



Dear Fellow-Eagles,

I hope all is well with you and your families?

This letter continues the theme of 'reaching out' started in the last email... Scripture is clear, we all have a responsibility to share our faith with others [Matthew 5:16, 9:37-38; Luke 10:1-23; Acts 1:8, 8:4].

Traditionally evangelism has focused on getting people to make a 'decision for Christ', or 'getting them saved', often resulting in exultation (or disappointment) over the numbers who have responded, and church growth without real spiritual substance. (This is evidenced by the comments of thousands of Christians on social media which show little, or no understanding of the grace poured out in Jesus Christ.)

Where there is follow-up, it is usually seen to be the province of the local church, with groups for new Christians led by appointed leaders or the minister. While this is commendable, the problem with this arrangement is that it has left ordinary church members with no responsibility for the mentoring of their friends and family, and the erroneous belief that they are not capable of doing it.

Jesus left his followers with a commission:

*He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'* [Matthew 28: 19-20]

Making *disciples* is the thing. Deuteronomy 11 tells us how...

*Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates* [Deuteronomy 11: 18-19].

Parents teach their children, not in formal classes, but in everyday situations. Our two-year-old granddaughter made us laugh recently at her oh-so-serious invitation over the toy telephone for teddy to come round for cake. How did she know that an invitation to a friend is a good thing? How did she know which words out of her small vocabulary to use? She was copying her mother. Our

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children are adults now, but we often recognise their words and actions as those we modelled for them as they were growing up. (Of course, they have added many insights of their own, over the years, so learning is a two-way process these days.)

Discipleship is about 'parenting', about doing life with people. When our friends watch how we live, how we treat other people, discuss current affairs, our generosity with time and resources, how we deal with adversity—and so much more, they are learning how to live as a Christian. And is not just about seeing our strengths; when they see our weaknesses and failures and how we live in the grace of God, they are learning how to access the same resources for themselves.

However, as well as sharing lives, we also need to make sure that our friends are properly founded in Christ. There are many resources, video-sets and bible studies available on the internet or as hard copies. When choosing a resource, some things to consider are:

- Is the tone dry or legalistic?
- Is it prescriptive about things which are a matter of choice?
- Does it emphasise what Jesus has done for us, or does it suggest that we need to do certain things to earn God's favour?
- Is the Holy Spirit presented as our present teacher and equipper?

This website, 'Rhythms of Grace: a Journey into Rest' can be used as a discipleship track, as it attempts to lay a foundation for faith in a clear pathway. My suggestion would be that the material for each page is read independently, then discussed as a pair or in a group. The 'rhythms of grace' on each page give some pointers for response. (I am presently preparing the material to be published with study questions in kindle format for those who would prefer to read, highlight, and make notes. Hopefully, it will be ready in a few weeks. In time, I hope to make hard copies too.)

Alternatively, you might like to do a shared bible study. I would suggest starting with one of the Gospels, followed by the book of Acts. Read the passage independently in preparation, then discuss it together. There are many suggestions for biblical discussions on the internet, or you may like to use the following questions:

- What does this passage say about God? (Jesus is the exact representation of the Father, so whatever we learn about Jesus is also true of the Father).
- What does it say about people? Do you know anyone like the characters in this chapter? Do you recognise any of these traits in yourself?
- What is the key message of the chapter? Why do you think so?
- What do you need to do about this chapter?

Just as in natural parenting, we will make mistakes, and our friends may pick up some bad habits or wrong theology—but that happens in the best of formal groups, for none of us has everything right. But if Jesus was prepared to entrust the future of the world to twelve ordinary men plus the Holy Spirit, maybe we can let go of perfect and trust Him too?

God bless you,

Kate W at Rhythms of Grace

<https://www.rhythmsofgraceuk.org>

PS Do get in touch. I love to hear how things are going for you!

Previous emails are available in PDF format on the Eagles' Wings page:

<https://www.rhythmsofgraceuk.org/eagles-wings-9691.html>