

40 DAYS – WHERE NEXT?

Church life at Durham Road before Easter was dominated by our participation in the *40 Days of Purpose* programme. For those who threw themselves into it wholeheartedly, it was a richly rewarding and (in some cases) a challenging and life-changing experience.

- All 42 copies of Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, which we had ordered, were taken up - and most of them were paid for!
- A total of 46 different people participated in our Small Groups programme, with an average attendance of 36 per week. (Last year, by comparison, our mid-week meetings averaged 16.)
- 31 young people heard us explain what God's purposes for their lives are, through our *Rock Solid* and *Fit for Life* clubs in the run up to Easter. Many of them have collected a full set of Bible memory verses for their key rings!
- 16 people completed a 'What is Your Shape?' Offers of Service Form. Thank you for doing so. I am planning to process them during this coming week, and will be getting in touch with you to take you up on your offers of help.
- Our Easter Sunday morning attendance was 55, the best of the year so far.

But the challenge of any kind of spiritual renewal programme, such as *40 Days of Purpose*, is the question: 'Where do we go next?' Does the programme become the springboard for further growth and development, or do we view it merely as an interesting siding (dead end) that we took time out to explore?

One of the best ways of following through the lessons God taught us through the programme is to make time to read through *The Purpose Driven Life* book again *slowly*.

- Try re-reading it at the rate of a page a day, rather than a chapter a day.
- Make a note of the lessons God teaches you as you go along.
- Record them in a journal.
- And pray for God's empowering to put them into practise.

The *40 Days of Purpose* programme ends with the challenging words of Jesus: ***Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them***

(John 13.17).

LESSONS TO LIVE BY

Our Sunday sermon series and Wednesday mid-week programme seek to build on the good foundation laid down through the *40 Days of Purpose* programme.

- On **Sunday mornings**, we will be looking at the first 12 chapters of the book of Acts to *See How They Grew*. There are rich lessons to be learned from those who pioneered church life and the spread of the Gospel right from the outset.
- On **Sunday evenings**, we will be looking at some of God's intended 'Supermodels' - the kings of Judah who were urged to *seek God*. The phrase occurs no fewer than 24 times in the book of 2 Chronicles. During our *40 Days of Purpose* programme, we learned that the first great purpose for which God made us is 'worship' - and worship begins when we truly seek God. Whenever the Bible uses the word 'seek', it carries the idea of valuing something so much that we go in search of it until we have secured it as our possession (see Luke 15. 3-10, Jesus' parables of the lost sheep and lost coin). God must always be prioritised in our lives, as we will see by looking at the triumphs and tragedies of God's would-be supermodels, Judah's kings.

LOST FOR WORDS

Lost for Words is the exciting training programme for "sharing our faith naturally" that we will be exploring together through our midweek programme. It was encouraging to see almost two dozen people present for our launch-night last week, but it would be good to build the numbers up to around the 30 mark for our Small Groups.

Every survey conducted into people's 'journey to faith' discovers the same fact. The most significant single factor for most people is the influence and encouragement of a Christian friend.

The key people in evangelism are ordinary Christians going about their everyday lives because evangelism is meant to be a natural part of being a Christian. Just as all Christians pray, although there are some who have a particular

gift and calling for prayer (as intercessors), so too all Christians are called to play their part in sharing the Gospel with unbelievers (with some having a particular gift and calling as evangelists). The coalface of evangelism is ordinary Christian people in their ordinary everyday lives in contact with ordinary unbelievers who are not yet Christians.

Lost for Words is a course designed to help the 'non-expert' who feels 'lost for words' when it comes to telling other people about Jesus. So unless you are already an expert at sharing your faith with other people, this course is for you!

DON'T MISS YOUR BIRTHDAY!

We are very privileged to have Revd Peter Grainger as our 129th Church Anniversary speaker over next weekend, 13th-14th May. Peter, a former missionary in India with the Wycliffe Bible translators, is currently the Senior Pastor of Charlotte Baptist Chapel in Edinburgh, a large city-centre church with a weekly congregation of around 1,000. His wife, Nita, was baptised at DRBC during her days as a student in Newcastle. Just as you wouldn't dream of missing your own birthday celebrations, plan to be at all four celebration events for our Church Anniversary:

Saturday 13th May:

6.30pm: *Buffet Meal.*

7.30-9.00pm: *Celebration Event*

(with guest soloist Jane Kitson, from Heworth)

Sunday 14th May

Services at 11.00am and 6.30pm.

International Fellowship Tea, 5.30pm

(at which Peter and Nita will speak about their recent visit to Papua New Guinea)

COMING UP

- Three special outreach opportunities are planned for the coming months as part of our *Fun and Food for all the Family* programme.
 - **Games Night, Tuesday 9th May, 7.30-9.00pm**
 - **World Cup Special, Tuesday 13th June, 7.30-9.00pm**
 - **Barbecue, Tuesday 11th July, 7.30-9.00pm.**
- There will be an **IREF(UK) Fund-raising**

Barbecue at 94 Sunnyside Road, Sunnyside, on **Monday 29th May** from 12 noon - 2.00pm (weather permitting). Pray for a fine day!

- **NE1** is a major youth event, taking place in the Northeast from 23rd-29th July. 3,000 young people from all over the world are expected for a time of teaching and practical action. We will be hosting a team who will get involved in some ground-clearing projects. See Helena Simmonds for further information.
- **Prom Praise at the Sage**, scheduled for **Saturday 25th November 2006**, sold out within a month of the tickets going on sale! So with the encouragement of Langham Arts (who act as the promoters for the concerts), the local Planning Group has decided to lay on an extra afternoon performance, 3.00-5.30pm. Please pray that this will be sold out too!
- We still require singers for our **Prom Praise Choir**. Details on how to join the choir are available on the Prom Praise Northeast website: www.prompraisenortheast.org.uk. Rehearsals will take place at the Brunswick Methodist Church, Newcastle on 29th June (registration from 6.15pm), and 2nd and 16th November. Rehearsal times will be 7.00-9.00pm.

PRAY FOR GRANTS

Please continue to pray that we will receive sufficient grant funding to proceed with the next phase of our building refurbishment work – repairs to the front pediment of the Church and the re-roofing of our Small Hall and Storage Annexe. Sixteen grant applications were sent off but so far, we haven't received any positive replies. The cost of the work is estimated to be about £30,000. We must continue to look to the Lord to supply all our needs, in the spirit of Asa, one of God's better 'supermodels'. He prayed,

"LORD, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O LORD our God, for we rely on you. [2 Chronicles 14.11]

David Hunt