

Happenings at Balham: May 2016

Being a Light in the Community

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which art in heaven. Matthew 5:16.

Growing up whether in school, church or your neighbourhood, we all knew of some people who were the 'soul and life of the party.' People who knew always knew when they were around and they could change the atmosphere of the room simply by their presence. Other such people were those whose influence impacted the environment where they were. In other words people who made a difference.

We can also think of bible characters who made a significant difference. Characters like David, Elijah and the Apostle Paul. They had human failings but they changed the environment in which they lived by their personality, characters and what they did or better still what God did through them.

No doubt the person in scripture that had the biggest impact and changed the environment in which they lived and in which we live today was Jesus. He drew crowds when he spoke and his words touched a chord such that some said 'never a man spake like this man.' His miracles, his words and his life changed lives. In what some called 'The greatest sermon ever preached'. Jesus challenged his listeners and by extension us to make a difference and to 'let our light shine before men.' The heart of the message of the Sermon on the Mount was challenging us to live like Kingdom bound people. Such a people would even love their enemies and bless them that persecute you (Matthew 5:44), to forgive those who wrong us, rejoice when people persecute us for righteousness (Matthew 5:10-12) and to trust God to provide for our needs. In a selfish, harsh world to live like that is pretty radical, I would like to suggest even impossible, without God. Just imagine what impact we would have on our communities if we as Christians consistently lived like that. Imagine how our communities would differ if they would accept Christ and live like and for him.

I believe that many people around us in our communities would like their lives to be very different and are watching people who are called by Christ's name to see if we have something to offer that they could embrace. That's why people flocked to see Jesus because his words, actions and deportment was attractive and more meaningful than what they had experienced before and remember for the good part Jesus lived amongst and preached to the Jews (church people). Even though some people like the Pharisees were angry at what he taught, people at least knew what he taught and when he left the scene people noticed. I once read a caption of a poster which read 'If your church moved would anyone notice?' Ouch! What If the answer to this question is no.

Christians are called to make a difference wherever God places us and that's the point, we may think we are in situations and places by accident but God knows what he was doing when he placed us where we are. I believe God has placed us as a Church in the Balham area for a purpose and for 'such a time as this' and he wants us to make a difference in the Community that we are called to serve. The world may not know they are in darkness but we know and we need to let our light shine by our conduct, words and deeds so they can get to know and love the light of the World, I'm talking about Jesus.

Just imagine if the Community had contact with a Church where the members' love for each other was self evident for all to see, a church where people went the extra mile for each other not to seek a reward but an outflow of their love for Jesus. Imagine a Church where the hungry knew they could find food, the lonely knew they could find real friendship and the sad and bereaved knew they could find comfort and encouragement. Imagine a Church where the Community knew cared for them and which sought to provide for their needs not just spiritual but emotional, physical and mental. I believe such a Church would truly make a difference in the Community and people would miss that Church if they left that Community. I believe not only are we called to be such a Church but by God's grace we can become just that.

Looking back at April 2016

Community Impact was in full flow in April. The three week Ingathering charity fundraising campaign took part this month as we hit the doors of the Community inviting them to contribute to the world's needy. We also launched a new initiative in April as we invited the Community to make food contributions outside a local supermarket as they did their shopping. We will in turn distribute this to a local food bank, the homeless and other needy people in our community. We hope that this will become a regular feature.

We also held our first Health Expo of 2016 as we provided health information and support to our Community including offering free GP services for the day. We invited the Community through door to door efforts and meeting people on the streets. One lady that we met had come to one of our Expos in the past and had learnt for the first time that she had high cholesterol and plans to come back. Another Church member met someone who has seen our Church on a recent BBC documentary and was particularly impressed with the preacher who she felt would appeal to the Youth. She is seriously considering inviting her daughters to Balham Church

We also continued with our monthly street witnessing venture as we sang and gave out literature and invitations to Church to passers by and tried to strike up a conversation about the gospel with them. As a result of our past efforts, we have been invited to sing at a Community street party in the Balham area and the person who invited us expressed excitement at the prospect of us attending and taking part.

Other features this month included our quarterly prayer and fasting session. There was a time when this would attract a few members and it would be the same ones who came. In the last two years this has been a well attended and appreciated programme. This time around, powerful testimonies featured highly and were blessed and encouraged by them.

Four of our Elders were ordained for ministry in a very moving and meaningful service this month.

Finally we experienced a very inspiring International Music Day at the end of the month, where we learnt many gospel songs in various African dialects as well as singing in English. The day ended in a charity fundraising concert for Adra (our Church run charity) which included more singing in an African dialect

Pre-campaign prayer meeting - Friday 6th May @ 7.30pm

We will be preparing for the Campaign with a prayer meeting as prayer is the source of our strength.

Church Campaign (May 7th - May 21st)

We have invited the Conference Sabbath School and PM Director, Pastor Kirk Thomas, originally from Guyana as our preacher for this evangelistic Campaign Meetings are nightly at 7pm: Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday Sabbath (Saturday) sessions are 11am & 5pm. We plan to hold a Children's programme on Sabbath May 14th @ 5pm and a baptism on May 21st.



Sharing the benefits of healthy lifestyle - including water Juicing and exercise at the Health Expo

May

