

Weekly Newsletter: 29th August 2023

Reflection: Enlarging the Tent and Strengthening the Stakes

By Joe Barnard

Have you ever been told by someone, “Follow me.” It can be a bewildering experience. Although the person in front of you knows where he or she is going, to you- the follower – each turn is abrupt and unexpected. One of our goals at Holyrood is, whenever possible, to take the surprise element out of leadership. It’s a lot easier to follow someone if you are given an itinerary for where you are going.

This in mind, my hope is, periodically, to give the church family something of a roadmap for the ministry ahead. This should remove confusion and, God willing, increase excitement. Part of the reason why I want us to look at the horizon is because I genuinely believe we are headed in an exciting direction. Last Sunday morning we thought together about the gospel imperative to “enlarge the place of your tent” and “strengthen your stakes” (Is. 54:2). This is a timely word to us. In view of the majesty and authority of Christ, we ought to be expecting the gospel to make in-roads around Montgomery St. If this is indeed the case, now is the time to be preparing ourselves so that, as new people come, we are ready – not just to welcome them – but to nurture them in the habits of the kingdom.

So, then, what can we expect in this Autumn?

1 – A Renewed Focus on the Call to Love One Another

Home Groups will be restarting in September. The subject-matter we will study and discuss in our groups is 1 John. Why this particular letter? The reason is because 1 John more than any other book of the Bible takes the great command of Jesus to love one another (c.f. John 13:33-34) and massages this command into the bones of the church.

Now, here is a pastoral request for members of the church: come out this Sunday evening at 6pm for a special teaching session on 1 John. On Sunday night, Jon Gemmell (who teaches people how to read the Bible for a living) will be giving us an overview of 1 John and helping us think about how to read this letter and, of equal importance, how *not* to read this letter

One further pastoral exhortation: keep the goal of home groups in view this Autumn. The primary goal of home groups is not to increase our knowledge of the Bible, but to live out the blue print of community that is found in the Bible. We want to be doers of the word, not just hearers of the word. “Success” in a home group is taking the truth of the Bible and translating it into what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called “life together”.

2 – A Recommitment to the Basics of Membership

Part of “strengthening the stakes” of our church is improving the process by which new people join Holyrood. For a while now, I have been talking about the need for us to develop a more formal “new members class”. Now, one option would be me to create such a class and implement it without current members knowing much of what is happening. However, this would be counterproductive. In the same way that it is useful for married couples periodically to rethink the meaning of their vows, it is also helpful for church members from time to time to rethink what it means to be stakeholders in a gospel community.

This in mind, the plan for Equip in the Autumn will be for current members to take part in training sessions that will provide the framework for a future course for new members.

Regardless of how long you have been a part of HEC, don’t miss these sessions. Our unity and effectiveness as a congregation depends on us having a shared commitment to the basics of church membership.

3 – Preparing the Ground for an Intensive Week of Mission

At this point everyone should know that January 21st-28th 2024 will be a week dedicated to local mission in the Montgomery Street area. To help us man-power the week, a team of 6-10 Christians from Tulsa, Oklahoma will be traveling over and doing ministry with us.

Now, the hope is that, well before the Mission Week begins, all members of the church will (1) understand the strategy for the week and (2) have a significant role in the events that happen. For the sake of training and communication, two Equip sessions before Christmas will be dedicated to preparing the congregation for the mission week.

Lots more could be mentioned regarding outreach events, Warm Space, men’s and women’s discipleship, and youth ministry. However, the main point of all of this is that we need to be a church preparing for growth. This Autumn, we will be “enlarging our tent” and “strengthening our stakes” with the firm conviction that Easter Road is one of the “desolate cities” (c.f. Is. 54:3) that Christ desires to claim as His own.

Equip this Sunday – 1 John

By Jon Gemmell

It is so exciting to be studying 1 John as a church in our home groups this term. 1 John is a truly extraordinary letter but it is quite awkward and therefore to have an evening together to try and get a handle on some of its big themes will be really fun. Please do come at **6pm on Sunday** and if possible reading 1 John through a couple of times and making a note of repeated words/phrases that you see would be wonderful preparation. Also bringing highlighters and pens will be massively helpful.

Holyrood Youth – Fun Fridays!

One Friday a month, the youth of Holyrood are planning to get together for a time of teaching, friendship and fun! If you have any high school aged kids, please put the dates in your calendars – we’re planning the first one on 8th September and then the first Friday of October (6th), November (3rd) and December (1st). Timings and the venues will be sent out by email. Please continue to pray for the youth in our church family and that their time together on Fridays would be a blessing.

Men's Discipleship 2023

By Joe Barnard

Does your spiritual life need a reboot? Are you eager to make closer friendships with other guys in the church? If so, men's discipleship will be starting back up in September. Our focus this Autumn will be deepening our understanding of basic truth by studying the Gospel Coalition Statement of Faith. Also, see the note below about a special men's event on Sept. 16th.

In-Person Option

- Time: Thursdays, 10:30am at Holyrood
- Topic: Gospel Coalition Statement of Faith
- Start Date: Sept 14th

Zoom Option

- Time: Tuesdays at 6:30am
- Topic: Gospel Coalition Statement of Faith
- Start Date: Sept. 12th
- Sign Up: Contact Joe to be added to the WhatsApp group

Special Men's Event- Saturday Sept 16th

Andrew Moore is organising a "Hilltop Experience" for guys in the church. This will be a hillwalk followed by a take-away dinner on route home. Further details are forthcoming. Let Andrew or I know if you are interested. Final details will be communicated in the newsletter and on social media. And, yes, friends are welcome.

Women's Ministry Update

We're looking forward to the Ladies' Bible Studies starting again! This term we're hoping to meet on Tuesday evenings from 7-8pm. We'll do six weeks together using Rebecca McLaughlin's 'Navigating Gospel Truth' and will look at Session 2. There is no pre-reading, homework or book to buy – just come as you are!

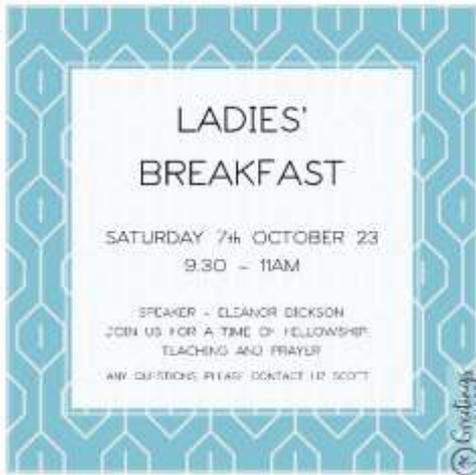
Our first meeting will be tonight (Tuesday 29th) at 7pm in person at the manse (112 Milton Road West) and then from Tuesday 12th September to Tuesday 10th October we'll meet on Zoom. Hopefully this will allow those who live at a distance or are working to attend.

There will be no Bible study on Tuesday 5th September because Nancy Guthrie is in Edinburgh on **Wednesday 6th September**. She's speaking at Grace Church Leith from 7.30pm – 9.30pm and we'd love as many as possible to attend. We have booked tickets as a group so contact Liz (liz@holyroodevangelical.org) if you would like a ticket (cost is £10 or £5 for students) and for more info go [here](#).



We're hoping to have two Ladies' Breakfasts - one in October (see more info below) and another one at the beginning of 2024. We're also planning an afternoon tea in Spring 2024. More details to follow about these nearer the time but there's lots to be praying for and looking forward to! If you have any questions please speak to Anna Barnard, Aileen Malaczynska, Alison Nelson, Anncris Roberts, Gillian Pickering, Liz Scott or Norma Shippin.

Ladies' Breakfast – Saturday 7th October



Save the date! Our next Ladies' Breakfast will take place on Saturday 7th October.

Eleanor Dickson will be our speaker as well as hearing interviews with some of the women in the church family. Please join us for a time of fellowship, teaching and prayer (as well as having our breakfast together!)

Look out for more details next month.

Any questions, please contact Liz (Liz@holyroodevangelical.org)

The Saturday Course – Edinburgh Theological Seminary



The Saturday Course at ETS is open to everyone and is an excellent way to learn more about God.

They run one Saturday a month, from September through to April, and three lectures are delivered by visiting speakers. These lectures, which are also available to access online, are specially designed to stretch our minds and deepen our understanding of God's word. Liz and some of the Scott girls are hoping to attend this coming year – come and join us! For more information and to sign up, go [here](#).

Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Monday: Baby & Toddler Group from 10am – 11.30am
- Tuesday:
 - Pickleball and Table Tennis at 7pm
 - Ladies' Bible Study at 7pm at 112 Milton Road West
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting at 7pm on Zoom with Paul Curd from SASRA
- Sunday:
 - Communion Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching.
 - Equip at 6pm (and live streamed) on 1 John with Jon Gemmell.



www.holyroodevangelical.org

Incorporated as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Scottish Charity Number SCO44820