

## Walls Down – Connecting with our friends and community.

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Last week, I had the privilege to attend a service of celebration for the New Ministry of Nicky Bradford, a former member of our church community. At the service, Bishop Michael, who asked a question that still resonates in my mind: How serious and how committed are we in following and living out Jesus' intentions?

For those of us who support a particular team, whether football or rugby, we will go at great lengths to watch games and show our support. Some even commit large sums of money in acquiring a season ticket. Supporting a team is a serious (and at times costly) business! What about our commitment to supporting Jesus' intentions for the world?

### Read Luke 15. 1-10

Jesus was popular among the despised and the nobodies of his time. They were drawing near to hear him. This made the religious leaders angry and they murmured "this man receives sinners and eats with them"

- How instrumental has the love, welcome and hospitality of Christians been instrumental in your coming to faith (or growing in faith)?
- Thinking about creating a church space and a church culture where non-church people can "draw near and hear Jesus": What do we do well at St James and what could we do better?
- What can you do to make it better?

The two parables told by Jesus are about something being lost and found and the sense of joy and excitement resulting from it. Jesus tells that the whole of heaven rejoices when "a lost soul turns to God." To connect with our friends and neighbours we need to realise that we live in a post-Christian society with nearly everyone below the age of 50 raised outside the church. The majority has not heard the gospel in any form, which makes sense to them and people outside have little understanding of what the church is for. Our main task is to remind our friends that God's intentions and good purposes towards his creation includes them. We are to be God's messengers once again, telling and living the story of God's incredible goodness and faithfulness towards us.



- Do you find it easy to share your story of faith with others? Why?
- How can you grow in confidence?
- What can the church do to facilitate faith conversation and people coming to faith?

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Our second reading speaks about hearing, seeing and touching (read 1 John 1. 1-4)

Think about:

- a. The promises and special words you have learned or heard from God recently. (Hearing)
- b. How you have seen God at work in the last month? (Seeing)
- c. The “tangible” experiences of God in your life? (Touching)

Now, if you had 3 minutes to share the above what would you say?

Prayer

Think about a few friends, colleagues or neighbours and ask God for an opportunity to share something of your faith in the coming future.

Holy Spirit come, fill our hearts and minds with the desires and plans of Jesus our Lord and Saviour.