

This document is based on a talk and discussion by Darren Blaney, pastor of Herne Bay Baptist Church, on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2007. Its intention is to put forward some helpful models in helping and supporting each other to live as follows of Jesus.

All quotes are from the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible.

## The Kingdom Of God

*From Mark 1:15*

"The time has come," he [Jesus] said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

The KINGDOM OF GOD is a PROCESS or POWER breaking into the world to transform it, rather than an actual place. After a while, people realised that Jesus wasn't coming back to Earth immediately, and needed to live in the Power of the Kingdom offered by Jesus' offer of Salvation and the working of the Holy Spirit.

The early Disciples worked this way:



Nowadays, we seem to have got so caught up in the formal workings of Church, that Church is the centre of our Christian life, not the Kingdom of God. We need to start with the Kingdom again!!

How do we support each other to live the new life that is given from the Kingdom? The Church originally built up from Christians who met for SUPPORT in a COMMUNITY and that DISCIPLINED EACH OTHER.

SMALL GROUPS are the KEY to this support. It is the original Biblical model. Two methods are discussed below.

## Blessing Model

This started in a small group in the USA as an answer to the question "What sort of spirituality should we have?"

They were moved towards the idea of blessings. There are several verses relating to blessing, for example:

*From John 1:16* - From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.

They asked, "HOW CAN WE BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS" wherever you happen to be: At work, at home, with friends, in the pub, at a social club, in your allotment.

They discovered that BLESSINGS HAVE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1) Blessings begin with a MEANINGFUL TOUCHING OF A PERSON to be blessed. This can be a laying on of hands, or an emotional touching / connection with them.
- 2) A SPOKEN MESSAGE OF GREAT VALUE
- 3) PAINTS A PICTURE of the future of the person being blessed
- 4) The person doing the blessing has A ROLE IN THE BLESSING'S FULFILMENT

Each week the group would share issues and situations with each other. They would lay on hands, speak prophetically, give a picture of how God would change the situation, and all take a part where appropriate in helping to bless their fellow disciples.

## Contextual Theology Model

Despite its rather fancy name, this is a simple cycle.



This model leads to a PROPHETIC MESSAGE.

## Summary

- Both models both require in-depth use and study of the Bible.
- Both models need openness and willingness to share with your small group. Being honest and accountable to your fellow group members is crucial with both positive and negative experiences.
- The biggest issue is likely to be “HOW BADLY DO YOU WANT IT?!”, ie, do you *really* want to live the way Jesus taught?
- Finally, one other model is the Wesleyan Model. At each meeting each person in the room had to answer the question “What sins have you committed and how have you been tempted since we last met?”. That certainly needs trust and honesty!!

Try using both models in your cell / home groups or with any other small regular group you meet with for support.