listening. But listening isn't easy, because I'm too quick to give a reply.

I hear a story, which reminds me of a similar story in my life and before you know it I've become the focus, telling my story.

Listening is a powerful way of welcoming because you are saying that