

From our Churches

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Doing the Work of the Church

Loving God, Loving our Neighbour

A 7-session study outline

Floradale Mennonite Church organized a 7-week series of panel discussions for their combined adult Sunday School time in March and April 2013. Each week began with some edited video comments from persons they don't often hear from, and a brief "Moment in history" from our historian. After the panel took turns commenting on the week's questions, they had an open forum for questions, comments and discussion. The videos of each session can be viewed here - www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2034. The panelists spoke from their own experience. Everyone found it valuable to listen to each other's stories and testimonies.

Week 1 – **Worshipping together**

- a) In your opinion, what is the essence of worship? What is worship all about?
- a) What are the aspects of a truly meaningful worship service?
- b) What role do music/scripture/images/symbols play in worship?

Week 2 – **Learning about God**

This could happen in places such as Sunday School, Bible Study, sermons, private reading, Bible quizzing, Religious Studies courses

- a) What was your earliest image or experience of God? What in your early life influenced your view of God?
- b) In your experience, what is the most effective way to learn the stories of the Bible?
- c) Learning about God can happen in a variety of places. Where have you experienced this learning in the church and outside the church?

Week 3 – **Sharing the gospel**

This could happen in a variety of settings such as mission trips, visiting nursing homes, prison visitation, Mennonite World Conference

- a) What experience have you had in travelling to another town or country (or unfamiliar place) to share the love of God? Did you consider yourself a missionary?
- b) What experience have you had in inviting someone into your home whose culture was different from yours?
- c) What is most rewarding and most challenging about sharing the gospel?

Week 4 – Helping those in need

This could include any Mennonite Central Committee programs or fundraising, food banks, Mennonite Disaster Service, work with the homeless, mission trips, etc.

- a) What work do you do (or have you done) where aid is given to those in need? What is rewarding or challenging about this work?
- b) What advice would you give about maintaining the dignity of the recipients of aid?
- c) How important is it to give direct aid to those in need?

Week 5 – Sharing generously

- a) Does God expect generosity? What is our responsibility regarding generosity?
- b) How do you decide where to put your support? Do you evaluate the effectiveness of charities?
- c) If Christians have debts (such as a mortgage), are they still expected to give to the church?
- d) How can we best teach generosity to the next generation?

Week 6 – Supporting our local community

This could include any local programs run by the church or the local municipality or service clubs.

- a) Describe some of the work you do (or have done) that provides programming or support to people in the local community.
- b) What is most rewarding and most challenging about this work?
- c) How important are these programs? Should the church be providing direct support to this type of program?

Week 7 – Building a community of mutual support

This could include visiting the sick, sharing hospitality, church potlucks, informal conversation in the lobby, any group fellowships in the congregation

- a) Do you agree with the statement that community happens when we spend time with others, face-to-face? How important is community?
- b) When have you felt supported by the church community?
- c) Where and how does community best happen in a church setting?