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# COMMUNICATION

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## Discovering communication in scripture

As Christian communicators we base the gospel message on God's written word; the Bible. We can also base our standards of communication on the Bible.

## THE WORD OF GOD

In New Testament Greek the word most commonly used for "word" is λογος (logos) It is the general term used to mean that which is said or spoken, but it is also the word used to describe the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in John's gospel, chapter 1. In fact its primary meaning is "the word by which the inward thought is expressed". So Jesus is the Word by which God's thoughts are expressed - through Him God communicates.

In John 1 vs 18 we see that The Word became flesh. The incarnation is God's communication with us – he didn't just speak to us – at incredible cost he became one of us so that we may experience Him.

## FAR MORE THAN WORDS

We cannot use the word communication to mean simply talking or preaching. Communication is not primarily to do with words themselves as we understand them. From an understanding of what the Bible means by "word" we can see that it involves thoughts and ideas. Words are only the means we use to put across those ideas. We need to beware of thinking we have communicated when all we have done is said something in words that we understand. The vital question is "Did the other person understand?". So: communication is: "Getting the idea across"

## COMMUNICATION

We can also look to the Bible for guidance as to what communication is. Far from being simply the dissemination of facts, we will find that there is a yet deeper and more fundamental principle underlying a Biblical view of communication.

## COMMUNIS - TO HAVE IN COMMON

The root of the English word "Communication" is the same as for the word "Communion". The basic idea is that of sharing together. This communion is a fundamental principle of creation - even God himself is in communion in creation, as we see in the first chapter of Genesis.

*Then God said "Let **us** make man in **our** image, in **our** likeness, and let them rule over the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. (Genesis Ch 1 vs 26 :**Bold mine**)*

## GOD IN COMMUNION

Here we can see a plurality, within which there is fellowship and communion, both in word and in action. From Genesis to Revelation we see God as trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit - three persons, yet one God) in communion.

## GOD'S PLAN FOR MAN

We can also see that communion is God's plan for man. This is part of man's likeness to God. God wants fellowship and communion with man - He gets involved with us and demands a response in return. God also wants man to live in communion with his fellow man. That is why Eve was given to Adam. Communication or communion then is not just incidental to the task of the Church; it is an outworking of one of the central patterns of creation as designed by God.

## BROKEN COMMUNICATION

The reason we need study this is that although communication is a key part of creation, it is also that part which was destroyed by the fall. In the fall communication in its original fullness was disrupted. The rift caused by the fall separated man from God, and man from man. This is vividly illustrated in the account of the tower of Babel.

## RESTORED COMMUNICATION

Just as communication was disrupted in the fall of man, so now restored communication is a part of the kingdom of God. By dying on the cross Jesus has made it possible for us to have fellowship with God and with each other. This communication is to be seen within the church, and also as the church proclaims its message of redemption to the world. For example we have it in Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17 vs. 22&23

*I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

Jesus also speaks of the communion, or communication, within the Godhead as it was first revealed in creation:

*"I and the Father are one" (John Ch 10 vs. 30)*

So: communication is

*"The act of making things common" (κοινε – koine)*

## COMMUNICATION AND CHANGE

Communication always results in a change in the recipient. It is not about what is said or done, but about what becomes shared. The communicator and the recipient now have something in common - they share in the outworking of the thought or idea which was expressed.

## POWER TO CHANGE

There is another element necessary in the communication of the gospel. For the word of God to truly affect the life of the listener it must be accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is not enough that he believes what he hears simply in the sense of recognising that it is true. We see that in the letter of James where he writes:

*You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that -- and shudder. (James Ch 2 vs 19)*

Our attempts to communicate need always to be accompanied by prayer that God's Spirit will apply what we say to the hearts of men and bring change in their lives. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit can change occur, and communication be complete.

- **Dependance** on and **Direction & Empowering** by the Holy Spirit

## A DEFINITION OF COMMUNICATION

If we take these biblical principles we can then come up with a definition of communication which might go something like this:

*Communication is the process of sharing thoughts, ideas or values in such a way as to have an effect on the recipient's life.*

- Communication is idea and thought centred, not word centred.
- Communication is built on fellowship and relationship.
- Communication involves change.
- Communication is a process.

## COMMUNICATION AND THE COMMUNICATOR

Because to communicate, is not merely to speak, or to write, this will affect us, the communicators. Much more is involved than simply speaking or writing. In fact involvement becomes the key word. We have seen this already in considering Jesus as our model. The communicator must be active and involved in the communication process. He or she must have their concern focused on the receiver or listener. The degree to which we are successful in communicating depends largely on how much we give ourselves to the task.

### **An attitude that helps:**

*Failure to communicate is always the fault of the communicator.*