

# **CHAPTER 11**

## **Giving Your Testimony**

## THE TESTIMONY

There is no doubt in my mind that when people tell how they came to faith in Christ and the difference which this has made, this has an important effect in reinforcing the gospel as it is preached. People are able to identify with 'ordinary people' as opposed to the 'professional people'.

Testimonies are of course helpful and can be well used for evangelistic meetings, but their value in conversations should not be overlooked. Here the ideas are no longer abstract but real and therefore need to be interacted with.

There are some principles which are helpful in thinking about testimonies:

1. Write down your testimony. When did you become a Christian? Did you grow up in a Christian home? How did you come to understand that Jesus Christ was Lord and had died for you? How did you respond to this information? What do you consider to be the hardest part of the Christian life? What do you consider to be the best part of the Christian life?
2. These questions are helpful in clarifying in your mind what your testimony is. From here you are able to write a draft of your testimony.
3. It must be your story. It is often tempting to exaggerate or add to your conversion story to impress people so that they become Christians. This is especially so when teenagers are being used to tell how they came to Christ. To show the power of the gospel at work, we must tell the truth.
4. The testimony should focus on the Lord Jesus and not on persons. He is the centre of what we are doing. The importance should not be laid on the decision that you have made, rather on the difference that Jesus as your Lord has made.
5. Don't have a testimony monologue. Especially in conversations with people where it is obvious that you are rattling off some facts you think they need to know. Having thought about your testimony gives you flexibility in how you present it.
6. Use it! If you are talking to someone about God and they ask about your Christian life, then explain the gospel to them using your testimony. It makes it all much closer to reality for people.

With a testimony for an evangelistic meeting there are some other principles that are worth keeping in mind:

1. Don't try to be a "super Christian". Nor for that matter should we be choosing personalities because of who they are. The gospel affects ordinary people's lives, therefore share your story as it is.
2. Prepare for your testimony, but don't read it! It always lacks realism when this is done.
3. It is important to work out how the testimony will be presented. Is it a short talk? Will the chairman interview the person? There are also the details of how to begin and end the testimony. Remember, this is not just to fill in the gaps, but to show how being confronted with Jesus calls us to change. Therefore the beginning and the end need to reflect this.
4. Talk with the chairman about the testimony beforehand. He will be able to give you a hand at packaging the testimony. It is also helpful so that if you forget something in your testimony he will be able to remind you of it in the interview.
5. If you are interviewing someone for a testimony, then there are some important questions to ask. For example, it is important to find out about the persons background of where they lived and their religious associations. Also their understanding of becoming a Christian is necessary to ask (though the stress of the interview is not on the **conversion**, but *their response to Jesus*). The questions above in writing out the interview are helpful ones also to ask.
6. Speak with the person who is speaking at the meeting. You may be able to link the talk with the testimony in some way. It might even be pertinent for the person giving the talk to be the one giving their testimony. This can whet people's appetite for the talk.