Gospel Life - Week 4: Everyday Rhythms

Over the past several weeks we’ve learnt a lot about the power of the Gospel (week 1), Everyday Discipleship (week 2) and our New Identity in Christ (week 3).

We’ve seen how being a disciple of Jesus affects all of life and how God’s plan is to transform us into His image.

Our aim at Arkhouse Church is to be a church on mission, living all of life with gospel intentionality. As we seek to fulfill Jesus’ Great Commission to go and make disciples we learn what it means to be disciples. So this week we ask how do we make disciple-making an every day part of life?

How do we live out our gospel identity with gospel intentionality in the everyday rhythms of life?

1. Exploration – what are the everyday rhythms?

Most of us have a hard time translating what we’ve learnt about the gospel and our new identity into everyday life. We struggle to make the ‘Sunday-Monday connection’, how can we more consistently live out our gospel identity (as a family of missionary servants, disciples making disciples) at home, at work, at uni and out in the community? It’s normal to feel some tension related to living on mission; we’ve all lived in certain patterns for years and it isn’t always immediately clear how to live this out in our day-to-day life. In our post-Christian context, we’re re-learning how to be disciples!!

The following 6 Everyday Rhythms help us to see all the normal routines of life as easy opportunities for living out our gospel identity and providing opportunities to talk about and invite others into life in Christ. It’s not a ‘missional to-do list’ but simply raising awareness of our daily, weekly, monthly rhythms where we’re meeting and mixing with unbelievers all the time. It’s life on mission rather than mission/evangelism as an added on extra to an already busy life.
Questions:
Which of the rhythms is most appealing to you? Which stuck out as the hardest to engage in? Why?

In what ways are you already living in these rhythms? How could you bring greater gospel intentionality to each of these rhythms?

Are you a good listener? In what ways can you become a more effective listener? Have you learnt how to ask good questions to hear people’s stories?

What ‘false stories’ are people living under today? How does the gospel complete or heal or correct those stories?

How much of your prayer and Bible reading time is spent listening for God to speak to you? Do you have an expectation of ‘hearing God’s voice’? Why or why not?

In what ways do you practice a rest rhythm? Do you have hobbies? Do you have a regular time of Sabbath? If not, how can you start?

What would you need to change - for your life to be increasingly shaped by your gospel identity (family, missionary, servant, disciple) being lived out in each of these 6 rhythms? How might people around you react to this? How might their view of God begin to change?
2. Meditation - what are the everyday rhythms?

Read the following passages and discuss all the ways they show living on gospel mission with gospel intentionality in the everyday rhythms:

- Mark 1:35, 4:33-34
- Col 3:23-4:6
- Acts 8:26-35
- Romans 12
- Hebrews 4:1-11

3. Transformation – what are the everyday rhythms?

Many people resonate with and get excited about living all of life with gospel intentionality. They really do believe that Jesus teaches his disciples to go and make disciples as an everyday part of life. But, everyone’s busy. Our lives are already so full with work, study, family, friends, sport, movies, recreation, and our church community, that we struggle to see how someone can actually live this missional life in the busy world today?

The mind-set shift we need to make, the secret to increasingly living our lives on mission, is to move from seeing gospel mission as something “additional” that needs to be added to an already busy life, to seeing all the normal stuff you already do as FULL of gospel opportunities, if only we’d live with gospel intentionality.

We must move from an additional mindset to an intentional mindset in the normal rhythms of life that God has given us.

To do this we regularly need to pray ‘Col 4 prayers’ and so see how the everyday stuff of life is where discipleship and mission happens, the natural environment or context, is just the everyday, normal, usual, stuff of life – and that’s because you’re not a Sunday-only Christian, you’re an all of life Christian, all of life is lived as a witness to Jesus.

4. Explanation – what are the everyday rhythms?

We’re now ready to plan to live with gospel intentionality in the everyday rhythms.

Pray and plan to have a coffee or a meal this week with a friend or two who don’t yet know and follow Jesus. Remember this time of eating together is an opportunity to live – as a servant, missionary, disciple - in the normal, daily rhythms – eating, listening, story telling, blessing – all while displaying God’s generosity, love and care. God is the ultimate provider of all our needs...that is how a meal can be a picture or pointer to the gospel – our ultimate need is fulfilled in Jesus, the bread of life.

Relax. Have fun. Be yourself!
As you engage in conversation ask them to tell you a little bit of their stories. *Eg. “Tell me something about your life, where’d you grow up?”*

Listen for themes of *creation-fall-redemption-recreation* as they speak. As you listen and pray for them think about these sorts of questions:

- What has been the biggest influence on their life? *(creation)*
- What is their family background? *(creation)*
- What is their biggest problem? Who or what do they blame? *(fall)*
- What currently gives their life meaning, purpose and identity? *(redemption)*
- What are their hopes and dreams for the future? *(recreation)*
- How would the gospel story most resonate with this person? *(creation)*
- What particular part or theme of the gospel would speak the strongest into their life? *(e.g. adoption, forgiveness, resurrection, regeneration, redemption, ransom, victory)* *(creation)*

Listen to find out a person’s story in order to connect God’s Story to them. Recognise that each person’s story usually has the following parallels/connections to God’s Story:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>God’s Story: Creation</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Redemption</th>
<th>Recreation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>My Identity</strong> - family, education, work, etc – my sense of self is based on…?</td>
<td><strong>My Problems</strong> - sense of brokenness, worries, addictions, sin.</td>
<td><strong>My Solution</strong> - functional saviours, idols, my escape is…?</td>
<td><strong>My Hope/Dreams</strong> - my life would be complete if…?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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“When we use presenting issues as a window to the heart, we are in effect contextualizing the gospel on a person-by-person basis. We identify the particular sinful desires that control people’s lives and the particular truths that will set them free.”

Tim Chester & Steve Timmis - *Everyday Church: Gospel Communities on Mission*

Next, as we seek to listen and hear someone’s story, we want to create opportunities to share God’s Story, to do this we’ll need to be familiar and comfortable with a basic gospel outline – *get into pairs and take turns sharing the gospel using the ‘phone method’* - using 2 hands to explain: creation – fall – redemption – (recreation).

Teach it to anyone in your group who doesn’t know it.
5. Community – what are the everyday rhythms?

We not only have our Everyday Mission (your networks, your neighbours, etc) but we go on mission together to make disciples, so each Sharehouse (Community Group) should have a Collective Mission – a people or place you’re praying for regularly and planning together ways and events and things you can do to create gospel opportunities.

Each week, in your Sharehouse, for feedback and encouragement, plan to ask:

- Did anyone have a meal/coffee/tea with an unbelieving friend this week?
- How did it go? What worked/didn’t work?
- What common themes came up?
- Did you get to know their stories?
- Based on their story, how might you bless this person?
- Based on their story, how might they hear the gospel? Which theme of the gospel might most resonate with them?
- Where you able to share God’s Story? How did that go?
- Did anything surprising happen or where there ways you think God was at work?
- How can you naturally follow-up this meeting?
- What are the next steps to them coming to know Jesus? (eg. read the Bible together? Invite to another meal? Invite to a church meeting?)

If you are not planning to contribute or be intentional in your Everyday Mission and Collective Mission, why do you think that is? Which part of our New Identity is unclear, or which part of the idols/4G’s do you need to review? [see Study #2 – Everyday Discipleship]

6. Action – what are the everyday rhythms?

Take Home-Action Points:

- What changes will you need to make to live all of life with gospel intentionality in the everyday rhythms?
- What 3 people will you seek to bless this week? – send an encouraging message, card or email, give a gift, make a meal, buy a coffee or some other action?
- What 1-2 people will you seek to have a meal/coffee/tea with?
- Look at the dates for Scattered Worship (next one on Sunday 29th May 2016) - what event or party or other action will you plan with your Sharehouse for your Collective Mission?
- Start to ‘pray continuously’ for each person or action the Spirit brings to your mind, that God would provide opportunities to share the gospel and bring many people to salvation in Jesus.

Pray to close.