

# Understanding your *oikos*

## session handout

### Pictures of evangelism

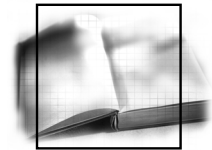
Talk together in small groups about your experience of sharing the Christian faith:



- *In organized 'missions' and events.*
- *In informal friendships and contacts.*
- *Has this faith sharing been a positive or negative experience for you and those you have talked with?*
- *Has it been effective in terms of seeing people come to faith?*
- *If so – why? If not – why not?*

### *Oikos* in the New Testament

In the New Testament, much of the evangelism is based on the *oikos* – a network of existing relationships.



#### **Mark 1.14-18**

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.' As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea – for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

#### **Mark 1.29-30**

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once.

#### **Mark 2.13-17**

Jesus went out again beside the sea; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him. And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples – for there were many who followed him. When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' When Jesus heard this, he said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.'

## Mark 5.19-20

But Jesus refused and said to him, 'Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you.' And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

## Mark 6.8-10

He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place.'

## Discover your oikos

Find a pen and paper.

- Write your name in the centre.
- Above your name write the names of your extended family with whom you are in meaningful contact: spouse; children; parents; uncles; cousins; grandchildren, etc.
- Below your name write the names of your neighbours and people in your community you know well.
- To the right of your name write the names of your work colleagues or people you know through work.
- To the left of your name write the names of your friends and people you know through hobbies, sports, etc.



Do two more things:

- Put a \* by everyone who is already a Christian.
- Underline the people with whom you spend at least 30 minutes a week in face-to-face contact or conversation (the 30 minutes doesn't have to be all at the same time).

For the purpose of this course, the people whose names you have underlined are your oikos.

Now compare notes with the people sitting either side of you.

As a whole group answer three further questions:

- As a group we have an oikos of \_\_\_ people.
- As a church we have an oikos of \_\_\_ people.
- To draw these people to Christ we need to \_\_\_\_\_.

## Putting it into practice

Before the next group meeting write out a neater copy of your oikos on the supplementary handout provided.



Pray once for every member of your oikos. Listen to anything God says to you about them.

## Bible reading

Spot the oikos principle at work.

Acts 10.1-48      Acts 16.11-15      Acts 16.22-34      Acts 17.1-9  
Acts 18.1-11      Acts 28.1-11      Acts 28.30-31