



Seeking to deepen my relationship with my Community:

First of all consider these scriptures:

Luke 10:25-37; Romans 15:1-3; 1 Timothy 1:15-17; Acts 20:35;
1 Thess. 5:12-22; Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 7:1-6

It takes time to get to know people well and to establish a relationship bridge across which we can share the gospel message. (Consider if it takes 24 contacts to earn such a right. How long will it take us? Once a week; then less than 6 months. Once every 3 months then at least 6 years). Little and as often as possible is better.

Getting to know people is a gradual process. A greeting in the street. An invite for a brief cup of tea or coffee. Aperitifs as the French do. A meal.

As we take time to find out others interests and hobbies, it may be that we can in some way share them.

Look for common ground.

As they tell you something of their story so you can share your story and that will of course include something of what your faith and Jesus means to you.

When needs or problems are mentioned why not ask if they would like you to pray for them explaining that you believe God hears and answers prayer. I have found very few refuse. If they do. Its okay. You can pray for them privately. Offers of help and support may be appropriate.

It will soon be apparent especially as we have more than 1 neighbour, that the big demand is going to be time. This will cause us quite rightly to examine what our own priorities are and to consider possibly for example, how important someone else's eternal destiny is compared with personal desires. This must be a matter between each one of us and God.

And remember: I have absolutely no right to expect people who are not Christians to live by Christian standards or even more by MY Christian standards: (They can at times be unbiblical) - 2 Corinthians 4:4.

Neither is it my responsibility to be judging of others.

One area where as Christians we can be quite harsh is concerning the keeping of the Sabbath. We can be so like the Pharisees. We forget Jesus said Man was not made for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for man. Mark 2:23-3:6; Matthew 12:1-14. A day of rest, a day to relax and to share with others. Certainly for the Christian to take time to worship our great God.

Just one example where we can be a hindrance rather than a help to those who may be desperately seeking love and acceptance and a place to belong. Acceptance, acceptance, no judging.

{For your reflection: At least 62 people have come into our church in the last 5 years or so and have not stayed. Why? We all should ask. Have I played a part in that?}