

# Mission

Luke 10:1-9

## Learning to love Mission

The model of Mission demonstrated by Jesus in sending out the seventy two-by-two is a familiar approach, adopted by Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses and others, and yet the thought of doing it ourselves may fill our hearts with dread. We may actually feel it is an inappropriate way of evangelising in the modern world, and that it might put people off Christianity. Nevertheless, we may be keen to support others who go "out into the mission field" by our prayers and our money, and we remain grateful that there are other Christians still willing to act on our behalf in this way.

Luke wrote his gospel and the book of Acts long after Paul's missionary journeys and chose to record this event and the accompanying words of Jesus in some detail. In Matthew's gospel, it is the twelve who are sent out on a similar mission with similar warnings. The number 70 is often used in a biblical context to refer to a large number. Luke was a Gentile - the only non-Jewish author in the New Testament, and his gospel is addressed to Gentiles - Theophilus may be a person, or people who love God. It was thus addressed to people who are already Christians, second generation Christians. Christ had not returned and he wrote to reassure them and to encourage them in how they should now live. He notes, "the Kingdom of God is near", to stress that this does not mean an imminent return of Christ, but that He is nevertheless accessible in life.

We can become too obsessed with techniques for "doing" mission, when many of the well-known "missionaries" in fact lived simple lives, just "being" mission. It requires no specific abilities, such as being a good speaker, and it is the responsibility of all believers. Sometimes, in an effort to achieve church growth and to spread the good news, the "job" of mission is over-engineered.

The model of sending out the seventy two-by-two aims to maximise the coverage with the people available, rather like when looking for a missing person, but the destination of the pairs is critical. They are seeking people who will welcome them - fellow believers - on whom they can build a hub of missionary activity. Then the good news can be spread far and wide. They are told that they should not to be put off by the customs or lifestyle of other believers - in their case unclean food. In the same way, we should not limit our approach simply to people who are like us.

### Questions:

1. What kind of "missionary" activity have you been involved in? How did you feel about it? Do you think some people are more suited for mission than others? Why?
2. How did you come to faith? Through you family environment? Invited by a friend? School? Have you attended any "missions" in the past, such as Billy Graham's Mission 89?
3. Why do you think Springfield Church has already generated six people who felt called to train for ordination? What was it about the life of the church that might have influenced them?
4. What can we learn from our experiences of café Church at Roundshaw? How can we develop the "missionary" life of many of our cells?
5. Which places in our community or in your daily life do you think might provide a welcoming environment for a mission initiative for Springfield? How do we reach them?

6. Do you have a personal hunger for any particular people or groups of people, to whom you feel called to tell that, "The Kingdom of God is near", even if not in so many words?