

## Plenary 2 &3 Responses

### ***How do we build atmosphere, attitudes or behaviours that 'lets love live'?***

#### **Lead by Example**

- “Allow a thousand flowers to bloom” (is a quote from Chairman Mao’s Little Red Book I believe)
- See what is taught is demonstrated
- Leadership must model
- Do not tolerate intolerant attitudes
- Building vulnerability
- Structures need to be in place so that it becomes a lifestyle not a one off
- Behaviour becomes from within. Leaders need to model it
- Be encouragers
- Introduce new people
- Doing life together
- See spiritual fruit grow
- Need bridge builders who will bring people and congregations together
- Treasure questions - don’t be threatened by them, keep dialogue open
- Broaden peoples idea of what church is
- Not ‘here we are’ but ‘there you are’

#### **Expect Complicated Lives**

- Messy church
- Not allowing problems to fester, dealing with things properly
- Looking out for people, noticing people be aware
- Keep short accounts, slow to anger, we are on a journey – we are all on a progress
- Stop the church being a club with club rules
- Accept people where they are
- We should be unshockable
- Small steps need encouragement
- Watch out for lonely/vulnerable people
- Help people love themselves
- Build on a foundation of prayer
- ‘Warm’ Church in every sense, physical, spiritual and relational

#### **Expect Mistakes**

- Not to be wound up if we make mistakes
- Set examples of non-judgemental models
- Always say a positive before a negative
- Warm church in every sense, physical, spiritual, relational
- No condemnation

## ***Is it ever acceptable for leadership just to change one congregation for another so that we can attract prodigals?***

The Clear Majority said “NO” –No – you create more prodigals BUT...

### **New Congregation – Different Days – Different Times**

- The father wanted both brothers in his house
- Allow one congregation to join another
- Different styles to cater for different appetites/cultures
- Different for large cities and villages – can specialise where there are other churches locally
- Wait for God’s prompting
- A single pastor can not do it all
- Everyone responds in a different way – love languages
- Diversity not polarity
- ‘Being church’ is not the same as Sunday service, it is about changing lives

### **Managing Change**

- Slow integration is less painful
- When change happens, there will be consequences, some will leave
- Place oneself into a risk situation and demonstrate vulnerability
- Those who leave should be loved
- Make change a trickle effect not ‘big bang’
- Consider implications of ‘old and new wineskins’ carefully
- Difficult to hold all things in balance but not impossible!
- Sensitive to Holy Spirit
- Balance between evolution and revolution

### **Communication**

- Let everyone know how you are planning to reach new people
- Talk through
- Deal with the mess along the way
- You don’t gain anything by losing the traditionalists; they may be supportive of outreach

## ***How do we stop ourselves 'shooting the elder brother'?***

### **Shoot to wound not to kill!**

- Give him chance to vent frustrations, pray with him, value him, in extreme let him go
- Respond, 'Yes, I know' or 'what can we do about it.' Make them agents for change
- Encourage 'ownership'
- Love the Pharisee not his attitude
- "You are always with me" = "I value you".
- Bi-focal vision – seeing the flock and the lost sheep
- Lock the gun away
- Allow time for God to work things out
- Leave the door open, the father came out to speak to the elder brother but didn't stop the party
- Will that result in us actually shooting ourselves
- Value their experience
- Some situations we need to shoot the entire congregation
- Recognise I am the elder brother
- It probably is not fair -So listen talk and pray with him
- Major on encouragement and affirmation
- The old stalwarts can be your strongest allies if you can keep them on board
- Anticipate problems and provide teaching, whilst the sun is still shining

## ***What is the right balance between law and grace?***

- Important to show you have not compromised faith fundamentals whilst showing grace
- Retain our values but be graceful with people
- The balance between law and grace is where principles can be upheld but without compromise and seeking to still let love live
- Love brings law and grace together (truth and mercy kiss). It's the way you say it.
- In Jesus there is law and grace – "while we were yet sinners"
- Grace filled, we hope that grace comes before the law
- It is not about law versus grace, it is about traditions and rituals versus grace

## ***Top 3 ideas for bringing prodigals back***

- Change the image of what church is
- Write friendship letters to prodigals (from people who have natural relationships with them)
- Take a look at ourselves first – preparation
- Sorry! Say it. From church body or leadership or by individual
- Identify and pray for them
- Big 'sorry' sign out front!