

Equipped to make the most of every opportunity

Have you come across the expression, “Opportunity knocks, but temptation leans on the bell”? The idea here is that temptation makes its presence felt more conspicuously than opportunity does. Sometimes we’re not even aware that an opportunity to tell people about Jesus Christ is actually presenting itself. We read in the bible about “*making the most of every opportunity*”¹ and this is particularly relevant in the area of evangelism. How can we make the most of every opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others? One way is to consider the various groups of people with whom we have regular contact and, as we attempt to build relationships with them, to take opportunities to tell them about Jesus. Here are some suggestions you might want to adapt to your own circumstances.

- **Family members.** The hardest group of all can be unbelieving family members and we need to pray often for wisdom in our relationships with them. Married women whose husbands are not Christians could pray over **1 Peter 3:1, 2**. Christian husbands married to unbelieving wives might wish to pray according to **1 Peter 3:7**. **Colossians 3:18-21** might also be helpful.
- **Neighbours.** People often respond well to kindness shown to them. It doesn’t have to be anything extravagant - even simple acts that show consideration can have a positive impact. Examples might include very practical things like returning our neighbour’s empty rubbish bin to their garden; offering to clear their drive of snow; and generally showing ourselves friendly and approachable. Eating together is something else worth considering. The Bible gives us a great example of this in the story of Levi who organized a dinner at his house that included several of his unbelieving friends or neighbours who then had the opportunity of meeting Jesus.² Why not consider getting some of your church friends together for a meal and extend the invitation to your neighbours?
- **Work colleagues.** Have you ever invited someone at work to have coffee or lunch with you, or go for a walk together at lunchtime? Even small gestures like this enable us to show our colleagues we value their company. It’s also a good idea to take an interest in them by asking them questions about themselves and then making sure we listen to their answers. Knowing a little about them can give us some idea as to where they are spiritually - this, in turn, will influence how we communicate the good news of Jesus Christ to them.
- **School/college/university friends.** Why not do homework together or invite them to your home for a Saturday night sleep-over. You might want to mention to them that you’ll be going to church on Sunday morning and you’d love if they came with you... Remember their birthdays; have lunch with them; compare lecture notes or problem-solve together.
- **Regular contacts - hairstylist, waiter in our favourite restaurant, parents at the school gate, etc.** Whenever we meet any of these people, we need to be intentional in making the most of every opportunity. For example, we can choose to bring the conversation round to what we did, or are planning to do, at the weekend. As church is likely to feature as part of our weekend, we could mention this to them. Might there be an event at your church to which it would be appropriate to invite them?

For all these groups, we need to make regular prayer a priority. Someone has said it’s important to talk to God about people before talking to people about God. We can pray for them in various ways, using Bible verses to help us. For example, we might pray for them by name that the Lord will soften their hearts and show them their need of him;³ that God will use us as an effective witness in their lives;⁴ that they will believe in Christ as their Saviour;⁵ that they will turn from their sin;⁶ and that they will confess Jesus as Lord.⁷ Why not turn this week into a time when you will make the most of every opportunity?

¹ Ephesians 5:16 (NIV)

² Luke 5:29

³ John 6:44

⁴ Acts 1:8

⁵ John 5:24

⁶ Acts 3:19

⁷ Romans 10:9