

reproducing your fresh expression of church



essential
fresh
expressions

Four reasons

First, God wants believers (where possible) to be missional through the week within Christian communities, not on their own - see the three-minute guide, *five reasons to start a fresh expression of church*.

If that's true for those who begin a fresh expression, it must also be true for people who find faith through one. They too must learn to be and do mission in community. Starting another fresh expression can help them with this.

Secondly, throughout history the church has spread by reproducing. In Acts new believers led the way. Jews from Cyprus and Cyrene came to Jerusalem, discovered Jesus, were forced to leave because of persecution and travelled to Antioch, where they started a church (Acts 2.10: 11.20). If recent converts founded Christian communities then, why not today?

Thirdly, multiplying is the best way for fresh expressions to grow. Often communities expand quickly, then plateau. You can avoid this levelling off by starting a further community.

A church worker formed a Christian community in her front room with people on a council estate. Space became tight. But instead

of starting a second group in another home, they moved to a nearby school. Big mistake! Many on the estate had hated school. Though new families from the school came, the originals drifted away. Multiplying small groups might have been better than trying to grow a large one.

Fourthly, reproducing is more important than creating a durable fresh expression. Some fresh expressions may last a long time, others for a season. The Holy Spirit can be in both.

The Jerusalem church existed for a relatively short period - till AD 70, when the city was destroyed. But it was highly fruitful. Scores of Jews had visited Jerusalem, heard about Jesus, went home and started church - as far away as Rome. Fruitfulness is more important than sustainability.

fresh
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Three-minute Guide



Three principles

Encourage the right expectation

As individuals come to faith, help them see that multiplying expressions of church is part of the Christian life.

For example, when you explain what it means to be a Christian, why not say that it may involve finding one or more Christians, together loving and serving the people nearby, creating community with those being served, sharing Jesus as appropriate, and seeing what the Spirit does - 'just as we have done with you'. Enquirers will enter the faith with that possibility in mind.

Keep things simple

As you introduce people to Jesus, prayerfully use approaches they can easily copy. Show DVDs they can share with their contacts. Use forms of 'discovery' Bible study they can easily adapt, perhaps based on these questions:

- what would this story look like if it happened today?
- what does it mean to you?
- how could it make a difference to your life?

Find ways of praying that emerging Christians could show their friends. The same applies to worship. People are shy about singing? Why not listen to Christian songs?

Mentor new believers

Invite them to take you into their world and explore how the three-minute guide, *How to start a fresh expression of church*, might work for them.

Two examples

example

Parents and carers in Cambridge came to faith through Thirst, a discussion group for people who were dropping off their children at school.

They enthused about what they were experiencing and wanted to invite their friends. But their friends were at work. So they started 'Thirst Too' on Saturday afternoons for the people they knew.

freshexpressions.org.uk/stories/thirsttoo

example

Sorted began among eleven to fourteen-year-olds. As the group got older they asked their leaders, 'why don't we do with the next generation what you did with us?' And they did!

freshexpressions.org.uk/stories/sorted/aug13

One conclusion

Do it again! It will grow your faith.