

**OBJECTIVE: To look at the varying ways the early Christians witnessed (in the Book of Acts) and how we might use a similar approach when opportunity arises:**

**Introduction**

"I just don't seem to get any opportunities to share Jesus"

"When I do get opportunities – I'm like the Arctic river – frozen at the mouth"

"I don't want to come across as patronising" – familiar? Others?

Within our many and varied workplaces, there are many and varied people – many from different backgrounds, many with differing experiences of Christians and Christianity – from no experience through to extensive – perhaps having themselves once professed a faith.

Several opportunities may arise where the Gospel can be shared; and different people may need a different approach – let's look at some examples:

**So Just WHAT Are We Sharing?**

Paul's letter to the Romans gives us two big clues:

Romans 10:8-13

Romans 10:14-17

Read the content of some of the early sermons in Acts – see the 'story' form that many of the Apostles used.

**We are sharing THE GOSPEL: What should our approach to sharing be?**

Romans 1:16

**First Things First:**

Acts 1:4-5 – the Lord announced that before any successful 'work' for Him could be achieved - His disciples needed to 'wait for the gift My Father promised' – The Holy Spirit. Whilst as God's people – we do have the Holy Spirit – it is good to pray before each day that the Lord will anoint your ministry and witness – and workplace.

Q? How often do we pray at the outset of each day for the people we will meet that day – known and unknown.

### **Group Opportunities:**

Acts 2:6-14 – the group were talking and asking questions about the Holy Spirit.

We may come across 'groups' in our workplace, or community – perhaps in the staff room, or on a seminar, at a social or meal – **listen** to what the people are talking about – it's amazing how many people actually mention God, or 'right and wrong', or the 'dodgy vicar' story...seize the opportunity – if people are speaking and giving their opinions – respect and listen – then speak the **truth**. Notice how Peter associated himself with them – 'fellow Jews' and how he appealed to God's Word – remember, it is not the 'heat' of argument that changes lives but the 'light' of the Gospel – leave the outcome to the Lord (Mark 4:26-29).

**Practical prompts:** People speaking about religion being the cause of all wars...or perhaps 'why doesn't God do something about it' (speaking of a certain situation). In your 'downtime' – think about these things, ask others – we will hold a 'difficult questions' night one evening.

### **Everyday Conversation - Speak about God's Activity:**

Acts 3:11-16 – speak about the amazing things that God has done. We can often have one set of language for our church friends, and another approach with others. Peter gives God the glory and tells the crowd WHO changed the man's life.

**Practical prompts:** How was the weekend? Are you worried about the redundancies?

How would you answer someone at church? Why answer differently to anyone else?

### **Individual Questions:**

Acts 8:26-35 – God placed Philip in just the right place at the right time. The Ethiopian had been reading his 'bible' – and didn't understand it. It's amazing how many people have read the bible – or are genuinely interested in what it says. The Ethiopian had a question – and Philip offered to spend some time with him, one on one, to explain 'the good news about Jesus'.

Is there anyone you know who has commented (perhaps even more than once) on the Bible? – why not offer to help them understand it – or look out for a book to help them (read it yourself first before you recommend it) – maybe give them it as a gift.

**Practical Prompts:** Someone may say – “I’ve got a bible, but I’ve never been able to understand it” .....”I was a Jehovah’s Witness for a while – but didn’t get on with it’ (they are obviously searching).....or they see you reading yours and enquire what you are reading about.

### **Don’t write people off – God prepares people to listen:**

Acts 10:9-20 – Peter thought he knew the sort of people that God wanted to reach. Yet Peter had his ‘evangelical standards’ challenged. At the same time – the Lord was working in the heart of Cornelius – the gentile centurion, to receive His Word. Have you been surprised by the interest shown by anyone you know or have met?

**Practical Prompt:** Give out God’s word – listen and look for who the Lord might be prompting – be prepared to have your evangelical ‘standards’ challenged.

### **Correct any misconceptions and misunderstandings of Scripture:**

Acts 14:8-18 - People can come out with all sorts! It’s amazing how little things get twisted – and how ‘big statements’ are made without any real depth or understanding. People are superstitious too, with St Christopher’s, keep sakes, ‘touch wood’ – et al!

Think about the group of a people you see or mix with regularly –what sort of things do they come out with?

Paul & Barnabus quickly corrected the people of Lystra & Derbe – and spoke in ways that they would understand (they were gentiles) – speaking of creation & the Living God.

**Practical Prompt:** Ask other people what *they* believe. It’s amazing, the variety of answers they give – plus gives you a great platform for communicating the truth. Many people also can be challenged when they are caused to think through life and death issues.

### **Be There For those who are low and Needing Support:**

Acts 16:25-31 – The Jailer had heard and seen the witness of Paul & Silas. So when at a low ebb, Paul stepped in – cut to the chase – ‘there is a better way’.

**Practical Prompt:** Don’t be afraid to cut to the chase with people who are feeling low or facing tragedy or difficulty – they can be at their most receptive during these times. Offer to pray for and with them. Perhaps give them something to comfort them – perhaps to read or listen to.

### **Show Respect and understanding about the beliefs of others:**

Acts 17:16-23 – Paul had taken the time to read up on the things the people of Athens believed and put value in – and was even able to quote their own philosophers. Do your homework.

Paul also identified the ‘gap’ in their knowledge – the ‘unknown God’ – and spoke into it. Many people ‘believe in God’ – but are unsure as to who Jesus is, or why He died – again, asking questions can give you lots of information – Jesus was the Master at this – ‘So who do you say that I am?’ (Mark 8:29).

**Practical Prompt:** Again, listen to the conversations of others, what sort of books do they read? What do they wear with regards ‘religious’ jewellery? Ask them about it.

### **Encourage others who have a faith:**

Acts 18:24-26 – Apollos was a learned man – yet had some gaps in his understanding. Priscilla and Aquila ‘explained to him the way of God more accurately’. Is there another believer at work that you can encourage and meet with?

**Practical Prompt:** Try and find a time to meet with another Christian within your ‘group’ – together, the synergy of the witness can be very powerful. One believer may know a certain part of the group well, another believer, still others.

Share about conversations you have had with mutual colleagues, perhaps start a lunchtime CU to pray for the organisation or group.

### **Use Your Influence for the Lord:**

Acts 22:22-29 – Paul was a Roman Citizen and so had certain rights and privileges. He used these to full effect (Acts 16:37). Perhaps we are in a position of influence – people look to us for guidance in other areas (employees or assistants, younger family members).

**Practical Prompt:** Those who look to us will respect our opinions and will be more likely to listen to us. A good witness in other practical areas will assist our witness for the Lord.

Questions may come such as: How do YOU handle stress?

### **Above all Pray:**

Ephesians 6:18: *“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people”.*

*“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” – 1Peter3:15*