

Active Compassion: A Pattern to Follow . . .

Acts 13, 14

Introduction: Last week we began to discuss our vision for Faith EFC over the next three to five years. In terms of helping people come to faith in Christ, we believe that all of us have a part to play and that having hearts of compassion for those who are far from God is the starting point. Out of compassion, we want people to come to faith in Christ and experience God in all of their lives. Today, we are going to talk about another key component in this process of leading others to faith in Christ: intentionality.

In·ten·tion \ in-'ten(t)-shən\ (14c) 1 : a determination to act in a certain way : RESOLVE; 2 : IMPORT, SIGNIFICANCE; 3 a : what one intends to do or bring about . . .

Opening Discussion: What kinds of things in your life are you intentional about?

Read Acts 13:1-3

1. What takes place while the church is gathered in prayer?
2. What did the church send Barnabas and Saul to do?
3. Quickly skim Acts 13 – 14. What generally takes place in these chapters?

Read Acts 14:26-28

4. What did Barnabas and Paul do upon returning to Antioch?
5. The text says that Barnabas and Paul “spent a long time with the disciples.” How might the church in Antioch have been encouraged and strengthened by the time Barnabas and Paul spent with them?

Speaking of our missionaries, Steve said:

We send them . . . primarily to develop relationships with people who need to know God. Our missionaries do a lot of other things, but this is the main thing. They intentionally develop relationships, live out the life they have in Christ, and explain to people what they are seeing. Most often they do this in community, not in isolation from others. Since this is the very thing we want to do here in Manhattan, it only makes sense that we would learn from them and pattern ourselves after their intentionality. We've often said that we want to have the same type of impact here at home that they have in other cultures.

6. What do you think of this idea of patterning our lives after the missionaries we have sent?

Note: After introducing the idea of patterning our lives after the missionaries we have sent, Steve spent the rest of the time interviewing Lowell and Robynn Bliss who serve as church planters in northern India. The remainder of this study guide is based off of this interview.

7. Lowell said, "We all live under the Great Commission" (read Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). What is the Great Commission? What does it mean that we ALL live under it?
8. Living in a foreign land is often a reminder to missionaries that they have a purpose for being there. Are we any different in terms of having a purpose? Why or why not?
9. Lowell and Robynn shared that in their work in India they have to be intentional about befriending unbelievers. Is it part of your lifestyle to intentionally seek to develop friendships with unbelievers? Why or why not?
10. What changes would you have to make in your life (or your family) to intentionally develop friendships with unbelievers?
11. Why do you think intentionality is such a key component to leading others to faith in Christ?
12. What are some ideas that you have about how you can intentionally develop friendships with unbelievers?