

Engaging Others

Question: Have you ever found yourself in what became a difficult/ hard conversation, and you have no idea what to do or how to proceed with this person? Describe the situation to your table? Describe how it made you feel?

Today it seems like so many people are experiencing such hard things. The point of today is to equip you are how best to HEAR people and to move CLOSER to them in a way that makes them feel seen, hear and loved.

God calls us to Go and Engage people. To enter their lives. To walk with them. To navigate things with them.

Gal 6:2 Says “Carry eachothers burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.

What is the law of Christ? Love God and Love Neighbour. Who is our neighbour? Everyone who is in need? Who is in need? Everyone.

How are we to navigate things people are going through? How do we best help them? How do we carry erachothers burdens well? What is our role?

Our role is to LOVE! Here are 2 ways we can navigate with people.

2 Principles as you Engage others:

1) H.E.A.R.

Holy Spirit

Trust and Believe that the Holy Spirit is going to be the one speaking to them, and that He has much better things to say than you do. We must rely on Gods Spirit always in these conversations. He will give us what to say.

Engage the Whole Heart

Be completely attentive to them, and listen thoroughly to all four aspects of their heart (be listening to your whole heart too). Thoughts, Feelings, Desires, Choices. Also learn to listen in on a deeper level. Listen for:

- What God might be saying
- What we are experiencing as they share
- What they are actually saying – Thoughts, Feelings, Desires, Choices, Significant words, repetition
- Any deceit from the enemy – lies about themselves, inaccurate biblical truth

It is so important we don't approach with a 'I'm going to fix you' mentality. The purpose here is to learn to speak less, listen more. Be available. We need to become good listeners.

Ask Open and Powerful Questions

Ask open-ended and powerful questions that guide the person to hear from the Holy Spirit and to make choices from their deep desires.

Respond from Your Heart

After pursuing their heart first, share how this conversation has impacted your own whole heart (not your own story), and then rejoice in what the Holy Spirit has done.

2) C.L.O.S.E.R.

Compassion – Have a heart of compassion as you approach anyone. Jesus moved towards others in compassion. His compassion actually moved him towards others.

- Jesus and the leper. Moved with Compassion.
- Jesus saw the crowds. Sheep without a shepherd. Had compassion.
- Best attitude and posture to have as we engage others.

Lean in and Listen – Lean in to the people you are choosing to engage with. Give them your attention. Practice paying attention and remove all distractions. We are called to be quick to listen, slow to speak. Actively listening is a skill that one must grow in over time.

Observe – As you listen, observe. Look at **WHAT** they may be saying, Verbal and Non verbal. Also look for **HOW** they may be saying things. Defeated. With energy. Quiet., or **HOW MANY** times they may be saying those things. Repetition can be a key to what they may be going through.

Spirit – Practically observe what is being communicated, but be willing to tune in to what the Spirit might be saying too. The Spirit is at work when we step into moments like this. We need to invite Him into situations. Pray always before engaging someone, and have an attitude of prayer through out.. We in our own strength can offer good advice, and good solutions, but the best place to be, is to be dependent on the Spirits help, and to trust the Spirits leading and guiding. Not only just in what to say to the person in front of you, but even trusting the Spirit on how best to move forward with them.

Engage – You can do this in 2 places. 1) Engage your own heart, what might be going on inside of you. This is so helpful as not only did you move towards them IN compassion, it's now about experiencing continued empathy, so you don't shut down or shut off or just move on. By doing this, you can connect with someone going on inside of you as you connect with what's going on inside of them.. 2) Engage them by asking

effective and engaging questions. Ask open-ended and powerful questions. Questions that are beyond yes or no question. Ask questions that will be helpful. You are not just information seeking, you are seeking to ask questions in such a way, that the person will feel seen, heard and loved.

Respond – This is key. How will you respond from beginning to end? Shock. Sincerity. Kindness. Empathy. Judgement. These are decisions you have to make early and internally. If you are caught off guard, trust the Spirit to help you respond in a way that is helpful, and from your heart. Your response can make someone feel safe, feel loved, feel heard, or it can cause them to shut down, shut off, and become closed off. Responding in a way that covers them so they don't feel naked and shame. Your presence should be a safe presence. Your response matters.

CASE STUDY QUESTIONS:

What thoughts come to mind?

What emotions do you feel and experience the moment you read through their story?

What thoughts and emotions do you think they are thinking and feeling?

What do you want and hope for this person?

How will you chose to move towards them in this moment after they have shared their story with you, to make them feel seen, loved and heard? Ideally,

- What practical steps will you take after hearing their story?
- What will you pray?
- How will you approach the conversation?
- What will you say?
- What questions will you ask?
- How will you respond?
- What will be your follow up plan?

Come up with some good effective and engaging questions you can ask them throughout the conversation?

How does scripture approach moments like this? What are some key scriptures and key truths that come to mind as you consider their story? (Google if necessary)

What are some lies this person might be believing? Or could possible believe?

What does culture and society tempt this person to believe? What does the gospel declare to this person in light of their story?

Disclaimer: These are stories were created to help people navigate what people may be going through.

Case Study #1

You arrive at Discipleship Group, and everything seems fine with your group. Everyone is laughing, messing around, and sharing stories from the week before. Your leader begins to ask some questions, everyone seems like they are in a good space, but you notice something is alil off with one of your friends. When asked how they are doing, they say “I’m good” but you sense they are not. The group time continues, everyone shares prayer requests, you close in prayer and everyone leaves. You decide boldy and without courage, to approach your friend and check in with them. They breakdown and start crying. And what you witness is a flood of emotions as they begin sharing. Your friend’s parents just shared with them that they are getting a divorce. They one parent had been engaging in a marital affair with someone else for years. Over night, they packed up everything they owned and moved into another families basement. This is so fresh for your friend. What remains are a lot of unanswered questions.

Case Study #2

It’s a typical Saturday night in May. You just got back from watching a movie with your group of friends. It’s been a long week for you. Tests. Midterms. Sports banquets. It feels so good to be at the end of the school year. You’re laying in bed, getting in your last minute scroll on social media, and you notice a very discouraging post by one of your friends, about loneliness. You don’t think much off it, but you keep a watchful eye on their socials. Over the next few weeks, you notice very similar posts happening. You decide to check in with them. You grab dinner with them and just simply ask how they are doing? They begin to share that the year was rough for them. They are going into the next school and they feel like they have no friends. Every weekend feels empty. Every weekend they feel alone. No one spends time with them it feels. This comes as quite a shock to you as you feel like you spend quite some time with them. You continue listening and just realize they are longing for deep friendships and connections. Ever since they left church, you have noticed this downward spiral.

Case Study #3

It’s finally here. Discipleship Kickoff! Its so good to see everyone again. RUSH was amazing. Working at CAA got you riding high. Though exhausting, the Summer was one of the best ones yet. Group time that night was just the best. Everyone is sharing, catching up. Seems like everyone had a great Summer. Until Tuesday night happens. You get a text in your group groupchat that is a shock to everyone’s system. Your friend has just shared that they got the heartbreaking news that their sibling was diagnosed with a rare type of Cancer, and the Dr’s have no idea what to do or how to proceed. Everyone starts

sending prayers and encouragements. Your group leader shares that for the first few minutes of group next week, there will be prayer time for your friend. After that prayer time, and after that group time, you decide to just check in and see how your friend is handling the news.

Case Study #4

“I’m just so tired of my parents breathing down my neck. They don’t trust me to get my work done. They don’t trust me when I am with friends. I feel like they don’t understand or even get me. They heap such heavy burdens on my shoulders and I am just TIRED. There is definitely a chasm between us I don’t know how to cross it or even if I want to” Your friend in your small group seems to return to this type of language over and over during small group time. You want to help, but you don’t know what’s fully going on at home. You don’t fully understand your friend or even their parents hearts. All you get to experience is what you hear every Sunday. This connects somewhat with something inside of you because you also have had moments like this with your family. You set up time to with your friend to just listen and learn, and try help them navigate this every trying and difficult season.