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Oh, thank you for the privilege of sharing with you. And we have plenty to get through so I am just going to dive straight in. We will look first of all discipleship and then a look at some aspects of training and developing young people. So, first of all, we are going to look at discipleship.

A disciple is someone who is personally devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 11:28.

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

You see, the emphasis immediately, the personal emphasis.

Leon Morris commenting on Matthew 28, go and make disciples of all nations says, “In the first century a disciple did not enroll which such and such a school, but with such and such a teacher. Jesus isn’t giving a command that will merely secure nominal adherence to a group, but one that will secure a whole hearted commitment to a person. The life of a disciple is different because of his attachment to Jesus.”

So discipleship is, first and foremost, personal devotion to Jesus.

In a recent review of Roger Steers biography of the highly respected Anglican John Stott who has just gone to be with the Lord we read, “The overwhelming impression is that the consuming passion of John Stott is the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing else can explain his dedication and prodigious labors. He is what he professes. He wants to please God and that is all he cares about, doing God’s will, living for his glory and being faithful.”

I think most of us would love that to be said of us at the end of our pilgrimage as said at the end of John who, just as I say, has just gone to be with the Lord, a personal devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. And that goes to the heart of biblical discipleship, a consuming passion for the Lord Jesus, a passion to do his will, to live for his glory, to be faithful with dedication and prodigious labors.

We might well ask: Is that how I see my discipleship concerning the Lord Jesus Christ? To say with Count Zinzendorf, "I have one passion. It is he. It is he alone, one passion, the Lord Jesus Christ, that in all things he may have the preeminence, the first place."

Then a disciple is a learner. Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Matthew 11:29.

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

The word to learn, learn from me, comes from the same source as disciple. So Jesus is saying, "Be disciplined by me. Learn through my instruction."

To be a committed disciple of Jesus is to commit yourself to a serious process of learning.

Someone once said to a great scholar that a certain young man claimed he had been one of his students. The scholar replied devastatingly, "He may have attended my lectures. He was never one of my students."

Clearly it is all too possible, then, to attend church with a Christian profession, but without being one of Christ's students, without being a true disciple.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day laid a heavy burden of religious Legalism upon the people which they were unable to bear. The people felt weighed down. But Jesus says:

"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

So Jesus isn't calling people to lives of careless ease, but he is... learning from Jesus is no difficult, unpleasant and burdensome affair, not at all. Rather, it is a privilege. It is a delight to those who truly love him. Jesus has lifted our weight of sin. He has lifted our burden of guilt. He has freed us from a condemning conscience. He has liberated us from an empty meaningless life. He has filled us with hope and purpose and joy in believing. Wonderful to be a true Christian and disciple of Jesus.

For many years at [?] where I was minister we had the joy of seeing people saved from right out of the world with no Christian background at all. To them everything, then, was new. It was fresh. It was a revelation, really, which took their breath away, an invigorating spiritual adventure. Many had an appetite to discover the unknown treasures of the Bible, to read books which were full of God, full of the knowledge of God, to listen to and to devour preaching, to praise the God who had become real, to wrestle, yes,

and to weep with him for the conversion of their loved ones. The appetite for all of this was almost insatiable. Why? Because their experience of Christ was fresh and real.

The Scottish preacher Eric Alexander has said, “The difference between Christians is not attainment, but appetite.”

C. S. Lewis warned, “Our danger is not that we ask too much from God, but the opposite.” He says we are too easily pleased, too easily satisfied. We don’t ask enough, we don’t expect enough from him. Our appetite is too small.

Many of the converts that we saw were people with very limited education, but when regenerated by the Spirit of God were given a new confidence, a new hunger to read and to learn. For example, I found to my amazement one of the young women with, yes, limited education. Her job was to help with school meals. But she progressed in her reading to such authors as John Calvin, John Owen and Jonathan Edwards within a year or so of being converted. I could believe it.

So I said to her, “Do you understand what you re reading?”

“No, not everything,” she said. “But I feel that these men knew God.”

See, the passion was not just for theoretical or cerebral knowledge. They wanted knowledge of God at a deeper level, spiritual reality. And they felt that these men were men who knew God at that level and could feed their souls.

So, then, isn’t that true discipleship? Yes. The difference between Christians isn’t attainment. It is appetite.

For three years Jesus personally taught. He disciplined the 12 apostles and also sent them out in pairs for practical experience. For example, in John 13 Jesus is teaching by example.

“Now that I your Lord and teacher have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.”

Fundamental to discipleship is a passion to learn, to grow, to mature in understanding and in relationship with Jesus.

Quoting Leon Morris again. “Jesus’ disciples are people for whom a life has been given in ransom and who have committed to the service of the master who not only took time to teach his disciples, but who died for them and rose again. Those who are disciples of such a leader are committed people.”

And, of course, these are the kind of disciples that Jesus looked for. And a disciple is not simply one has been taught, but one who continues to learn through to the end of our lives.

The church is a great place, then, isn't it, to learn from the experience, the example of more mature Christians so that you follow them as they follow Christ. That is a biblical pattern, isn't it? And, of course, Christ likeness is always the ultimate goal of all true discipleship. Christ like holiness, that is the goal for everyone of us.

Can I ask, then? Do you have a healthy appetite? May God increase that appetite. This is one situation where greed wouldn't be a bad thing, greed for more of God. A disciple is a learner.

Then a disciple is a disciplined learner. There is clearly a close relationship between discipleship and discipline. It is universally agreed that self discipline is critical in spiritual development. [?] tells of a test given in the 1960s to four year olds at a preschool on the Stanford University campus in America involving primarily children of faculty members, so probably pretty intelligent kids. The children were given a marshmallow, but told not to eat it for 15 to 20 minutes. These are four year olds. As a reward they would be given another one if they waited for the 20 minutes. They were then watched unaware. Some pounded their heads to muster resistance. Others did everything possible to distract themselves. Some just gobbled it up and didn't give it a moment's thought. Some patiently waited.

Thirty years later the same children, 34 years of age were studied, now as adults. The incredible results showed a dramatic difference in the ones who had the discipline to wait and the ones who just swallowed their marshmallow with no will power. The difference surfaced in virtually every area of their lives and their performance. Their adult life, what they achieved life with discipline in adult life was reflected in the way they dealt with marshmallows when they were four.

How strong willed are you resisting marshmallows? It might tell you more about your spiritual life than you realize.

Those who establish a pattern of self discipline, of disciplined learning and devotional life soon after they become Christians are likely to maintain this throughout their Christian life. This is a real challenge for young people. The discipline you put into your spiritual life and for recent converts, a real challenge.

It was said of George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, "The secret of George Fox's life is easily told. He was completely master of himself because completely a servant of God."

His secret was self discipline, self mastery. But God masters man. Sorry, God mastered man [?] to Jesus.

Matthew 11.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me."

A yoke is a wooden frame fastened across the shoulders to join two oxen or horses so that they share the strain of pulling a plow or some other farm instrument. I remember the yoke on my dad's farm. Its size, its weight ensured the two animals were inseparably harnessed together.

When yoked together the oxen walk side by side. They took the strain together though one was often stronger and more experienced. It was still a very real partnership yoked together. And, by the way, farmers train sheep dogs, sometimes, they tie a young dog to an older experienced dog to provide discipline and learning for the younger dog.

The disciple of Jesus is yoked to Jesus. See, he is to walk in step with him. And Jesus, of course, is the stronger and the wiser. He carries the heavier strain. There is a very real discipline in walking in step with a more experienced oxen or horse and, of course, there is with Jesus. It takes discipline for consistent devotional life day by day. It takes discipline to make time to learn and read and pray. It takes discipline to be a godly husband, a godly wife, a godly parent. It takes discipline to listen to preaching with the serious intention of applying God's Word to your life. It takes discipline to be a living, active member of the body of Christ with a consistent commitment to church life. It takes discipline to give biblically and sacrificially for the work of Christ. It takes discipline to discharge consistent responsibility in serving in the church. It takes discipline to live a consistent, godly life before unbelievers out in the world. It is a real challenge. Am I a disciplined learner who is still teachable, still eagerly learning, still enthusiastically yoked to Jesus? Am I? Are you? A disciple is a disciplined learner.

And then a disciple of Jesus is a learner of heart knowledge as well as heads knowledge. Paul longed the I may know him, not just know about him, but know him. So much in the New Testament and, indeed the whole of the Bible, is a personal relationship. That is what Christianity is. It is not a religion. It is not a set of beliefs. It is a relationship with the living God.

I have longed been convinced that this is the area, this area of experiential knowledge of God where we are weakest today, where we differ most with our forefathers of previous generations.

Some of you may come across a book by Paul Cook called *Fire from Heaven: Times of Extraordinary Revival*. It is really an account of the great Methodist movement after the Wesley Whitefield era from about 1790 to 1840. That is where the real growth came. But the significant growth that impacted the country didn't come during the life of Wesley and Whitefield. It came after that, on the back of that and 1790 to 1840. That is when the Methodist churches all over the country, that is when most of them were planted. That is when Methodism is really strong, one and a half million people converted, brought into the free churches during those years.

Paul Cook says this concerning the Methodists. "They knew a quality of spiritual life to which most of us are strangers, a depth of spiritual experience, a joy in God, an ardent

love for Christ, a thirst for holiness, a compassion for the lost and an uninhibited zeal for God.” That is what characterized them.

For as much contemporary Christianity in our sort of churches is formal, is cerebral in the mind primarily, perhaps even a little bit clinical and lacking in spiritual vibrancy, freshness and experiential reality.

Quoting Paul Cook again. “Our reformed theology is too much in our heads and too little in our hearts. Our present weakness has more to do with our lack of spirituality than our lack of ability.”

I wonder if you agree with that, accepting that our impact on the world around us is pretty weak. Won’t you agree with that? Our present weakness has more to do with our lack of spirituality, our knowledge of God than our lack of ability.

He says concerning the Methodists, “Expecting God to visit them and deal personally and directly with their souls, they held the view that spiritual soundness within a gospel church is not just dependent upon a faithful ministry of the Word, but also requires direct operations of the Spirit of God upon the souls of man.”

I was struck recently in our own church by this prayer at our prayer meeting. One of our men prayed this.

“I have never forgotten, Lord, the day you came to me and I have never been the same since. I have never forgotten the day you came to me and I have never been the same since.”

As he prayed movingly from his heart, his memory of his conversion wasn’t just of believing the gospel, it wasn’t just of trusting Jesus, but of Jesus coming to him in the personal experience.

How many today are speaking of their conversion in these kind of terms? Our forefathers were.

A few weeks ago the same man prayed.

“Remember a Sunday morning when you were so real we were afraid to open our eyes. We thought we might see you.”

It was a very special Sunday morning service. It was a wonderful experience of the Lord’s immediate presence among us and a number of people have had that same experience. It left a mark on people. They remembered it years later.

Now, friends, my point is not that we can manufacture this kind of experience or that we should try to do that, but my point is this. This experiential element, this personal experiential [?] seems to be seldom mentioned, talked about today in our circles. Aren’t

we in danger of missing something of vital importance which goes to the very heart of New Testament Christianity?

Yes, of course we walk by faith and not by sight. But the spiritual, experiential vision... Remember Hebrews 11. Moses persevered. Why? Because he saw he who is invisible. He had experience of the one he couldn't actually see and yet he saw him with the mind of the Spirit as it were.

Jesus said, John 14, "I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. Before long the world won't see you anymore, but you will see me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father and I, too, will love him and show myself to him, manifest myself, show myself to him. If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him."

Now this is Jesus teaching. As with Moses, isn't Jesus saying to his disciples, "You, too, will persevere because you, too, will see me. You will see me who is invisible when you have gone back to glory, but you will still have personal dealings with me"?

I will give you head knowledge as well as... I am sorry, I will give you heart knowledge as well as head knowledge. You will know me personally. You will know me experientially by the power of the Holy Spirit even though I will be back in glory.

Simon [?], you may have heard of him, is a young evangelist working in the dangerous war torn Burundi in Central Africa. His life has been in danger a number of times, working very, very extreme conditions. He wrote in his diary, "God has blessed me with times of unbelievable intimacy where I have wept with love for him, joy in him, desperation for family and friends who are currently rejecting him. How can they miss out on this? It is so real, so big, so important."

He writes of times of unbelievable intimacy. Isn't that what Jesus was promising to all of his disciples in John 14 and, of course, to the Laodiceans in Revelation 3:21, supping with him and him with us?

You see, keeping the heart experientially warm, spiritually vibrant and in love with a known, a felt Christ, is challenging.

Henry Fish, the American theologian said, "It takes much less vigilance to maintain a sound creed than a sound heart."

It does take vigilance and perseverance to keep the heart warm, to cultivate experiential knowledge of Christ. But, friends, it is one of our greatest needs, one of our greatest lacks. It almost... all our emphasis today is on maintaining a sound creed, isn't it? Friends, I hope all of us would agree that faithfulness to Scripture is absolutely fundamental to our discipleship. I am taking this as read today. I am assuming this in a congregation like this.

But have we overreacted to what we may consider Pentecostal, charismatic excesses, overreacted? The swing of the pendulum too far. Are we becomes suspicious of almost any experiential dealings with God, any experience of the Holy Spirit, how much mention is there of the Holy Spirit? How much teach is there on the Holy Spirit? Are we, perhaps, unconsciously settling for a safe, cerebral, almost theoretical Christianity which can be arid and dry spiritually and unattractive and largely powerless? Of course we are zealous to maintain a sound creed, to get our doctrine right, to handle the Scriptures properly. Of course that is right. But as Paul cook argues, "Doctrine has to be experienced before it really takes hold of men and women." And, boy, that sure changes our lives. It has got to move from there to there and, as someone has said, the longest journey in the world is from there to there.

Let me put it this way. I can't help feeling at times that there is a danger of us losing the reality of a living God.

I was converted out of the world. The thing that hit me when I was converted was the reality of God. He became so real. That is the experience that I had the privilege of having in the church, of seeing hundreds of people not just converted, making a hands up profession of faith, brought up in a Christian home, but people out of the world with no Christian background coming to faith in Christ and it is the reality of Christ, the reality of God that has changed our lives. You can never be too biblical. You can never been to Bible based.

So there is a sense in which you can almost replace God with the Bible. You see, in the end, the Bible is given to us as revelation of God that through the Bible and through the truth of God and Jesus revealed in the Bible we come to know God. But God and the Bible is not the same thing. When you get to heaven you will not be going around reading the Bible, because you will be like him. You shall see him as he is. The goal of Christianity is not the Bible. The goal of Christianity is the living God. And there is a difference, friends. And the danger is that we... I mentioned to Paul last night, one of the Puritans used the phrase, the frozen knowledge of God. We have the Bible, but the Bible has got to bring us to God, to experience God through the Scriptures by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is not just frozen knowledge in our heads. It has got to become reality in our hearts. God is the goal and the Bible leads us. The Bible is a sign post. It points us to Christ. Indeed, in the Bible we encounter God. Of course we do, by the power of the Holy Spirit. But we have got to encounter a living God. And the danger today is that we are losing that sense of a living God.

And you can run a church in a sense at a cerebral level without stepping out in faith and trusting and living God, as we say, out of our comfort zone. [?] as Abraham did not knowing where the Lord was ultimately going to take him, but going out trusting God, a living God, stepping out on the promises of the Bible, trusting him.

Do we know anything of that today if the money isn't in the bank? Are you able to step out and trust him? Do we think in those terms? Oh, these are real questions in our own

heart, our own lives. Are we dealing with a living God who handles us, whose Holy Spirit is within us and deals with us?

I raise the question. A disciple is a learner of heart knowledge, not just of head knowledge. And then a disciple is a follower, a follower of a personal unknown Jesus Christ. There is surely a vital connection between our experiential knowledge of God and our following as his disciples.

Daniel 11:32. The people know their God shall be strong and carry out exploits if we know God.

Moses persevered because he saw him who is invisible. Are we persevering? Are we carrying out great exploits? People who know their God will do that.

Recently there has been a disconnect, I believe, between our strong belief in the great reformed doctrines, the doctrines of grace and the absolute sovereign rule of God. We make much, and rightly so, because the Bible does, of God's absolute sovereign role, rule over the whole affair of the creation, the universe and of our lives. He is sovereign in conversion. He is sovereign in keeping us, in persevering. God is sovereign over all. We make much of his almighty power and providential sovereign control of all things.

Many of our forefathers who held that great doctrine, the heart of the Bible, biblical theology were then able to trust such a great God. If he is so great, if he is so powerful, if he is so much in control, surely a great God like that can be trusted and we can venture and step out in faith with such a God.

Friends, in recent years there has been a disconnect between our strong belief in God's absolute rule and sovereignty and our timid, unadventurous faith, because that has been the nature of our churches in recent years, hasn't it? We are basically timid and unadventurous.

And Paul Cook argues that the reason is that doctrine has to be experienced before it really takes hold of men and women and affects our lives and affects our churches. Our doctrine hasn't taken hold of us as it should. This is why in practice, even the ... you are right, the old Arminian Methodists gave a far greater emphasis upon the sovereignty of God than is evident in our modern churches. They have experienced their doctrine. They have experienced God's sovereignty and they are able to step out and trust him.

There are so many of our reformed fathers, forefathers, God's sovereignty was their motivation of expectancy and success in the gospel and launched them out, launched them into bold, passionate, believing prayer. I will repeat that: Bold, passionate, believing prayer came from their belief that knowledge of God. Their doctrine drove them to that, into evangelistic zeal, real heart compassion for those who are lost and going to hell. They were moved, they were arrested, they were gripped by what the Bible revealed. [?] the lost. They felt the doctrine. They were able to engage confidently and fearlessly with the culture of their day. They weren't afraid of their culture. They were

able to engage with it. It launched them into world wide missionary endeavor, William Carey and all the rest of it.

Friend, it is surely troubling that by and large the rediscovery of reformed theology in our day hasn't produced this kind of confident faith in God. But it hasn't, has it? Generally speaking we are so cautious, we are so hesitant, we are so timid in what we attempt for God. We show little confidence in God himself, little confidence in evangelism, little confidence in gospel preaching, little confidence in reaching younger people and, indeed, older people as well, little confidence in engaging with our post Christian culture. The certainty of Christ's sovereign victory should envision us with bold confidence in God. And there is a disconnect. There is something seriously wrong. It is the people who know their God, who experience their doctrine that will be strong and carry out great exploits. Doctrine has to be experienced before it really takes hold of men and women.

Are we carrying out great exploits? But, secondly, are we persevering particularly in prayer?

If there is one particular area where we reformed Christians now have lost confidence in God, it is surely in this vital area of prayer. Lack of prayer is the most obvious area of weakness in most of our churches. I think a leaflet was handed out on Sunday which is... probably most of you read that. Yes, that is right, which was written in the *Evangelical Times*. There [?] professor Don Carson saying, "We have forgotten how to pray." [?] we have stopped praying. Roger [?], I don't know if I mentioned him there. He says at Keswick convention a few years ago the numbers that turned up at the prayer meetings, particularly the early morning prayer meetings at Keswick were huge. But now just a handful. Churches have lost confidence in prayer, not confidence in calling upon God.

I asked a church leader recently, "Have you wrestled with God over some problem in the church?"

"Wrestled with God," he said, "You mean you have had a pillow fight with him?"

A rather picturesque way of putting it.

No serious wrestling with God. I asked another about giving some time in their prayer meetings for just calling upon God.

"Our people wouldn't know what to do," he said.

We can pray for the sick, we can pray for the unemployed. We can pray for the elderly, but calling upon God? Our people wouldn't know what to do with that.

The reformed churches, like this.

I was speaking to another church leader about persevering in prayer. He said, "If they don't get answers in a couple of weeks, they just give up."

Isn't this our greatest weakness by far, a lack of prayer in our churches, real, serious calling upon God, wrestling with God?

Jesus doesn't seem to have given his disciples much teaching about preaching, but he gave them a great deal of teaching about prayer.

"Lord, teach us to pray."

And he did. Persevering prayer, the friend at midnight, the importunate widow.

Friend, will we be bold, expectant and persevering as prayer as we desperately need to be without seeing him who is invisible, without experiential knowledge, without times of unbelievable intimacy?

Fundamental to true biblical discipleship is the recovery of believing, expectant, passionate, persevering, wrestling prayer. If ever we needed to be calling upon God, surely it is now. Just look at the state of our country. Just look at the multitudes around us who know little or nothing of the gospel. Is it one child in 100 in Britain basically knows the gospel? We touch about 10 percent of the population, I think. The vast majority in so-called ... oh Cameron did need it just before Christmas, a Christian country. He actually used that phrase, didn't he, just before Christmas. Can we really be a Christian country when 90 percent have no contact, really with Christianity at all?

If ever we needed to be calling upon God, it is now. Why aren't we? Because we are not. Why aren't we?

Huge issue. He is sovereign. Only he can revive our churches. It is his prerogative. Let us not sin against him by failing to call upon him. We can't manufacture... we can't manipulate God. We can't twist his arm off his back. We can't put him under psychological pressure. We can't say, "Now come on, God. It is your job. Look at the people going to hell. It is your job. You have got to stop..."

We can't do that with God. We can ask. Friends, we cannot force him. We cannot bludgeon him. But we can ask. And at the very least put at the very lowest level, please let us not sin against him by not even asking for God to come and move again and move in this country and bring men and women and young people to the knowledge. Let's not sin against him by not asking. In the end he has his sovereign purposes. He has his providential plans and he will do things as he chooses. He knows better than we do. Of course he does. But let us not sin against him by not asking.

Oh, Lord, come back to us again. We desperately need you. Pour out your Spirit again upon our church. Anoint the preaching of the gospel. Give reason to your leaders. Raise up a generation of godly young men and young women who are going to have an impact for God in the coming generation.

At least we can call upon him, friends. If we don't know, how bad have things got to get before we do?

And then, quickly we will finish. Are we sacrificial disciples?

Luke 14.

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”

Not literally hate. Jesus is using a comparative term, isn't he, to show how much greater our devotion to Jesus should be and to all other loving relationships.

“If anyone would come after me he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.”

This really is the most difficult part of what we are dealing with today. Jesus is here wedding discipleship to cost, to sacrifice, denying self and taking up our cross daily. Self denial and self sacrifice are inevitable for serious followers of Jesus.

Now today we almost have to justify passion and urgency and sacrifice.

Roger [?] the evangelist has said, “Hard work in the Lord's service is now perceived as unbalanced, unhelpful and even as unspiritual.” This is what he finds going around the country.

Peter [?] used to be at Saint Albans. He said, “Seriousness or earnestness is not a very obvious feature of modern evangelical life. The passion has gone out of our preaching, the fervor has gone out of our praying, the commitment has gone out of service, the enthusiasm has gone out of our evangelism and the word “sacrifice” has almost disappeared from our vocabulary.

Now, friends, this is incredibly serious. We cannot rewrite the teaching of Jesus about cost, about sacrifice. It is inevitable for true discipleship. Yet at the same time so many are under an unreasonable and extreme pressure in their secular work. The demands that are put upon people in the secular... you don't need me to tell you that. The demands are huge today and might get worse with government cuts. It could even get worse. Many are struggling to keep their head above water and to find all important time for their families and also of their basic church responsibilities. And grappling with this is absolutely fundamental to 21st century discipleship.

Now I certainly don't have conclusive answers, but let me quickly make a few suggestions before we finish this first session. First and foremost, all Christians should major on what we are as godly disciples even above what we do. What we are is the

most important. And this itself may involve active sacrifice. Being people with spiritual and moral integrity at work. Seeking to live out the fruit of the Spirit in our dealings with colleagues at work. Being godly husbands, being godly wives, godly parents is absolutely critical for genuine discipleship. For some with hugely demanding work responsibilities, especially at times of extra pressure they may have to avoid church leadership responsibility all together for a time. I think we have got to face that reality. We have to settle for minimum mid week involvement in church life, reluctantly, but they may have to do that, without being made to feel guilty either. Rather, the church should support them and pray for them during that time, perhaps, promotion, new responsibility and new demands, maybe illness in the family, whatever. We should support each other during times like that.

Surely the Lord would have Christians in positions of major influence and responsibility in the world. However, if what they are as Christians rather than what they do is to be the main thrust of their discipleship, they will have to be doubly [?] to guard their own spiritual walk with the Lord, their own quiet time, their own relationship with the Lord. That is very, very important. That must never be neglected. But we must face the fact of the pressure that some people are under. And you won't achieve anything by just filling them with guilt because they can't do everything in the church.

Secondly, this is a very bad time to change jobs, but perhaps some people should consider sacrificing a job for a less time consuming, perhaps lower pay job to release them for the Lord's work. I know there is concerning the mortgage and that kind of thing you need both to be working and all the rest of it, but maybe some couples could sacrifice and try to live on one wage or whatever. I know this may seem off the wall to you, but maybe some ought to think these terms. And all of us should give sacrificially so that those who can't give time, but can give money they have to give extra money in order to build team ministries so to facilitate the work and expand the work of God.

We had it most of the time at [?] we had a team ministry. For many years we had four ministers full time, all these families paid and we never had the money to pay them, but the Lord provided. But he did build the work and [?] we could continually be reaching out with the gospel.

Churches should make the fullest use of those who are available, perhaps especially—I will say a bit more about this later—retired people. Older folk will mean, perhaps, sacrificing a little leisure and ambition, but never mind.

And then the third suggestion: Be flexible in church life. Things like home groups, if you have them, spreading the times when they are held to try and cater of everyone. At [?] one of the good things they have done since I retired is we always church night sort of particular was Tuesday night. But there were those who could never attend on a Tuesday night. And so if they couldn't they missed out on a major chunk of church life. The home groups. We always had them on the same night. Now the home groups are spread over two or three different nights and at least one or two different times in the day. So home groups meet probably five different times of the week. They study the same passage of

Scripture if it is Bible study. It is the same. It is just not meeting at the same time. It means that everybody in the church, however busy, whatever part of the country they are working in, just about, they can all attend one of the groups. They can all be a part of the midweek devotional life, the prayer life of the church.

In many churches they can't. I have folks today they may not even working [?] a lot of people now have their office on the continent, don't they? They not only have their office in the Britain, they are on the continent. I mean, I know offices in Brussels, I think. Very involved in his church, but his office has been in Brussels.

It is a different world. And we have got to face the fact. This is the kind of pressure that people are under today. Surviving will be more flexible it means everybody, perhaps, could attend a devotional meeting during the week, get into a home group, a prayer meeting, whatever.

Be more targeted and creative as well. We are finding out one of the greatest spiritual needs of those who are very limited time, those who have very limited time need to make the very best use of that small window of time.

One of my sons-in-law is a very high flying consultant, hospital consultant. He said that time is so limited, but was I able to give an hour during the week. I want that hour to be well used for the Lord. Finding out where people are, finding out what is most helpful for them in those spiritual needs. And in terms of sabbaticals [?] pastored those who carry responsibility in the church. Try to have a policy offering them sabbaticals when they come under extra, extra pressure, secular pressure. If we don't, then willing people will just break down.

You and young Christians will be afraid to accept positions of responsibility or fear that once they do they will be trapped with no way out. And these, in other words, be flexible in church life. Support each other. Be aware of those who are under pressure and help them out. Don't just wait until they collapse, until they break down. Be there. Support them. Encourage... release them. Have a policy of doing that. And this will enable people then to think, well, ok, I won't be afraid to accept responsibility because when I am [?] they will help me. They will stand with me. They will care for me. They won't just kill me off.

That is a huge issue for people coming into responsibility and church life, to pastor them at that proactive level.

Friends, I am going to leave it there of the first session. Ok.