

“The Relationships Network”

Exercise

This exercise looks to identify the breadth and the depth of the relationships your congregation already have. To be useful in developing a programme for your church you must encourage them to limit the network of relationships they create to your community, however you have delineated that. You may of course decide that this is not important. They may decide that the reach of your church does not need to be defined geographically. If this is the case you can widen the horizon for the exercise.

Time: From experience it has been found that this exercise is better done together, maybe in context of a mid-week church meeting or as a main feature of a morning worship service. This allows you to keep people on track and direct them when they get stuck, or think they have far fewer contacts than they actually have.

Purpose: Identifying who you know and the depth that you know them.

The aim is to identify all those persons in the relational network of the members of your congregation and who live within your local community (friends, relatives, neighbours, and colleagues).

Please copy the attached worksheet for those who are likely to be at the meeting where you have decided to do this exercise. On the worksheet, people should fill in the names of those who belong to their ‘extended family’, under each category – work, family, neighbourhood, school, etc. (This must be specific, the people must be in relationship with you on a regular and personal basis. They can include your regular milkman or postman, or the person at the checkout of the supermarket; ie people you already know or could conceivably get to know better.) They must also write down the nature of the relationship, and ‘score’ the depth of the relationship 1-5 (1 being hardly know – speak to rarely, don’t know their names; 5 being know deeply – speak to regularly, would count a close friend.)

This exercise helps you to identify the spread of influence and the extent of your present contact through the individual members of your congregation with your community.

Having encouraged the congregation to do the task as thoroughly as they can, you then need to take the sheets in and collate the data. You are looking to create a list of names, a total number of contacts and common patterns. (Maybe half the congregation have the same postman?) This information can then be used as material for prayer and planning programmes that will enable you to develop stronger relationships.

Worksheet: My Extended Family

