



CITY BIBLE FORUM

Ask the bigger questions

SHARING JESUS AT WORK

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SHARING JESUS AT WORK



WHAT'S INSIDE

Have you noticed that people like to compartmentalise their lives? We talk about work/life balances, but we don't stop living when we work (however we might feel on Monday morning). What's going on?

Our society is structured against going deeper and asking the deeper questions – to do so requires relational engagement – or coffee, dinner, gospel.

This booklet outlines a series of action steps to build deep relationships and share the hope that we have in Christ with our colleagues

STUDIES

- COFFEE "Owning" Jesus
Rare love in the workplace
- DINNER Questions that explore people's worldviews
Sharing God's worldview and the difference it makes
Sharing God's worldview even when it's hard
- GOSPEL Meeting Jesus in the pages of the Bible
We're making disciples not converts
When an adult becomes a Christian

HOW TO USE THESE STUDIES



These studies are short modules to help readers think more deeply about different areas of your workplace witness. They are designed to be used in Evangelistic Prayer Teams (EPTs), but can also be used in any small group setting.

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COFFEE, DINNER, GOSPEL: AN INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgement: This booklet is based on a series of workshops conducted by Dr. Sam Chan, from City Bible Forum. Find out more about Sam at his blog at espressotheology.com

There's a saying among Christian missionaries:

"Closed country, open hearts; open country, closed hearts."

Do think this is true for Australia?

BIG IDEA

"Our society is structured against going deeper and asking the deeper questions – to do so requires relational engagement – or Coffee, Dinner, Gospel."

Have you noticed that people like to compartmentalise their lives? We talk about work/life balances, but we don't stop living when we work (however we might feel on Monday morning). What's going on?

In Australia we often think of the world as two separate realms. On the one hand, the public, observable and secular realm; on the other hand our private sacred realm. And in this culture, religion sits firmly in the private, sacred realm. Conversations about this realm leads to fights if raised in the public, secular realm, so we've learned to avoid religion to keep the peace.

So how do we talk about Jesus?

Coffee, Dinner, Gospel

The deeper we go in relationship, the deeper we are willing to share – it's all a matter of trust. Consider three social interactions:



COFFEE:

Coffee is public and safe. It lasts minutes and conversation is usually just small talk – topics like weather, sport, and news. If things get too deep, you can make a quick escape.

DINNER:

Dinner is more private (especially if you've invited someone into your home – your private space). Once small talk is exhausted, we move into more private issues – personal values, worldviews, politics and religion. Once we move into the private world we need to listen well. Listening well is about actively listening – asking questions, do you have faith? Do you pray? What values do you want your kids to have? How did you come to believe that? (notice the factual way of asking a private question)

Active listening involves demonstrating that you have heard the thought, understood the concept, and accepted the associated feeling; I hear, I understand, I feel something of what you feel. (note: not exactly how they feel, but something of what they feel)

GOSPEL:

The gospel touches who we are at our closest point, and so it usually takes some time for us to get to this stage with people.

What does this mean?

Sharing Jesus today takes going deeper in relationships. Our culture resists speaking about the matters of the gospel of Jesus until we've built relational trust. In this booklet we'll be looking at relational steps to move towards sharing Jesus in the workplace. We'll look at:

COFFEE	1	Meeting people and letting them know you're a Christian <i>Study 1. "Owning" Jesus</i>
	2	Socialising with people <i>Study 2. Rare love in the workplace</i>
DINNER	3	Getting to know their worldview <i>Study 3. Questions that explore people's worldview</i>
	4	Sharing our gospel informed worldview <i>Study 4a. Sharing God's worldview and the difference it makes</i> <i>Study 4b. Sharing God's worldview even when it's hard</i>
GOSPEL	5	Helping people meet Jesus in the pages of the Bible <i>Study 5. Sharing Jesus in a sitting</i>
	6	Sharing a clear presentation of the gospel <i>Study 6. Meeting Jesus in the pages of the Bible</i>
	7	Helping someone become a Christian <i>Study 7. We're making disciples, not converts</i>
	8	Getting someone connected into the church <i>Study 8. When an adult becomes a Christian</i>

Sharing Jesus takes confidence... in God

Daniel prays “He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.” (Dan 2:22). God knows the private thoughts of our colleagues – better than they do! We can trust God that as we seek to draw people out, God knows their hearts and is an expert at drawing the hidden things to the light.

Prayer

Pray for the people in your workplace, pray for deepening relationships with colleagues for the sake of the gospel.

"OWNING" JESUS

1

Thinking about the workplace...

When do you find it easier to keep quiet about following Jesus?

BIG IDEA

"Jesus promises to acknowledge us before God in the same way we acknowledge him before others – that's either a comforting thought, or a terrifying one."

From the Bible

Matthew 10:32-33

³²Whoever acknowledges me [Jesus] before others, I will also acknowledge them before my Father in heaven. ³³But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown them before my Father in heaven.

Key Truths

1. The issue at stake is the acceptance of others or of God.
2. Jesus promises to treat us as we treat him - do we acknowledge him or disown him before others?
3. The consequence for disowning Jesus is being disowned before God – what a terrifying prospect! Can you imagine Jesus saying "I never knew you"?
4. We need to make a clear decision – do we value the acceptance of God or others more?

Application

- How well do people know you at work?
- How soon after meeting you do people discover you're a Christian?
- How can you most naturally "own" Jesus at work?

Prayer

Pray for boldness to acknowledge Jesus before your work colleagues

Jesus calls upon us to be known as those who love.

What do you think Christians are known for in Australia?

Why do you think that is?

**BIG
IDEA**

"In Jesus' parable of the Samaritan he shows what loving your neighbour looks like - it's costly of time and money; it means meeting the needs of the one God brings before you"

From the Bible

Luke 10:25-37

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

³³ But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'"

Key Truths:

1. The person the Samaritan loved was the person he came across. He had compassion on the man.
2. In contrast to the Levite and the priest, the Samaritan stopped. He gave up whatever was on his agenda for that day and helped the man, even paying for his recovery out of his own money.
3. Love costs time and may cost money.

Application

We can get quite task focused at work, treating people as functional helps (or even hindrances!) But we need to love the people God has put before us. It can be quite hard to get to know people in the office, why not take the initiative to spend *social* time together?

Implicitly it conveys love and care, 'I care about you beyond your function for me in the workplace.' Relationship is created by time spent talking.

In the end, there can be no greater love than to risk everything to warn people of their danger of judgment and of the great love God has shown them in Jesus. What could you give up this week to show love in your workplace?

Prayer

Pray for a willingness to be open to new relationships at work and a desire to go deeper (and take on the time cost that means).

QUESTIONS THAT EXPLORE PEOPLE'S WORLDVIEWS

3

A worldview is “the framework or set of ideas and beliefs through which we view the world and our place in it. A worldview is 'never merely a vision *of* life. It is always a vision *for* life as well'. A worldview does not describe just the way things *are* but the way they *ought to be*.”

- James Oltuis, from *A Spectator's Guide to World Views*

What do you think?

BIG IDEA

“Everyone has a worldview. We need to enter into our colleagues' worldview if we are to genuinely love them and share the gospel in a way that is meaningful and resonates.”

Identifying a worldview

The following themes are a helpful starting point to break down and understand worldview:

- **Reality:** What is the nature of the Universe and the world around us?
- **Human Nature:** What is a human being?
- **Death:** What happens to people when they die?
- **Knowing:** How we know and what can we know?
- **Value:** How do we know what is right and wrong?
- **Purpose:** What is the meaning of human life?

Think about your colleagues: How do you think they would answer these questions?

As we go through life we will encounter many different and varied worldviews. These worldviews might seem like philosophical ideas, but they have real life impact, influencing how people view the world, decide what is right and wrong, and how they treat others. In other words, they shape how people live their lives.

Realistically, very often, people hold a mixed view based on different philosophies born from experience, education and culture. Worldviews often operate at the 'gut' or 'instinct' level. People have rarely studied to learn these views, they are assumed socio-culturally, and developed through 'living out life.' Often people might not even realise there are other ways of viewing the world, and risk unconsciously assuming that

everyone else fundamentally thinks the same way ("It is just what everyone thinks, isn't it?"). Alternatively, people can be quick to presume - stereotyping and over simplifying worldviews that are dissimilar from their own (e.g. "People who don't believe in God can't have a sense of morality" or "all Christians are bigots.").

How to explore someone's worldview

Spend a few moments thinking about the sort of questions you might ask to start entering in to explore someone's worldview. Taking the worldview idea from the abstract to the everyday helps to identify underlying worldview concerns when they arise in daily conversation and helps you to be ready to talk it through. Don't rush, and avoid being presumptive.

Theme	Questions	<i>What conversations will show someone's worldview? What real questions can we ask to determine worldview?</i>
Reality	What is the nature of the universe and the world around us?	E.g. "Do you think there is a spiritual element to life? What does that look like?"
Human Nature	What is a human being?	
Death	What happens to people when they die?	E.g. Is there some kind of life after death? What would it be like?
Knowing	How do we know and what can we know?	
Value	How do we know what is right and wrong?	
Purpose	What is the meaning of human life?	

It is worth pondering the degree to which your colleague's worldview matches with the Bible. Most people aren't completely opposed to God's worldview; often there are overlaps.

Are there some points of agreement you can start from as you share Jesus?

Prayer

Pray for a friend who has a very different worldview to yours. Pray that you would be able to start to understand them better.

SHARING GOD'S WORLDVIEW AND THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES

4_A

BIG IDEA

"Christians have had their worldview transformed by the gospel, and so we want to share our gospel transformed worldview has changed our life."

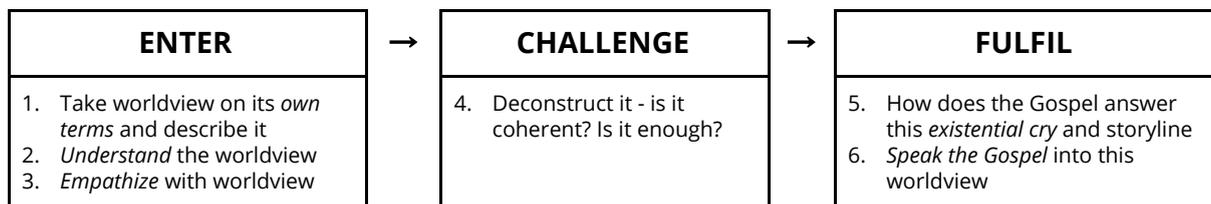
God's worldview changes our whole life

Christians believe that Jesus is the answer to our deepest desires and life's biggest questions. Worldviews aren't just *intellectual* ideas, but shape our whole *life*. Christians seek to be continually shaped and transformed by the gospel.

How has the gospel of Jesus shaped your perspective on meaning, happiness, freedom, identity, justice, or hope?

Engaging people's worldview

But Jesus isn't just the answer to our *own* desires and questions he's the answer for *everyone*. One framework to help bridge between their worldview and the Christian worldview is to: **enter**, **challenge**, and **fulfill**.¹



First **enter** and resonate with their worldview to honestly understand and earnestly empathise with them (this was the focus of the previous study). Would they feel like you are fairly representing their beliefs and values? Where are their overlaps with the Christian worldview?

Once we can express their worldview, we can **challenge** and deconstruct it. Is it *coherent*? and is it *enough*? In practice, does it actually meet their desires and answer their questions?

¹ Sam Chan, *Evangelism in a Skeptical World*. P158-166. Note that the model is applied for reading Cultural texts (Gospel-Cultural Hermeneutics) and has been adapted for worldview bridging. Also see Timothy Keller, *Center Church*, chapter 10 (Active Contextualization: Enter, Challenge, Appeal).

Finally, we express how the gospel of Jesus completely **fulfils** these desires and questions. Perhaps you can share your own experiences of how the gospel has met your own desires or has answered your own questions. Is there a passage or account of Jesus' life that has been a help to you? (See study 5, Sharing Jesus in a sitting for some ideas)

What we are trying to do is help our friends see that there is something right in their desires and in their questions, it's just that Jesus provides a more compelling answer and more adequately satisfies our desires.

Application

Pick one of the characters below (or, better yet, choose a real-life colleague!)

Spend a few minutes discussing how this person might find meaning, happiness, freedom, identity, justice, or hope.

Carole thinks that we are animals that evolved to have conscience and intellect, existence is an illusion of sense perceptions, death is the end.

Jordon believes there is a higher power, but it is arrogant to think any one religion has all the answers. He is anti-consumerist and believes people need to simplify their lives and get in touch with their deeper spiritual side.

Amy believes it's a waste of her precious time to think about faith and philosophy - she's too busy anyway! Work hard to get what you want, provide for the family and enjoy life - that's her motto.

In what ways are your own perspective on these ideas the same? How might you share about the ways in which they differ?

Prayer

Pray that we increase in understanding of how the gospel meets the deepest longings of our *own* heart, so we might show how the Christian worldview fulfils who we were made to be.

SHARING GOD'S WORLDVIEW EVEN WHEN IT'S HARD

4_B

Do you find you're often on the back foot when people talk about certain hot topics? What was the topic?

BIG IDEA

"Christians seek to have their worldview transformed by the gospel, and so we want to share our gospel transformed worldview, even when it is contrary to popular opinion."

Sharing our worldview or God's?

Everyone has a worldview. Paul says "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:2). Christians seek to have their worldview transformed by the gospel, and so we want to share our gospel transformed worldview.

Dealing with a hot topic

There are many topics that bounce around in the media, or in lunchrooms that sharply intersect with the gospel's worldview, the role of religion in schools, or the workplace, or even society more broadly. Should churches pay tax? Should abortion be legal? What about euthanasia? Whether you duck and hide, or rush headlong in with these hot topics, it's worth thinking beforehand so you're sharing God's view, and not just your own.

We're going to look at the issue of homosexuality as a worked example. There's a lot of emotion and identity involved in homosexuality, and the Bible seems to say very little except 'it's wrong, don't do it.' But our society is no longer happy with this answer, we need to say more.

But how?

Step 1. Why is this a hot topic?

What are the issues surrounding this topic? Why is this topic so sensitive? Why do people feel so strongly about it?

Step 2. What are the wider categories involved?

Homosexuality is obviously a sexuality issue, but more broadly it's an issue involving relationships and identity.

Step 3. Think widely across the whole Bible

The Bible has more to say about homosexuality than merely 'it's wrong, don't do it.' But you need to think in the broader categories, and remember to read the passages according to the shape of the Bible from creation to new creation.

Topic Area	Questions	How does it relate to the topic? Sexuality?	Any specific Bible passages?
Creation Nature of the world	What is creation? What is humanity's place in creation? Is it good or bad or ...	Physicality is good. Bodies are good. Sex is part of God's good creation.	Genesis 1
Humanity	What does it mean to be human? What is God's view of humanity?	Human beings are made for relationships. We long for them. It isn't surprising that even when we get this wrong it is still very powerful. Our sexuality is part of our identity and it is part of God's good design for the world. Our sexuality was part of God filling and subduing the world. When we make our sexuality our whole identity we distort who we are.	Gen. 1:26-28
Sin & the Fall	What is the nature of sin?	All human beings are broken sexually. Sexual sin is very powerful but it isn't a greater sin than any others. Adultery / prostitution / pornography are all part of our sexual brokenness	Rom. 1:18-32
Jesus and his saving death	Who was Jesus? How did he act? What does his death and resurrection mean for us?	Jesus treated all people with dignity and love. Jesus loved even the sexually broken such as the woman at the well. Jesus died for his all people, including those practicing homosexuality.	John 4:1-42
New creation	What future is God bringing us toward? When does it arrive?	No person will achieve sinless perfection. This will only come when Jesus returns. In the meantime we will all struggle with our sexual brokenness.	Matt. 22:30 Col. 1:28-29
Scripture	Are there specific passages that address our topic directly?	As a part of our rejection of God, we pursue various deviant sexual practices, but there is salvation for us irrespective of our prior behaviour.	Lev. 18:6-23 John 4:1-42 Rom. 1:24-32 1 Cor. 6:9-11
Nature of God	Is there something about who God is in himself that has bearing on our topic?	Human beings are made for relationships. Reflects the Trinitarian nature of God.	John's gospel Eph. 1

Step 4. The difference Jesus makes – The Gospel

What difference does the great news of Jesus make to the issue? If we haven't examined the difference the cross of Jesus makes, we haven't finished our thinking.

Broken human sexuality, relationships, and identity are impacted by the gospel in the following ways:

- All people are sinful and broken, including in the area of human sexuality. And we all need Jesus to fix our brokenness.
- Everyone of us has rebelled against God, so there is no moral superiority in a Christian, each of us has sinned in various ways, and it is as sinners that God acts in love to save us through Jesus (Romans 5:8)
- The gospel shows that God loves even those who live out their sinfulness in an overt way. 'For God so loved the world...' John 3:16 He loved in a costly way.
- Sin and wickedness matter. Jesus had to die to put them right. He had to face destruction because sin is so destructive for us, now and ultimately before God.
- If God loved the world in all its broken human sexuality then so can we!
- Any sexuality, if it defines us, is a destructive distortion, the great news is we can have a new identity in Christ that puts us right with God, the world, and each other.

Step 5. Formulate an answer

It's a lot of work, but getting to the truth is worth it. It's worth thinking about why this issue matters to people, to consider the wider issues standing behind the topic, to consider the Bible as a whole, to apply the gospel of Jesus, and finally outline your response.

Why not spend some time now and write down how you might answer a question about what do Christians think about homosexuality?

Prayer

Pray for clarity of thought and speech so that as we speak we might be heard according to what we are trying to convey. Pray for patience as people mishear us.

SHARING JESUS IN A SITTING

5

You've been seeking to share Jesus with your friend for some time, you've spent many a coffee and lunchtime finding out more and more of where they're coming from, and sharing what you've found the Bible has to say about life. And halfway through a coffee break, with both of you due to start back in 2-3 minutes, she shifts the conversation, 'So what is it about Jesus that's so important to you?' **What would you say?**

BIG IDEA

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

Different ways to share

There are many different ways to share Jesus in a short space of time:

- You could learn a rote presentation like two ways to live.
- You could talk about why you became a Christian (note, not how)
- You could tell a favourite episode from Jesus' life, or a parable and explain what Jesus is saying about God and us.
- You could pick your favourite verse and explain what it means for you.

Whichever way you go, you want to speak as succinctly as you can, you want to talk about Jesus, and you want to end with a challenge – this has impacts for your friend too! We're going to spend some time picking your favourite passage or verse and seeing if we can explain who Jesus is from it.

Spend a few minutes thinking about your favorite passage about Jesus (e.g. John 3:16). Explain to the group how you would share Jesus from that passage:

Prayer

Pray for an opportunity to share Jesus this week.

It is becoming increasingly clear that we are living in a post-Christian culture. The generation where everyone went to church or at least Sunday School has grown up and have adult children who haven't gone to church. The doubts of the former generation are now assumed to be true, and the church is assumed to be irrelevant.

Our culture doesn't think church figures have anything meaningful to say. The days of inviting people to church with us to hear about Jesus are fast running out. It's time for the church to go out to share Jesus with those God has put in their path.

Do you think this is a fair assessment of our society?

BIG IDEA

"Few people have actually read the Bible for themselves. Offering to read the Bible together allows the gospel speak for itself with you there as a guide."

This means Christians need to share Jesus by helping people meet him in the pages of the Bible, by reading the Bible one-to-one, or perhaps in small groups. This is effective in a post-Christian culture! Amidst all the different opinions and voices, people can be surprisingly open to form their *own* opinion from the "source text."

But how? I'm not a preacher!

There are three questions that you can use

1. What does this passage say about God?
2. What does it say about Jesus?
3. What does it say about people?

Why not give this passage a go?

Mark 8:27-38

²⁷ Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

²⁸ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

²⁹ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."

³⁰ Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹ He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ³⁷ Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

SUGGESTION: City Bible Forum has free Word One-to-One guides to help you read through the Bible together. See: citybibleforum.org/city/activity/word-121

Prayer

Pray for boldness to invite a colleague to read the Bible with you.

BIG IDEA

“When someone wants to become a Christian, they need to trust in Jesus, repent, turn to God, and bear fruit in keeping with repentance.”

Acts 2:37-40

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

Acts 16:30-34

³⁰ He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

³¹ They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³ At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. ³⁴ The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

Acts 26:20

²⁰ First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds.

Key points

1. What do you do when someone wants to become a Christian? Invite them to trust in Jesus, repent and turn to God, be baptised, and bear fruit.
2. Belief is not just assent to facts, but is relational - we trust in the trustworthy.
3. Repentance is about changing our mind, changing our allegiance from ourselves to God.
4. Baptism is an appropriate symbol for the community and the world to indicate a changed allegiance.
5. Repentance must lead to a new life, it means bearing fruit in keeping with repentance.

Application

What key issues do you think you need to talk about when someone wants to become a Christian?

Prayer

Pray for God to bring in his harvest in this city.

What barriers might there be to an adult turning up to church for the first time?

BIG IDEA

“We want our friend to not just go to church, but be established in church.”

Adults who become Christians

The longer we go in life, the harder to change. We have long established habits and relationships. New relationships and habits are difficult. Becoming a Christian changes how we relate to others, if your colleague is married, their spouse may notice - and they won't always see the change as a good thing! Becoming a Christian means new relationships as they join with other Christians.

When an adult becomes a Christian, it may be prudent to take time easing them into a church, perhaps even months!

Help them find a good church that teaches the gospel, go with them, maybe for the first month or so - you don't want them to go to church, but be established in that church. Once they're established in a church, don't abandon them, you are still the most significant Christian relationship they have!

City Bible Forum has the advantage of being in a network of many churches across the city, chances are you can find a church with a ready relationship by taking advantage of that network.

Application

What are the key concerns in finding a good church for your friend?
How can you help establish them into the church?

Prayer

Pray for good relationships with local churches throughout the city to aid in establishing new Christians into church.

