

# Ordinary evangelists - discussion guide

based on **Acts 8.1-40** (Linked to sermon of 4/6/16)

which can be accessed at [www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series](http://www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series)

*This was the first part of our 'The church: God's mission agency to the world' series.*

Intro: Do you see yourself as a missionary? Why / why not?

## Read Acts 8.1-4

After Stephen became the first Christian martyr (7.59-60), persecution broke out against the Christians, who were scattered.

Be honest: what do you think would have been your response in that situation? Why do you think the Christians kept on sharing the good news about Jesus wherever they were scattered to? (see also 4.20) What gave them the courage to do so?

Dan suggested that even when we find ourselves in difficult situations we didn't want or plan to be in, God has put us there for a reason. Do you agree / disagree? Why? How can we make the most of those opportunities?

## Read Acts 8.5-13, 26-40

Dan drew out a number of points about evangelism from this chapter:

- Don't dismiss those we think are from the 'wrong kind' of background [such as the Samaritans would have been to Philip]
- Be willing to pray for people [as Philip prayed for the Samaritans]
- Have courage to follow God's promptings – however strange they seem [as Philip left the fruitful preaching opportunity in Samaria to go to the desert road]
- Look out for 'spiritual seekers' – those whom God is preparing [such as the Ethiopian treasury official]
- Don't underestimate the power of questions [v 30]
- Don't underestimate the power of Scripture [v 32-35]
- Don't forget to move people towards a decision about Jesus [v 36-38]

Pick 2 or 3 of these and discuss them together (eg share examples from your own lives, work out how you could do them better etc).

**Up:** The Ethiopian was reading from Isaiah 53, which points forward to Jesus. Read that whole chapter, and spend time praising Jesus for the sacrifice he made for us.

**In:** What can you do as a group to help each other be 'ordinary evangelists' – to have the passion and boldness to share the good news about Jesus wherever God has put you?

**Out:** Who has God put you amongst? How can you be good news in those places?

## Pray:

- pray for Christians facing persecution today, especially in Egypt [<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/28/coptic-christians-accuse-egypt-government>]
- pray for opportunities to speak for Jesus this week, and boldness to do so
- pray for particular friends/colleagues/family members to come to know Jesus – and for God to help you see the spiritual seekers around you