

The Cairn: Home Mission film 2022

Recently, I was privileged to record a short Home Mission film focusing on 'The Cairn' - an emerging expression of church in Knowle West, Bristol. During my visit I was greatly encouraged to see examples of partnership, courage and faith, and transformation. Not to mention the exciting birth of this new expression of church arising out of a legacy left by a previous generation.

I invite you to watch this, to be encouraged and to give thanks to God for all he is doing in Knowle West, and to allow his Spirit to speak to you through it.

I've also prepared some questions to help you individually, your small group or your church to reflect on some of the themes arising out of the film.

Alisdair Longwill

You can find and download the film on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/NMPhjhvlyDQ>

Questions for Reflection

Please use these questions as a way of helping you personally, your small group or your church, to prayerfully reflect on 'The Cairn' Home Mission film 2022.

The aim of these questions is to help you to consider the different themes arising in the film. You may want to consider these individually or reflect on several at a time.

(The time-location in the film is listed alongside each).

Part One

1. **Hope** (watch 00.00-03.04)

The community of Knowle West have faced many challenges down through the years. The film shows that Phil, Alice and their small 'team' have been bearers of Hope in the midst of challenge and difficulty.

How might you – individually or collectively – be a channel of Hope in your community/family situation/place of work...?

2. **Using your resources in the mission of God** (watch 03.04-05:14)

Alice says, 'We always felt that it's important to go with what God's given us. God gave us a house – so that's our starting point.'

Each of our circumstances are unique - different from one person to another. But God has given to each one of us a resource, a skill, a particular gift or capacity. What has God given to you that might be your 'starting point' to help you to step more fully into the mission of God where you are?

3. **The gift of 'time'** (watch 03.04-05:14)

Alice says, '...So we just began by being here in the house and inviting people in... Time is a really important thing. Time to open the door, to give people a cup of tea or coffee, to chat and to listen.

How are you and I currently using the time that God has given us? What steps are we taking to make sure that we have time to 'love God' and also to 'love our neighbour'?

The aim here is not that we should condemn ourselves for what we're not doing, but rather to prayerfully reflect on how we might use our time to enrich our lives and the lives of others.

Part Two

4. **A place to belong** (watch 03:24-06:38)

'God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing...' (Psalm 68:6).

One of the women in the film shares a profound truth – 'People don't know they are loved.' And yet we who are followers of the Way of Jesus, know that God loves the world and everyone in it. We know that Jesus '...became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood (John 1:14, The Message). Jesus came to live among us – to reveal God the Father to us (full of grace and truth). The same woman in the film, powerfully reminds us that 'we've got to be like Jesus – to help others.' She says, 'That's how I like to see people – to love one another and be kind and helpful. That's how I see Jesus, and I think we've got to be the same – to help others.' And when we are, when others find a place to belong, she says (more movingly than any sermon I've recently heard), 'it feels like you're in with Jesus'!

If Jesus lived where you live – how would he live? How might you and I learn to live more like him – and in doing so, help others feel like 'they're in with Jesus'?

5. **Stepping out in Faith** (watch 06:39-07:04)

Alice speaking frankly, says, 'I think anyone who's thinking of stepping out, maybe stepping beyond their comfort zone to do something that God's calling them to do, I'd just say go for it... Because God's not going to let you down...Even if you don't know the end result... It's the best place to be'

How do you feel about stepping out of your comfort zone? What was the last significant step of faith you took? Prayerfully consider what step of faith God might be asking you to take just now. It may be quite life-changing or it may seem trivial to you, but central in God's purposes for a friend, relative or neighbour.

Prayerfully reflect on the verses from Proverbs 3 quoted in the film:

'Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the LORD in everything you do, and he will show you the right way. Never let yourself think that you are wiser than you are; simply obey the LORD and refuse to do wrong.' (Proverbs 3:5-7, Good News Bible).

6. **Transformation** (watch 07:08-08:59)

'As we have trusted God for the transformation of people and place, we've had the privilege of witnessing many incremental changes' (Phil).

Phil spoke about the transformation of the previously derelict vicarage and garden, but even more importantly about the transformation in people's lives. Do we really believe that God continues to transform the lives of men and women and young people? What aspects of transformation would you dearly like to see in your situation and circumstances? If you're discussing this question in a group, why not share your responses to this question, write down those responses and keep hold of them and repeatedly use them as a prompt to your collective and individual prayers. As you pray, remember the verses from Proverbs 3 above and allow them to deepen your faith in God. Keep a list of how God answers your prayers – and grow in gratitude.

Part Three

7. **Seeing things from a different perspective** (watch 08:12-08:59)

If like me you've been attending church for many years, you've probably become familiar, maybe even comfortable with the way things work – the way we do things. The man in this clip of the film, honestly and graciously shares the discomfort he's felt in his engagement with church over the years. How do you respond to this? Are you surprised? Have you ever asked anyone who's not a regular church-goer how they feel if/when they've attended a church service? I'm not in any way suggesting that we should water-down the truth of the Christian message, but have you ever thought about how we might better show and share this message in ways that don't alienate people like the man in this clip of the film?

8. **Guitar Club – really?** (watch 12:15-13.17)

I don't know of any other churches that have a guitar club! The significant thing here is that Phil and Alice are using one of their skills to get alongside and encourage others and to gently help them on their spiritual journey. Have you ever considered using your hobby or skill to get alongside others as friends/neighbours and at the same time help them on their spiritual journey? If you're considering this question as a group or church, please share with each other your hobbies and skills and explore together how they might be used to help you draw alongside others and learn to journey together?

9. **Engaging with the Bible when you're not much of a reader** (watch 13:17-15.15)

'How do we get scripture working in our lives in a way that is practical as opposed to just kind of taught?' (Phil). What do you make of what Phil says in this clip from the film, 'I don't want to create the impression that you have to be a good reader to be a good Christian?' Phil speaks of sending a text message (containing a Bible verse/passage) and also where appropriate, a worship song conveying that same verse/message to around 50 people every week. Does this resonate with you? Could you imagine doing this or something similar to this in your situation, with people you know (who aren't yet Christians)? Who might you begin with?

10. **'What you do is your history, what you set in motion is your legacy'** (watch 17:57-18:51)

This final question for reflection may relate to only a small number of people. Do you belong to one of our churches who have served God faithfully over the years, but now find yourself in a situation where it seems that your congregational life may be coming to an end? As you prayerfully consider this, please do contact one of your regional ministers and have a conversation about the kind of legacy your church might be able to leave to the next generation.

Thank you once again for giving to, and praying for, our Home Mission churches and new expressions of church.

