



Developing our Church Vision – part 1

(September 2016)

We're passionate about seeing God's Kingdom come in Shirley, throughout Southampton, and further afield.

As God's Kingdom comes, his peace, love, hope, forgiveness, freedom, healing, justice, reconciliation and truth will transform individual lives, families, organisations and other structures of society. Our community and our nation desperately need such transformation to happen.

God is still calling us to turn our church community inside out. That is, to organise and equip ourselves to join in with God's mission in his world, so that we're better placed to bring the transforming power of God's kingdom life to the 90-95% of our local population who probably haven't experienced the love, forgiveness and freedom that comes from knowing Jesus as saviour, friend and Lord.



As we seek to push further in mission, **we must first deepen our relationship with God**, because he is the one whose love compels us (2 Cor 5.14), whose Spirit equips and emboldens us (Acts 4.29-31) and whose promise sustains us (Mt 28.18-20).

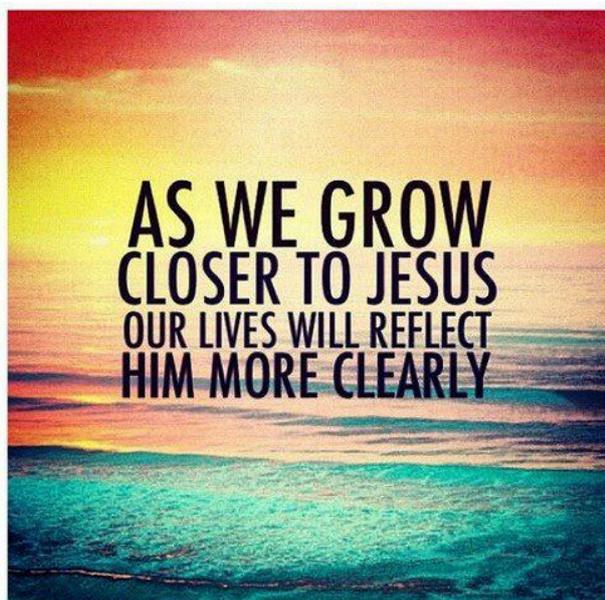
Each of us has responsibility for developing our own relationship with God, for daily calling out to him as our Father in heaven. Our relationship with God can also be deepened as we meet together in corporate worship.

We have a sense that God is giving us a shake at the moment, calling us to wake up from a spiritual slumber (Eph 5.14) and to step out in faith (Heb 11).

Up: Developing our relationship with God

Over the next few years, we'd love the following things to be happening, by God's grace:

- More of us will be **reading our Bibles regularly**, expecting to hear God's words of encouragement, comfort, rebuke and correction (2 Tim 3.17) as we do so
- We will have a **deepening prayer life**, individually and corporately, becoming better at listening to our Father's voice (Jn 10.14-16) as well as speaking to him
- More of us will be **stepping out in faith** (Heb 11), going outside of our comfort zones – whether through praying bigger, bolder prayers, or through actively doing new things at home, work or church
- More of us will feel able to **engage deeply with God at our Sunday services**, allowing us to express our heartfelt praise and worship, expectant that God will increase our understanding and devotion for him as we do so
- Our worship services will regularly see **words of knowledge** and other more spontaneous gifts of the Spirit being used, alongside the gift of teaching
- Through occasional teaching (eg by workshop or seminar), we will be better at **helping Christians think through particular issues they face** (eg parenting, illness, retirement) as disciples of Christ



How is God calling you to develop your relationship with him?