

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES OF NEW ZEALAND

Rongopai

REST & RENEWAL

TAKING OUR PRAYER TEMPERATURE

CHURCHES & CAMPSITES WORKING TOGETHER

LEADING LIKE JESUS:
RETURNING TO BIBLICAL ELDERSHIP



VOLUME 12

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To sign up for any of these emails, contact sophiasinclair@cccnz.nz



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SAVE THE DATE

Dates and locations for all our 2021 events.

*“Why do we push ourselves to the limit?
What is it we’re trying to achieve or prove?
What gaping hole in your heart are you trying
to fill with frenzied music-making?”*



TIME FOR A REST?



EMILY TYLER
BIRKENHEAD COMMUNITY CHURCH

Imagine music with no rests. Continuous noise. Think elevator music on repeat—but even worse than that—no rests even within the music itself. Unceasing, constant sound. No pauses, no sustaining of notes, no breathing space. Music created with no rests would be hard on the ears, generate anxiety in the heart, and leave the listener overwhelmed and wanting to switch off and step away from the ‘music’ altogether.

Why do we live cacophonous lives with no rests?

We hurry from one thing to the next, filling our time pleasing people, preparing projects, persistently performing, perfecting, and pressured. Why?

What is it that we’re searching for in our non-stop pacey lives? Why do we push ourselves to the limit? What is it we’re trying to achieve or prove? What gaping hole in your heart are you trying to fill with frenzied music-making?

Somewhere along the line choosing rest became synonymous with the feeble, frail and weak. Needing a rest meant you couldn’t keep up. You weren’t efficient and on task. Resting meant you didn’t value the work you were doing—or why would you stop?

In music, a rest indicates the absence of sound, a chance to breathe.

Did you know that before music notation, monks inserted pauses midway through singing verses. The phrases they were singing were getting muddled as the reverberation of the previous line lingered. They needed a rest. This rest orchestrated the monks so that a synchronised, harmonious sound could be created; providing them unity to sing and breathe as one.

French composer Claude Debussy said that music isn’t found in the notes, but in the spaces between them. Without rests in music, the listener loses any opportunity for relief as the music ebbs and flows.

Without moments of silence in music there is no space to find the meaning.

And yet, if you’re anything like me, you struggle to insert the rests needed in your own life composition.

Resting in a COVID-19 world

2020 has kept us all on our toes. Throwing curve balls left, right, and centre. We have had to scramble to adjust, adapt and keep up with the ever-moving goalposts of what ministry looks like, how to work remotely while simultaneously home-schooling the kids, entertaining the pre-schooler and delivering food parcels to the needy neighbour.

Despite lockdowns, many have been left with very few pauses or rests.

Jesus speaks into this dissonance of life and says:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

Jesus sees our striving to be sufficient: the self-imposed burdens, the heavy ladens others inflict and he speaks right into our interminable lives and calls us to rest. We were never meant to take on the job of providing our security or self-worth yet somewhere along the line we started believing it was our responsibility to satiate our hearts and provide our significance. We began to toil. We began to worry. And only five chapters earlier Jesus told us that the flowers don’t toil and we are far more valuable. Same word. Same message: lay your burden down and stop. Stop worrying. Stop striving. Stop filling your own hearts.

Jesus sees us juggling and struggling and knows there is one thing needed and he calls it: time-out.

The Greek for ‘rest’ here is *anapauo*. Ana—again, back + pauo – to cease/stop or give rest.

Jesus wants us to cease again. To stop again. To rest again. So that he can refresh us again.

Just like rests in music don’t only come at the end of a piece but throughout, Jesus wants us to learn to come to him and experience this repetitive resting that we all need. Rest again.

Like the monks, he wants us to learn to sing in unison with him. To breathe with him. To unite with him. Jesus understands that without resting our lives will become a tangled inharmonious mess. To live a melodious life we need to be at one with Jesus. And to be at one with Jesus we need to learn to step away from the busyness and distractions that would have us finding our security, significance and self-worth anywhere other than in him. Instead, we must return to him and rest again.

“Rests within a piece of music forces to listener to reflect, to move from passive listening to active listening, and become a participant in the piece. In the resting, the remainder of the music makes sense.”

When we live lives without the rest Jesus offers we find ourselves overwhelmed and anxious, trapped in the elevator with no way out. The burden of the to-do's increases in tune with our blood pressure and we're left wanting to quit the music altogether. We believe the lie that we can continue on the hamster-wheel of life in our own sufficiency and strength. Without resting again, we start to believe we don't even need Jesus at all.

Rests within a piece of music forces to listener to reflect, to move from passive listening to active listening, and become a participant in the piece. In the resting, the remainder of the music makes sense. In pausing with Jesus, we find meaning for the other activities occurring in life. It is when we stop and sit with Jesus that we can listen to his voice above all the commotion and be reminded of our peace and purpose once again. We're reminded that we're not sufficient and we were never supposed to be so put that yoke down! We need to rest again – not only from the inexorable pace we find ourselves in, but from the notion that we have to do all the things and save all the people, ourselves included.

Glorifying God in rest

Busyness in and of itself is not a bad thing. You only need to listen to some of the more famous classical pieces of music to discover prestissimo (music played as quickly as possible, typically over 200bpm). This music can inspire and quicken your spirit. But you cannot play all the music at that pace. There is a reason for going at full speed and that's what you need to keep in check to ensure the music you're creating glorifies God.

Is your busyness:

- Distracting you from dealing with deeper issues of the heart?
- Providing you with a sense of significance or self-worth?
- Fuelling the error that the busier you are the more important you are?
- A means to 'earn' God's approval or love?

If so, then it's time for a rest.

John Ruskin, an English art critic of the Victorian era, said:

“There is no music in a rest, but there is the making of music in it.”

If we want to live lives that are full, productive, and glorifying to God then we need to learn to “rest again” so that in those moments the next phrase of our life can be written hand-in-hand with the composer and conductor of the universe. It's in this cyclical resting and resting again that we're reminded of the need to continually return to Jesus where we check our motives and heart in our busyness. Resting is not a one-time thing. You rest. And you rest again. And again.

Anapau is not just stopping to rest, it is also a refreshing. Jesus wants us to rest again so that we can be refreshed and equipped to continue making music with our lives. As Ruskin observes:

“[The rests] are not to be slurred over nor to be omitted, nor to destroy the melody, nor to change the keynote. If we look up, God himself will beat the time for us. With the eye on him, we shall strike the next note full and clear.”

So if you've been feeling like your life is creating white noise rather than a beautiful melody can I suggest that you've removed one too many rests in your score? Don't quit making music altogether, take your song sheet back to the composer and allow him to show you where the rests need to be reinserted.

You don't need to strive for the rest. Jesus says he'll give it to you. Just come back. Again.

Originally from the UK, Emily and her husband Dan moved to New Zealand three years ago to pastor Birkenhead Community Church. She is a passionate preacher, teacher and writer, who loves to exhort the church in any way she can. Her weekly devotionals can be found on social media @promiseseeker or facebook.com/promiseseeker. You can email her directly at emily@bcc.org.nz



A HUNGER FOR MORE



MARYANNE WARDLAW
RONGOPAI WRITER

Jackie Millar doesn't often hear the words "joyful" and "prayer" together. But when joy is associated with times of communion with God, she says it signals to her that he is bringing people to life spiritually. And even though this year has been marked by periods of social isolation, CCCNZ's Prayer Coordinator says she has seen surprising signs of a culture of prayer in New Zealand's church communities.

"COVID has been a hard thing for many people," she says, "but honestly, in the space of prayer, I marvel at how the Lord has used it to raise the banner of prayer across our churches."

When the pandemic struck, regional prayer gatherings were already planned in Auckland Canterbury. These morphed into Zoom sessions, which allowed people across the country to participate.

Now, at the other end of a turbulent year, seven or eight people continue to log in every Tuesday morning to pray together. The number isn't near what it was at the height of lockdown, but the meeting has survived the return-to-normal work days. Participants pray for requests that have come via email or Facebook, for churches and their leaders, and for broader matters such as this year's elections.

"COVID was that jolt that we all needed to remind us that we're all desperate for God to move and have his way," Jackie says. "I know of many other denominations and churches—not just ours—who are still continuing in prayer together."

In her experience, virtual meetings sparked real-life engagement.

“It’s a beautiful gift to commune with the sovereign, holy, just God. It still blows my mind that we actually get to talk to him through prayer, and we get to hear him through prayer.”

“When we went out of lockdown, the conversation was a lot easier for me to say, ‘Okay, how about an in-person prayer gathering?’” Jackie says. In the second half of the year, Waikato and Auckland returned to hosting in-person prayer gatherings and, for the first time, Canterbury and Otago/Southland organised ones.

Another spin-off of the virtual prayer times has been a group of people who discovered they have the same questions, thoughts and concerns. Jackie says that the discussion group continues to address matters of prayer and how to mobilise others to pray.

Steve Murray is the Senior Pastor of Lifezone in Tauranga. He helped spearhead a 12-hour, inter-church prayer and worship session in Tauranga in August. These have flowed from the calling he’s had for the past year to make prayer a more central part of his faith.

Steve says that attending a 24-7 Prayer conference in the UK in 2019 was a catalyst for this.

“I realised, boy, we can do a whole lot of things really well, but it’s the Lord who does the work,” he says. “We should be praying to the Lord of the harvest.”

The teaching he sat under prompted him to plan a solo, four-day prayer retreat when he came back to New Zealand. He wanted to leave cell coverage and anything that might distract him behind and focus on spending time with God. He prayed some specific prayers in preparation for the retreat.

“I asked the Lord that I would enjoy him and this time,” he says. “I got detailed. I asked for guidance about the location of the retreat.”

And over two consecutive weeks, he invited his congregation to write out their prayer requests during the Sunday service.

“The thing that really moved people,” Steve recalled, “was when their senior pastor stood in front of them and said that I felt called by God to stand before God on behalf of the people.”

He collected 90 prayer cards from those services, packed up his tent and went off to an isolated place.

Between gathering firewood, preparing food, reading and writing, Steve worked his way through the prayer cards.

“It was very moving, because I felt like I knew what the people were feeling,” he says.

He wore a path around his campsite as he read the messages and interceded for members of Lifezone. “There were tears, especially in the beginning when I was reading what families were facing.”

God answered Steve’s request to enjoy the time in his presence, and did a work in his heart; he says he left in a very different place than where he began. A year on, he still has the prayer cards and still rereads them. He says it humbles him to see the ways God has intervened in people’s lives.

Steve’s focus on prayer has begun to spread in the community he leads. He initiated 21 days of fasting and prayer, which was effectively 11 days because the first lockdown in March arrived half way through.

Now that people can meet again, the church has made a space available for people to run a prayer room. People gather on weekdays from 9am to noon and on Wednesday evenings to sing and pray.

Steve also helped organise a one-day gathering to pray and worship called Before Thy Face, referencing a line in our national anthem. It involved nine churches from around Tauranga, far more than he anticipated. Each church took a turn leading the gathering through the 12 hours, and they plan to repeat the event.

“These things all stacked up together and put us on this journey,” Steve says. “Man—we need to be a praying church.”

Jackie hopes that this kind of passion for prayer will spread in Lifezone and through other churches in New Zealand.

“When I find a church and say, talk to me about prayer at your church, and I don’t just get told about when the prayer meetings are or aren’t happening—when they talk to me about the praying culture within the church—there’s a difference,” she says. Prayer teams

and prayer meetings are by-products of a praying culture; she wants prayer to be woven into the essence of each church, and for them to be known as “houses of prayer.”

“Prayer is this beautiful privilege and responsibility that we have,” she says. “It’s a beautiful gift to commune with the sovereign, holy, just God. It still blows my mind that we actually get to talk to him through prayer, and we get to hear him through prayer.”

The gap, of course, is between a theoretical understanding that prayer is necessary and good and a heart desire to spend that time in prayer. Steve has a helpful model that maps this connection between the theoretical and the practical: desire, discipline and delight.

“You can stop at any one of those places,” he says. The *desire* to pray must be supported by the discipline to spend time praying, or it will remain just a desire. And disciplined time must carry on to the point of delight in God’s presence to fuel our desire for more prayer.

And at each point, God is the one who does the work in the one praying; as St Augustine wrote, “Thou hast put salt on our lips, that we might thirst for Thee.”

“That’s something I was saying a bit,” Steve says. “God had made me thirsty for him.”

This desire has altered Steve’s perspective on priorities in the church. He says that church leaders are quick to resource various church ministries—music, for example—with staff and money for equipment. “Do we do the same for prayer? I would challenge people to answer that question.”

It’s a culture in our churches, and one that needs to be prayerfully sought, says Jackie: “that’s why I felt led, before elections, to spend our prayer hour to focus on the fear of the Lord. I’m absolutely convinced that it’s the fear of the Lord that not only shapes us, but shapes our prayers. Our reverence for who he is causes our ‘yes’ to be ‘yes’ and our ‘no’ to be ‘no’; not fear of man or fear of offending.”

How do we nurture fear of the Lord? “Fear of the Lord is nurtured in the quiet place of intimacy with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Fear of the Lord is expressed as we gather together as the Church to hear the Word shared, to worship and pray. Fear of the Lord is evident to a lost and broken world when we live in radical, faith-filled, all-glory-to-God obedience, in the everyday places he calls us to.”

Ultimately, God is at work in us, and through us in prayer, says Jackie: “Only God is going to stir us to pray for the nations and pray for our neighbours. He does the work in us.”



CCCNZ loves to support and encourage prayer. For more visit www.cccnz.nz/prayer:

- Sign up for the prayer newsletter
- Find out about regional prayer gatherings
- Enquire about being a regional prayer enabler
- Find ideas to help your church engage with prayer
- Find training events
- Send the team prayer requests

There is also a Facebook prayer group and a weekly, virtual prayer hour at 9:30am on Tuesdays. Email Jackie, jackiemillar@cccnz.nz, if you’d like to join or find out more information about any prayer initiatives.

“I’m grateful that into his own moment of pressure, intensity and tension; into his own moment of exhaustion and fatigue, David encounters the heart-replenishing and soul-renewing shepherd. The shepherd who is revealed to us most fully in the person and work of Jesus.”



REST IN THE TENSION

CONTEMPLATING REST FOR LEADERS FROM PSALM 23



MARK GRACE
CCCNZ AMBASSADOR

David does not hide from the tensions he faces. He names them all. I'm incredibly grateful for his honesty.

His internal tensions are named—behind the comfort of the shepherd's rod and staff is the recognition of David's own sin and idolatry.

His external tensions are named—the valley of the shadow of death, the reality of evil, and the presence of his enemies. Each element bores into David's personal, pastoral, public, and political leadership bringing tension, exhaustion, and soul-sapping fatigue.

I am not King David. But the reality of my own sin exposes the tensions in my own leadership.

The reality of spiritual opposition creates tension in our world. Being a Christian leader in this season involves leading personally and pastorally but now, at the same time, publicly and politically. This brings fresh tensions within leadership.

Added to these tensions is the strain and intensity of leading people in a pandemic. The tension between greater participation or greater professionalism; the tension between shepherding our own family and church families facing financial and pastoral challenges is real.

The exhaustion, fatigue and bone-tired weariness is real

I'm grateful that into his own moment of pressure, intensity and tension; into his own moment of exhaustion and fatigue, David encounters the heart-replenishing and soul-renewing shepherd. The shepherd who is revealed to us most fully in the person and work of Jesus.

Jesus, who can lead me beside still waters because he has stilled the storm.

Jesus, who can restore my soul because he is both my creator and my re-creator.

Jesus, who can be with me in the valley of the shadow of death, because he has traversed the valley.

Our shepherd. Our rest.

The first thing our shepherd does is make us lie down in green pastures. He makes us stop from our activity. He makes us cease from our busyness.

Everything else the shepherd does for us, and with us, involves our activity; but the first (and arguably the most important) thing the shepherd does in the Psalm involves our resting from our activity.

He invites us into his comfort and anointing, he welcomes us into his security and safety, he invites us into his restoration through rest. He invites us into his work, his leadership, his activity, by resting from our work, leadership and activity.

He wants to renew our leadership by making us lie down. He wants to pour his life into our leadership. He wants us to be renewed through rest.

He can make me lie down in two ways; by the power of the invitation to rest throughout Scripture, or by lovingly giving me over to my idols so that rest is the ultimate consequence.

The pattern of biblical rest

Biblical rest is resting in the God who works, by intentionally resting from our own work.

Biblical rest is soaking in God's sovereignty and goodness.

Biblical rest is a continual pattern of resting that prophetically speaks to my idols, saying 'God's Word works, God is sovereign in his work and I am not.'

Biblical rest has been secularised over the centuries and now is mistaken for relaxation and recreation. Biblical rest results in my relaxation and recreation, but my focus is resting in his goodness and greatness, so that he be glorified.

In this unique moment our shepherd is inviting us to name every tension, to feel them building up, and at the same time to rest with him in the tension.

To rest consistently and to rest well.

To rest in him and to rest with him in the tension.

Contact Mark Grace: markgrace@cccnz.nz



LEADING LIKE JESUS! RETURNING TO BIBLICAL ELDSHIP



KERRY RICKARD
CCCNZ PASTORLINK ENABLER

“Give us a King to lead us.” (1 Samuel 8:6) was Israel’s cry for leadership and, at the same time, a rejection of God’s leadership.

There is an ever-increasing fixation on leadership in the Church and many voices that crowd out the voice of the perfect leader, the head of the Church, Jesus.

What does it mean to be an elder, leader, in Christ’s Church? What does it mean to be a spiritual shepherd, called by the good shepherd? What does the Bible say about what it means to lead like Jesus?

Over time, many of our elderships and leadership teams have lost—to varying degrees—our focus on shepherding leadership.

From around our movement we have seen a repetitive pattern of elderships becoming church managers, rather than leading like Jesus. As one elder put it, “We needed to return to a shepherding role over a

governance type role”. This desire to renew a biblically-driven picture of shepherding leadership (Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, 1 Peter 5, John 10), has seen a number of elderships engage in both conversation and targeted retreats.

Jesus, the good shepherd

Jesus is our example, our model, our true representation. John 10 gives us an amazing image and understanding of Jesus, the good shepherd, who elders are called to emulate as spiritual under-shepherds—to lead like Jesus.

In John 10 we see Jesus, the good shepherd, who *knows* the sheep. The good shepherd who loves the sheep. There is an intimacy, a care, and concern for the sheep that is reflected by his knowledge of the sheep’s needs. So much so, he willingly gave his life for the sheep.

The good shepherd who *leads* the sheep. He knows them by name. As sheep hear the good shepherd, they go to him. He leads them out, he leads the flock. As he goes out, the sheep follow him.

The good shepherd who *feeds* the sheep. The good shepherd desires for his sheep to be well-fed. Well-fed on a knowledge, understanding and experience of God (Father, Son and Spirit). Well-fed on spiritual food.

The good shepherd who *protects* the sheep. The good shepherd protects and dies for his sheep. Sheep are prone to being led astray, to wandering. The good shepherd protects the flock from those who would lead them off course, he even protects them from themselves.

Managers or spiritual shepherds?

To varying degrees, it can be easy for elderships to spend more time on governance, deaconship, and management responsibilities rather than leading like the good shepherd. We have some well-managed flocks but not necessarily spiritually-led flocks.

Imagine a movement of churches that are led by spiritual shepherds reflecting the intentional nature of the good shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Focusing priorities

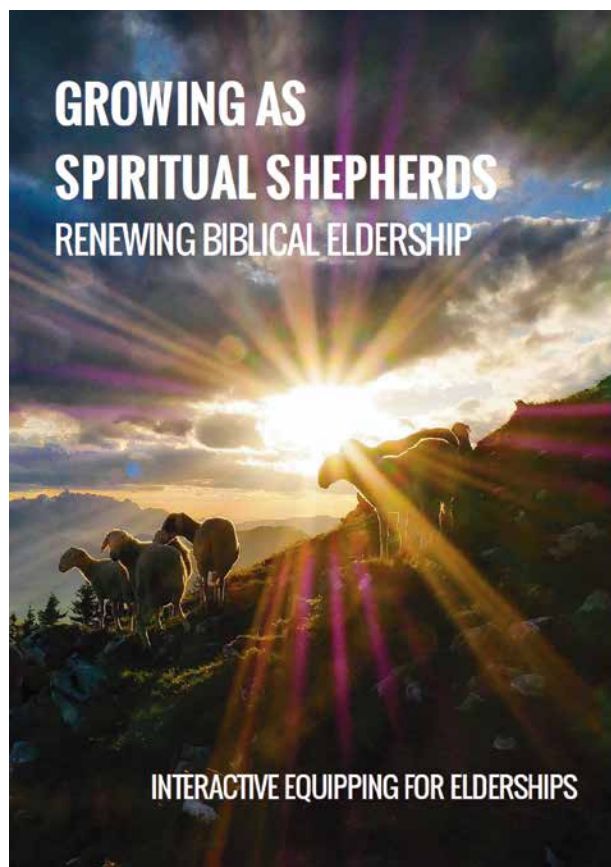
The Putaruru Gospel Chapel eldership recently set aside a Friday evening and Saturday to review, reflect, and grow as spiritual shepherds.

Through a series of biblical explorations and courageous conversations, Andrew Crosbie (eldership chair) described finding, “common purpose, and the opportunity to be focussed on some of our key priorities as elders”. They saw this process unite them, “in a way that is not possible during your regular eldership meetings and help put us on the same page”. Through the willingness to have courageous conversations, “it did show us our vulnerabilities”.

As the Putaruru Gospel Chapel eldership continue the journey of renewing their call to lead like Jesus, one elder described a recent meeting as “genuine, authentic, Spirit-led interactions, relationships and discipleship”.

Other elderships that have engaged in renewing their call to lead like Jesus have had courageous conversations observed that their, “understanding of leadership is quite shallow and needs to be developed”. Such honesty and humility is where growth begins.

Alongside Putaruru Gospel Chapel and Hillcrest Chapel, we have developed a free, interactive equipping resource for elderships that would like to review, reflect, and grow in the area of spiritual shepherding.

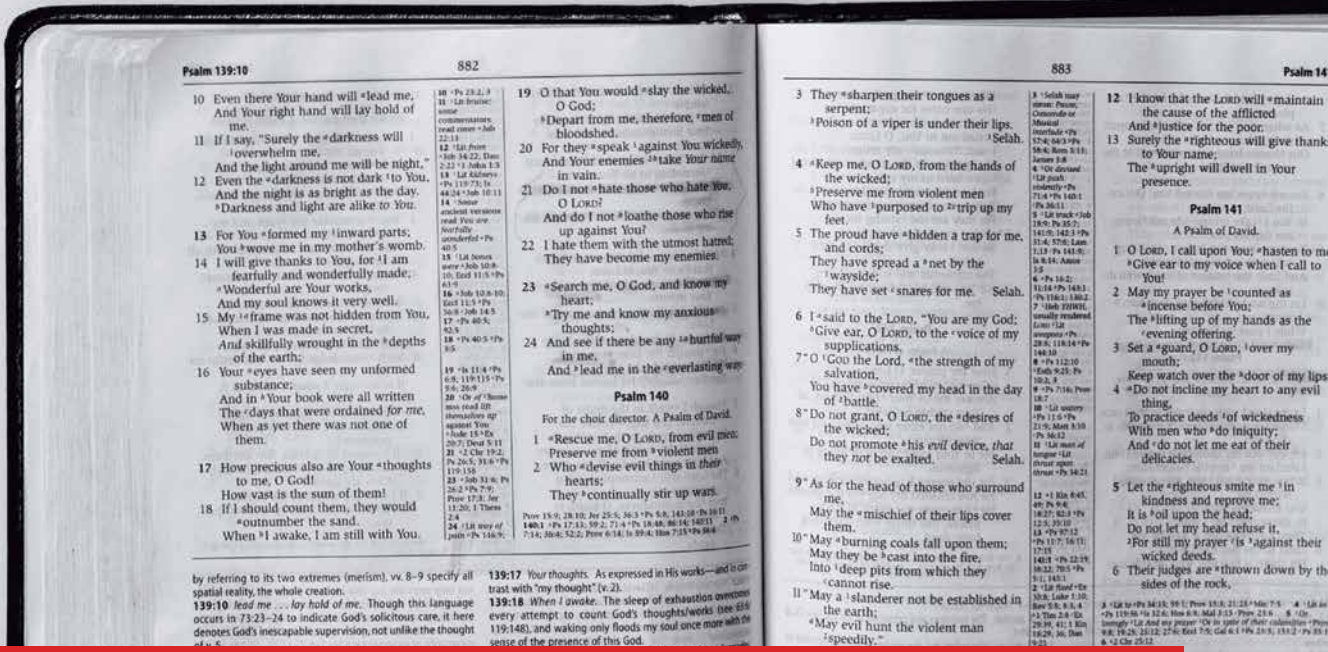


GROWING AS SPIRITUAL SHEPHERDS: RENEWING BIBLICAL ELDERSHIP is a resource for eldership teams that will encourage you to both review and renew your focus on leading as Jesus leads, as spiritual shepherds.

We desire to see elders, our church leaders, as Christ’s under-shepherds, leading like Jesus. They need to **KNOW, LEAD, FEED and PROTECT** the sheep.

PUT IT IN THE DIARY: The National Leaders’ Retreat, 23-25 September 2021 at Willow Park in Auckland is for eldership teams wanting to grow in these four areas. See the website for more details: www.ccnz.nz/national-leaders-retreat

If you see it as worthwhile for your eldership to reflect on and consider this, and have a series of ongoing discussions and biblical exploration in this area, don’t hesitate to contact Kerry Rickard kerryrickard@cccnz.nz 022 439 2507



GROWING TOGETHER ONE CHURCH'S JOURNEY IN GROWING TOGETHER AROUND GOD'S WORD



SOPHIA SINCLAIR
RONGOPAI EDITOR

“Over the last three years we’ve had our biggest growth; in unity, in people coming along, and in people growing in spiritual maturity.”

At the end of 2017 the leadership of the Hukanui Bible Church bought a bulk order of Bibles and set the challenge—let’s read through the entire Bible together in one year as a church.

By the end of 2018, 60-70% of people from the church were reading through the Bible together. The youngest readers were 11-12 years old, and the oldest in their 70s. The Bible reading challenge became a way for families to connect over the Word and develop everyday habits.

Pastor Gary Gilpin says that while the growth the church has experienced over the past three years is

due to a number of factors, reading the Bible together definitely led to development in other areas:

“In 2019 we decided to really focus the church on discipleship. This became really important among our young adults. We ran Discipleship Explored, an 8-week journey through the Apostle Paul’s letter to the church in Philippi and found this to be a really helpful foundation for building discipleship relationships.”

The church leadership encouraged mentoring and discipleship—people in twos, threes and small groups intentionally meeting together to share life around the Bible:

“For some older members this was a new idea, in comparison to younger people who were more culturally comfortable with the idea of being mentored.

We noticed real growth as people who were quieter became more open.”

2020 was meant to mark a focus on prayer:

“The lockdown and COVID-19 has changed our expectations and the shape of this! Instead, we’re hoping to make 2021 a year where we focus on prayer.”

One area of growth where Bible reading and discipleship has really flourished is getting younger people more involved with church life:

“It has been so encouraging to see the hunger young adults have for the Lord, a hunger for truth and a desire to grow. We’ve also got seven young guys now regularly speaking at Hukanui—Bible reading and discipleship played a huge role in preparing them as developing leaders.”

If you’re interested in finding out more about Hukanui Bible Church’s journey, get in touch with Gary Gilpin: garykath@xtra.co.nz

GOD AT WORK

Rongopai Editor Sophia Sinclair caught up with Craig Barrow, Lead Pastor of City Bible Church in Hamilton to chat about how God is at work in the people of Kirikiriroa, Hamilton.

This year has been a pretty strange one for lots of churches and ministries, what have you noticed since the COVID lockdown?

Like other churches here in Kirikiriroa, we’re noticing a lot of people searching since lockdown—it’s not unusual to have 3-4 families visiting each Sunday. People have had their security shaken. Whether it was a steady job that’s gone or the threat of sickness, people are being challenged to look for something truly steady—real security in Jesus.

And you’ve seen some people come to faith in Jesus?

We’ve seen 5-6 people saved this year, which is so cool to see people meet and trust in Jesus for the first time!

That must be so encouraging—what has God been teaching you during this time?

The really encouraging thing is that these are mostly the result of years of friendship, prayer and faithfully walking along with people and sharing Jesus. Nothing fancy—just faithful friendship evangelism.

One guy in his early 50s came to faith after a 30-year friendship. One day when they were out for a ride, he started asking questions and at the top of the mountain he said, ‘I need Jesus’. He was baptised recently and when he shared his testimony, he wondered just how many prayers friends and family had prayed for him.

City Bible Church has celebrated a few baptisms recently?

One of the things about baptism is putting the opportunity before people. Sometimes people have been following Jesus for a long time but have never taken the step to get baptised. So, we’ve spent time teaching on baptism, going through Bible studies, talking to our youth and meeting up to discuss baptism with people.

It’s great to see people wanting to follow Jesus’s command to get baptised. I think there can be a culture of waiting because we feel like we have to have it all together, or until we have something to bring something to the table—but the beauty of baptism is recognising that Jesus has done it all for us and we’re being obedient to him.

How would you encourage others who are hoping and praying for growth?

I was challenged by something one of our members recently shared. He reminded us that there’s no need of a light in lit places, that each of us need to be thinking, ‘where’s the dark place I can take my light?’—what’s it going to take? We need to be prepared to make an intentional investment and sacrifice to share the light of Jesus with those who need it most.

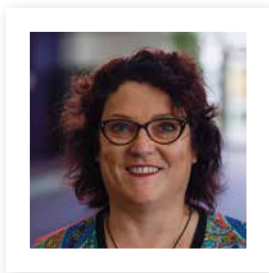
It’s classic Christian cheesiness, but our job is to be obedient—keep praying, keep trusting, sharing and believing. It’s God who does the miraculous!

To get in touch with Craig Barrow: craig@cbc.net.nz

KEEN TO GROW IN MINISTRY TO FAMILIES?

Children and Family Ministries Enabler Julie McKinnon launched E-QUIP a few months ago. E-QUIP is an online-based training discussion group for people serving in Children and Family Ministries. Participants work through a book, then meet regularly via Zoom to discuss each chapter, set goals, share ideas, and encourage one another.

Rongopai editor Sophia Sinclair caught up with three participants to hear more about how E-QUIP works and what they've found helpful.



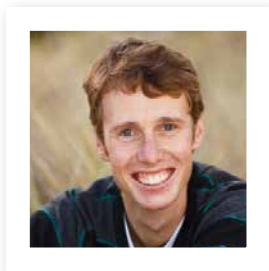
Viki Johnson is employed full-time as a Children's Pastor at Raleigh Street Christian Centre in Cambridge, Waikato.

"I signed on for E-quip because I had seen Julie's wisdom and passion for

children and family ministries in action. Like lots of people I'm crazy busy, but I want to read more good books and grow in my role. Intentionally reading a book with others—and being held accountable as we discuss the ideas together—seemed like a good way to grow together with others serving in children and families ministry.

"Together we read the book *It Takes a Church to Raise a Parent* by Rachel Turner. I'd recommend this book for any church looking to support faith at home and explore how this is the responsibility of the whole church body—not just the children's ministry team.

"Being part of E-quip has made a difference to what I'm doing here at RSCC. Recently, I was approached by some parents of intermediate/middle school aged kids asking for input on sexuality and identity, specifically a biblical perspective. Instead of running separate events for parents and middle schoolers I arranged an event for them to come to together. We discussed God's view, what it means to have identity in Christ, and how to approach these conversations in the home."

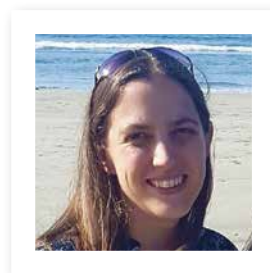


Steven Polglase is the Children's Pastor at Hope Community Church in Nelson.

"It was so beneficial to read the book with others in similar situations from

around New Zealand. In ministry it can be easy to feel alone, to get caught up in the day-to-day frustrations or challenges. It was a breath of fresh air to rub shoulders with others in the same kind of roles! We shared advice, ideas, frustrations and gave encouragement to each other.

"One big takeaway from E-QUIP was the reminder to be available to connect with families, to not be so busy running programs that we don't have time to build relationship and have conversations with parents. The benefit of communicating frequently with parents really stuck out to me. Long term, it's good to give parents a voice and the opportunity to have input into this ministry—doing this is one small step that encourages parents to play a crucial role in the faith formation of their children.



Kylie Brown is the Children's Pastor at Lifezone Church in Tauranga.

"For a while I'd been thinking about how we could encourage parents to get more involved in the faith of their children. During lockdown

I was preparing material for parents to use at home and it really struck me—there was a whole bunch of parents who had no idea where to start when it came to disciplining their kids. Maybe they'd only recently become Christians themselves, or hadn't been raised in a Christian home, and some parents didn't have access to email or a printer.

"One of the most helpful parts of E-QUIP was the accountability. Julie was great at prompting us to set goals and work towards implementing them, and it was great doing this along with other people serving in Children and Families Ministry from around New Zealand.

"If you're thinking about doing E-QUIP, go for it! It was so encouraging to hear how others are implementing ideas, to share tips and resources. The best part of E-QUIP was the depth of discussion and connecting with other leaders."

For more information on E-QUIP and to book in your place for the next round, contact Julie McKinnon: juliemckinnon@cccnz.nz



CHURCHES & CAMPSITES WORKING TOGETHER



MARYANNE WARDLAW
RONGOPAI WRITER

Mark van Wijk grew up in a Christian home, regularly attending Sunday services. But the memory he has of coming to faith took place at a kids camp at Moirs Point in Northland. Many of his significant memories, as well as some lifelong friendships, trace back to Christian camps.

So it isn't surprising that the community pastor for Summit Church in East Auckland is also involved with local Willow Park Christian Convention Centre. Over the past five years, he and Summit Church have intentionally grown a fruitful partnership with the team that runs the 7-acre campsite at Eastern Beach.

For churches, campsites provide reasonably priced facilities for conferences and kids camps. And for the 22 campsites in the CCCNZ network, churches provide income and the human resources needed to operate camps. But some churches, like Summit, decide to take this symbiotic relationship a few steps further.

The church already had some good connections with Willow Park when its leaders reviewed Willow Park's

trust deed. They saw that its goals—primarily around evangelism and discipleship—aligned perfectly with the church's. Mark said that its kids camps are a particularly good forum for evangelism.

Campers come from all backgrounds, and kids from unchurched homes get a rare opportunity to hear the gospel and ask questions.

This year, Mark said that a woman who had no faith background contacted Summit via Facebook. She turned up on Sunday with her daughter, who had been the reason she had gone church hunting—her daughter had recently come to faith at a Willow Park camp. The following week, the two returned with the girl's brother.

When kids from Christian homes come to faith at camps, the discipleship they need when they return home is a given. But for kids who come from families with no Christian background, it's more of a challenge.

"We're trying to step into that more," Mark said. With his camp hat on, he uses his church networks to



connect kids who have expressed an interest in faith and their parents with church communities near their homes.

Summit also promotes Willow Park's events to its members, and many get involved in camps across all age groups. Mark's wife Steph, a primary school teacher, was recently one of the speakers at a camp. Mark uses his background in tech to provide support on that front.

The church leaders have also been invited to support camp staff and volunteer leaders in Christian development, teaching and coming alongside them.

"Over time we've developed this high-trust relationship, where we plan and organise together," Mark said. "We've just spent a couple of sessions coming up with a set of leadership values, because we want to have some consistent language at the camp around what it is that we value in our leaders. We want them to see themselves as ambassadors, knowing that they're role models, that they're representing Christ to the campers."

Mark emphasised that building up a relationship like this is a long process. "You don't start with, 'We're here to change everything you're doing because we're the experts,'" he said. A good question for churches and individuals to ask, if they want to develop a relationship with camps, is "How can I help?"

Mark and another leader at Summit now serve on Willow Park's board, rounding out Mark's lifelong involvement with Christian camps and bringing his on-the-ground experience to the governance level. ("Literally on-the-ground, towing kids around," he added.)

With Willow Park and Summit Church, the support doesn't flow in one direction. Mark said that camps can provide churches with great opportunities for their young people to grow as Christian leaders.

Willow Park runs a leaders-in-training programme during the camps. Over two years, youth complete eight modules that have been developed by Christian Camping NZ. Between 10 and 20 youth are part of each cohort, learning by shadowing camp leaders and gaining experience themselves leading young campers. They also get their hands dirty, helping with the cleaning and day-to-day running of the site.

Mark's own sons are now cabin leaders, and his daughter is about to begin the programme.

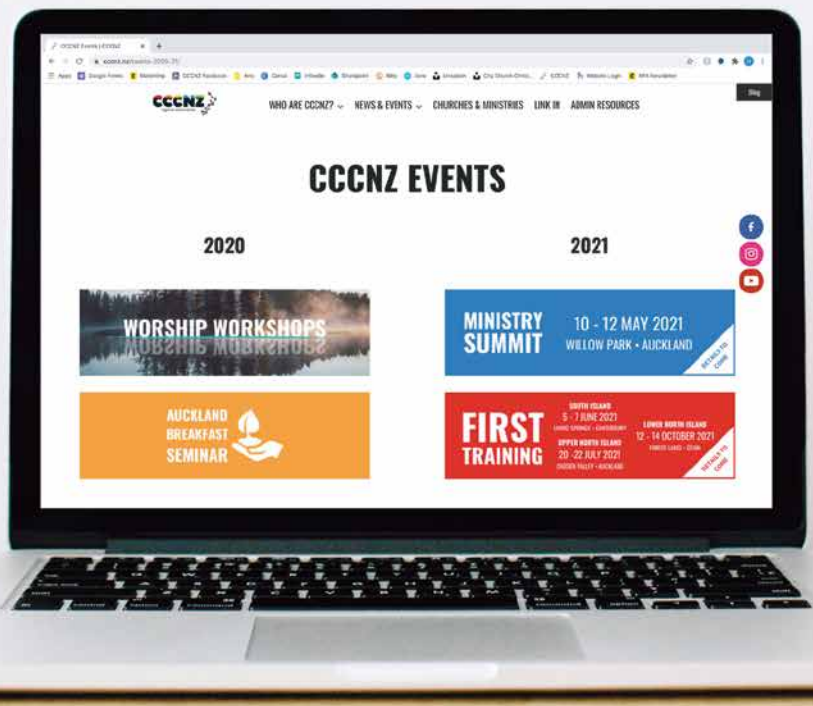
"There's a real progression through there," he said. "They give them practical opportunities to share their faith and to pray with kids, to really exercise their faith. They share the gospel with them and worship alongside them, along with practical leadership abilities. A number of our young people use this as work experience when they're applying for jobs."

Mark recalled the opportunities that camps gave him, and his own parents' involvement in Kiwi Ranch Curious Cove (in Marlborough). He experienced the "positive peer pressure," benefitted from the friendships, and sees his own children and their peers growing through their involvement in camps.

And now, as a pastor, he views camps as both a place in which church members can serve and one that stretches their own faith and witness.

Get in touch with Mark: mark@summitchurch.nz

SAVE THE DATE



NATIONAL LEADERS RETREAT 23 - 25 SEPTEMBER 2021
WILLOW PARK • AUCKLAND

MINISTRY SUMMIT 10 - 12 MAY 2021
WILLOW PARK • AUCKLAND

CCCNZ PASTORLINK RETREAT

NORTH ISLAND 3 - 6 AUGUST 2021 MICAMP • TAUPŌ	SOUTH ISLAND 18 - 20 AUGUST 2021 TEAPOT VALLEY • NELSON
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FIRST TRAINING

SOUTH ISLAND 5 - 7 JUNE 2021 LIVING SPRINGS • CANTERBURY	LOWER NORTH ISLAND 12 - 14 OCTOBER 2021 FOREST LAKES • OTAKI
UPPER NORTH ISLAND 20 - 22 JULY 2021 CHOSEN VALLEY • AUCKLAND	

Keen to come along to one of our events in 2021? Check out more details on our website: cccnz.nz

JOIN US!

NORTHLAND

Clark Road Chapel
Raumati Crescent Chapel

BAY OF PLENTY

Fenton Park Bible Church
Lifezone Church
Lakes Church Rotorua
Paengaroa Bible Chapel
Redeemer Church
Roosevelt Road Chapel
The Orchard Church

TARANAKI

New Plymouth Community Church

HAWKE'S BAY

Heretaunga Community Church
Onekawa Bible Church
Riverbend Bible Church

NELSON-TASMAN

Grace Church, Richmond
Hope Community Church
Tasman Bible Church

OTAGO

Caversham Community Church
Cornerstone International Bible Church
Orwell Street Church
Riverside Chapel

AUCKLAND

Auckland Bible Church
Birkenhead Community Church
Eden Community Church
Howick Community Church
Kelston Community Church
Lifechurch Manurewa
Lincoln Road Bible Chapel
Manurewa Bible Church
Massey Community Church
Mt Wellington Community Church
New Lynn Bible Chapel
Ngairu Avenue Bible Church
Northcross Community Church
Orewa Community Church
Papatoetoe Bible Chapel
Samoan Open Brethren, Ranui
Summit Church
Tāmaki Community Church
Wiremu Street Bible Chapel

WELLINGTON

Onslow Community Church
Porirua Gospel Chapel
The Anchor Church
Titahi Bay Community Church

HOROWHENUA

Queen Street Chapel
York Street Chapel

WAIKATO

Chapel Hill Community Church
Hillcrest Chapel
Hukanui Bible Church
Manawarū Bible Chapel
Matamata Bible Church
Northgate Community Church
Paeroa Bible Chapel
Putaruru Gospel Chapel
Raleigh Street Christian Centre
Te Awamutu Bible Chapel
Whitiora Bible Church

MANAWATŪ-WHANGANUI

Crossroads Church
Feilding Bible Chapel
Kingston Community Church
Ingestre Street Bible Church

SOUTHLAND

Rosedale Bible Chapel

CANTERBURY

Bryndwr Chapel
Church Street Bible Chapel
EAUKS (Ekalesia Au Uso Kerisiano Samoa)
Redemption Church Christchurch
Rowley Avenue Bible Chapel
Rutland Street Church
Wairakei Road Bible Church

*This is a list of linked in churches,
as of November 2020. For more
information on how to join us,
see www.cccnz.nz/link-in*

