



Biblical Counselling UK

# Talking Church

How personal conversations  
grow local congregations

Mon 21 – Wed 23 March 2022



## WORKSHOP 5

# Conversations with those not yet believing

## Helen Thorne

# Discuss with your neighbour

1. What excites you about engaging in biblical counselling with people who are not yet following Christ?
2. What scares or confuses you?



# Biblical counselling is for all

- If we believe God is sovereign over all
- If we believe God is the ultimate source of help & hope for all
- If we believe God's ways are good for all
- If we believe God's invitation extends to all
- If, like me, you have plenty of friends who are struggling



# Care has always been linked to outreach

- The example of Jesus (and his ministry with sinners)
- The example of Paul (and the Philippian jailer)
- The example of Ruth (in her time of grief)
- The example of the Samaritan woman at the well (an outcast in so many ways)
- The example of the apostles (and the widows in need)

Care -> Evangelism -> Care



# Context and opportunities

- Make contact through door knocking / leafleting / book tables / invitations (online or paper)
- Contact where people can address questions or prayer requests
- Intentional social action initiatives (food distribution / English conversation classes / night shelters)
- Support groups (grief / parenting) or book groups
- 1-to-1 conversation with friends



# Dangers of which to be aware

- Assuming knowledge of the word of God
- Using language that is opaque or mis-leading
- Mis-applying (over-promising) the promises of God
- Assuming people's struggles are spiritual (rather than biological)
- Underplaying the cost of following Jesus
- Evangelism by stealth and manipulation of the vulnerable

We are offering hope we're not guaranteeing healing



## Case study

Anne is 27 and finding life hard. She works in a residential care home, in an unpredictable shift pattern, and is frequently tired. Her clients range from delightful to aggressive but her boss is consistently unsupportive when it comes to handling stress at work. She is single – and hating it. She unwinds at the end of her shift by drinking in ways that are out of control – she knows that doesn't help. She gets anxiety attacks at night. She wakes up in the morning dreading the day ahead. And is plagued by consistent thoughts that she's failing at life and will never be loved.



# Caring by offering practical service

- Drop round a meal
- Offer to walk the dog
- Offer to babysit
- Lifts to the GP
- Help with shopping



# Caring by sharing common grace

- Rest
- Exercise
- Eating
- Reprioritising life tasks
- Breathing
- Grounding
- Medication



## Discuss with your neighbour

What common grace strategies and practical service would you want to offer to Anne?



# Caring by talking on common ground

- Getting to know the person before us by listening well
- Asking helpful questions to enable them to reflect on their experiences
- Teasing out the link between anxiety and life circumstances (past, present and future)
- Sharing appropriate self-disclosure (sharing our stories)
- Sharing a meaningful song, poem or prose



## Discuss with your neighbour

What kind of questions would help you understand Anne more – and help Anne understand herself more?



# Caring by talking wisdom literature

- Expression of emotion through the Psalms
- Exploration of what works in Ecclesiastes
- Common sense reflections on the Proverbs



# Discuss with your neighbour

How can you use Psalm 88 to help Anne:

- Express emotions
- Consider the depths of her struggles
- Acknowledge the reality of a broken world
- Consider the possibility that God is listening
- Consider the possibility of turning her expression into prayer?



# Caring by talking truth and lies

- I am all alone
- Everything is out of control
- I don't know where to turn
- I am at fault
- I will always be like this ...



## Discuss with your neighbour

What lies is Anne believing about herself? In what ways could you open Scripture to help her see herself as God sees her?



# Caring by talking eternity

- The life you've always wanted
  - What if it existed
  - What if it were better
  - What if there were a way



# Caring by integrating her more

- An addictions support group – where testimony, teaching, accountability combine
- A course on anxiety – showing how God's word makes a difference
- A chance to read a book with a Christian who can answer her questions
- A wander through a Gospel – seeing Jesus' sovereignty at play
- Continued conversation – connecting life to Scripture

