

# NEXT STEPS: CHANGE TO OUR SUNDAY GATHERING

Thanks for the input everyone gave at our meeting on 17 July 2017. We had over 70 people with us that were able to break up into small groups to discuss options for our Sunday gathering. It's very encouraging to have the church family invested in the process as we work out the next steps we should take in our mission to see more people growing as followers of Jesus. Here's a few summary reflections and an explanation of the next step we're going to take.

## **Have we considered all the options for creating more space on our Sundays?**

Comments were given such as – 'Have we considered moving to a bigger hall somewhere in our community?' 'What if we moved the kids' ministry to the Sports Hall on a Sunday?' We certainly need to be thinking creatively and be alert to all the options. There are no new concrete options that have been identified, but keep providing your feedback if you notice anything in our community that could be a possibility for us.

## **If we were to do a second service, when would it begin?**

Sometime in 2017.

## **If we were to do a second service in 2017 would we start it on a trial basis?**

Yes! The best way to move forward with a new service is to at least 'give it a go' for a few months. For the sake of the mission, we should always be prepared to boldly try new things. But at the same time we put our trust in our Heavenly Father who loves us and is completely in control. If it doesn't go according to our plans, we could still come back together knowing that God has his own good plans for us.

## **How does the prospect of a new building effect our thinking of a new sunday service?**

As you know, we've been looking at a block of land on Lilley Road, Cashmere. This past Friday afternoon we were told that the seller now wishes to withdraw the property from the market! It's obviously disappointing when we thought this parcel of land had real potential and yet we'll trust in God's sovereign purposes in this. This is a promise for us: '*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him...*' Romans 8:28. We will continue to look for church property of our own, but it does bring focus to the reality, that we can't wait forever for a new building to eventuate and not be prepared to make real changes to how we gather on a Sunday.

## **What's the benefits in starting a second service?**

Besides creating space, there are at least three benefits that can flow from taking this step. Firstly, a second service can help encourage people to get involved in new ways. We're not *passengers* but *partners* in the cause of the gospel and a new service can help show where there are opportunities to use our gifts to serve. Secondly, by starting a second service, it will probably lead to two smaller gatherings on a Sunday, at least initially. In a smaller gathering, we can begin to get to know others and it can bring into sharper focus those of our church family we can connect with. Thirdly, by having two services it creates an opportunity to serve across those two services. Potentially, a person could receive bible teaching and fellowship in one congregation but serve in particular ways in the other.

## **What are the costs in starting a second service?**

The cost that many people identify is the reality of not seeing everyone as much as they used to ie. a loss of our current sense of community. This is a real cost that people feel and we shouldn't take it lightly. We need to weigh this up as we think about how we can build community for the future. In terms of a new morning or new afternoon service, they would seem to have their own unique costs. If we fit in a second

morning service, would it threaten the great thing we now experience which is people hanging back to enjoy fellowship with each other? If we start a new afternoon service (ie. a completely different part of the day) would it increase the sense of disconnect between the two services?

### **What is the financial cost of starting a new Sunday service?**

To have multiple services that are sustainable and grow over time, we need at least one staff member per each service. As a church our financial giving needs to support our staff. One extra element in this too is that an afternoon service has the additional cost of having to hire the hall for another timeslot on a Sunday.

### **Why an afternoon service and not a night service?**

In part it's about lessons learnt from our previous experience of Lost&Found. The later a service is on a Sunday, the harder it is for some people to stay around afterwards ie. the reality of Monday morning begins to loom large! But also, our research of other churches suggests an afternoon service can appeal to a wider demographic of people – families, teenagers and young adults. As has been stated previously, to make an afternoon service work, we'd want there to be dinner to make it workable for families. And eating together is a great way to foster community together.

### **What is one practical step we can take right now?**

There was some discussion in the groups about whether we could increase our seating capacity in the current hall. While we continue to pray and work through what are best steps we can take in 2017, we should use 2016 to experiment and try new things. So on the **Working Bee of Saturday 6 August**, we're going to take the chance to set up a new seating arrangement. Things we can experiment with include: going wider with the number of seats across the auditorium, and move the music band and speaker onto the stage so as to allow space for more rows. So as a trial, look out for a new look on the morning Sunday 7 August. It will be good to hear what you think!

### **Why should we be considering change?**

Let's remember that as a church we have a mission. We want to see more people growing as followers of Jesus. And as one of our DNA statement says,

**DNA#7 We're a church not just for ourselves.** We're a church which doesn't exist for our comfort. We look outwards....

If this is our church, change will not only be a possibility, at various stages it will be a reality. Thanks you for all that you are doing in being a partner in the gospel. Please be in prayer for this.



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24 July 2016