

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September

### Discipleship is more than programmes

In our discussions it was generally recognised that one of the effects of lockdown has been to release many churches and ministers from the pressure of programmes and weekly groups, therefore there needs to be a careful review of what may go 'back in the box' when there is the option of returning to the building. Linked with this was the image of church potentially being like a strong elastic band, with a risk that things will just ping back to normal. To take this analogy further, this probably depends on whether we are holding onto the band or letting go of it, allowing God to work with us. The lockdown has created the potential for some to become more missional in their immediate neighbourhoods because we have become more available. This raises the question about whether we have actually become too complicated with all of our activity over the years, which has actually inadvertently disconnected us from our neighbours, friends and families, the very people with whom we were trying to connect. A possible conclusion which could be drawn from this, is that letting go of some of our systems and activities actually releases and encourages mission. Discipleship begins with our earliest contacts with friends, families and neighbours and possibly something we are learning is that it is therefore much more than our programmes. As church has met online and as people have connected more with their neighbours, some would say and have experienced, that church has become a much more genuine community rather than a series of gatherings and meetings, surely this is where true discipleship lies? Leading us to the next point, that discipleship is relational.



<https://www.easternbaptist.org.uk/news/what-might-god-be-saying-collation-of-zoom-discussions/>

### Biblical Reflection

Read: Matthew 11:25-30 These familiar words are a great source of comfort for us, aren't they. When we are burdened and weary, Jesus promises to give us rest if we come to him. He invites us to take a light yoke on our shoulders – his yoke – and to learn from him. He gently and humbly offers us rest for our souls. You can almost relax into these words like flopping onto a really comfortable sofa at the end of a busy day and exhaling: "Aaaaaaahhhh."

But it's important not to forget that Jesus said these things after he had thanked his Father that he had revealed "these things" to children, not the apparently experienced and wise people. And he has reminded those listening to him that his relationship with his Father is unique, and that only he can reveal the Father to us. Only the Son can know the Father as intimately as Jesus does and only a child can grasp the important things and as they are burdened by all the things that weigh us down as adults. A child sees possibilities to explore, adults see difficulties to be overcome. A child seeks love, adults seek power. A child seeks happiness, adults seek pleasure. And a child finds these things in relationships, adults look for them in busyness and belongings, plans and projects.

### Questions for Reflection

"Unless you... become like little children you can never enter the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 18:3) what might Jesus be saying to us about how we 'do' church in the light of this?

If we want Jesus' light yoke we'll have to put down what we have been carrying. What might he be asking us to put down?

Jesus simply invited people to follow him. Why have we made it so complicated?

### Interview with Dennis Pethers

<https://youtu.be/CYkmBp-Bxwk>

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<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/WUbNiYxg0efRKVUIGH-FjDB9I3CG-J8ubyXAYUtrQYL1wPytu-sdNJNyBJhunJET.2GNaeiLrQXcsuteO> Passcode: \*6kG=Us^