

What does Good News look and sound like?

The only way you and I will ever know the answer to the question of what Good News looks and sounds like is if we listen well to those around us. And to listen well, that means that you and I have to Go into our community, into our relationships; not with answers but with questions that seek to understand.

'Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable." David Augsburger, *Caring Enough to Hear and Be Heard*.

'Listen, listen, listen to your patients; they are telling you the answer.' Rene Laennec, inventor of the stethoscope

'If we listen well for people's insecurities, idols, sources of identity, and ultimate dreams, then we can discern what Good News looks and sounds like to them.' Jon Ritner, *Positively Irritating*

Listen

Upon hearing those conversations, our calling as disciples of Jesus is to identify the deep longings that point to God; and communicate to those individuals the story of God in the language of their longings.

Going implies action.

Action that takes us in the direction of people who don't know that they are loved deeply by God.

Action that recognizes how we carry ourselves in daily life makes people curious.

Action that moves us to the needs in our community so that we can restore hope, dignity and honor to people.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8 NLT

You and I, as disciples of Jesus, carry the Good News to people every day, wherever we go. The challenge is how well we are listening to their heart cry. They are telling us about the hunger of their soul. What we need to do is listen to the work of the Holy Spirit in knowing how to respond to the opportunity.

Start by building an authentic relationship with people.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. 1 Peter 3:15 NIV

Live a 'questionable life.'

What's different about me today as opposed to six months ago?

This is who I was. This is what happened. This is who I am as a result.

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke 4:18-19 NIV

Jesus inaugurated his ministry by telling people that to follow him meant we engage in actions that move us to the needs in our community so that we can restore hope, dignity and honor to people.

Questions demonstrate that we are interested in learning about other people and entering into deeper relationships.

Questions direct conversations in a natural way.

Conversations often go in the direction of the most profound questions, and people often grow toward the questions they are asked.

Questions often get reciprocated in conversations.

If you ask good questions, the person you're talking to will often ask you questions in return, giving you a chance to share your faith in a natural way. You can also respond to a question someone asks you by asking the same question back. This models vulnerability. For example, you might say:

"That's a hard question; how would you answer it?"

"Wow, that's a good question; what about you?"

"I'm not sure. Do you have an answer to that?"

Questions help us discern people's longings.

What are you celebrating as a success in life right now?

What do you value most in life?

What are your biggest challenges, and what is life teaching you through them?

What was the best thing/worst thing to happen to you this week?

What do you want most out of life?

If you were to receive a text that made you say, "Wow, that is great news!" what might it say?

What fears or anxieties tend to consume your thoughts most often?

If God appeared to us, what would you ask him or her?

Why do you think God seems so real to some people and so unreal to others?

Did you grow up in a family that talked about Jesus?

Ritner, Jon. *Positively Irritating: Embracing a Post-Christian World to Form a More Faithful and Innovative Church*

A good question is not concerned with a correct answer. A good question cannot be answered immediately. A good question challenges existing answers. A good question is one you badly want answered once you hear it, but had no inkling you cared before it was asked. A good question creates new territory of thinking. A good question reframes its own answers. A good question is the seed of innovation in science, technology, art, politics, and business. A good question is a probe, a what-if scenario. A good question skirts on the edge of what is known and not known, neither silly nor obvious. A good question cannot be predicted. A good question will be the sign of an educated mind. A good question is one that generates many other good questions. A good question may be the last job a machine will learn to do. A good question is what humans are for.

Kevin Kelly, *The Inevitable: Understanding the 12 Technological Forces That Will Shape Our Future*