

Like a CHILD

Sunday 23rd September 2018

Noddy Sharma

“Be who you are created to be”

Noddy Sharma is the director of Operation Mobilisation Australia. As someone with a long connection to NewHope, Noddy’s message was challenging us to remember that we are to live as God made us to be, and that we are designed by God for His mission.

Take a moment to share with the group.

- **What kinds of thoughts and experiences come to mind as you think of the term ‘mission’?**
- **How is this term used inside the church? How might it also be used outside the church?**

Noddy shared a couple of very challenging statistics with us.

Consider the following:

- An estimated 3 billion people in this generation will be born, live and die without knowing the name of Jesus
- Approximately 2.5 billion people around the world call themselves Christians

How do these statistics make you feel as a believer?

These suggest that there aren’t enough Christians ‘doing the work’ of mission – either here or around the globe. There simply aren’t enough people willing to disciple others into the love and knowledge of Jesus.

Noddy suggested there are two main reasons that we ourselves need to be aware if we are to really go and make disciples.

1. Knowing what we are enslaved to, and
2. We’ve lost the desire to embrace the pain of others.



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Knowing what we are enslaved to:

Read Exodus 6:1-10

In this passage, God reminds Moses who He is, and outlines his plan for Moses to lead the Hebrews out of slavery.

- Noddy challenged us to think of ourselves as people enslaved... not as Moses. How do you feel about that? Would you call yourself enslaved?

Noddy suggested that the things that enslave us can be things such as:

- Our outwards appearance
- People's expectations
- **Think about your prayer life over these past few months. Are there things that 'enslave you' that are represented in the way you pray?**

Ultimately God delivered his people out of slavery in Egypt and yet, as they prepared to approach the promised land, God gave them some firm reminders of His desires for them:

Read Deuteronomy 6:2-12 – What was God reminding his people of?

As they entered a land to live in 'houses they did not build' and eat and be satisfied from 'wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant' God's reminder to them is that he is the provider.

- **How does this reminder speak to you today? Do you fall into the trap of feeling that you are self-sufficient?**
- **What are some ways in which you're able to live completely dependent on God?**
- **What aspects of your life are harder to trust God with completely?**

Noddy's reminder to us is that God's desire for us is the same as for the Hebrews leaving Egypt and those entering the promised land: His desire is to be first in our lives, and that this should overshadow all of the other concerns that have the potential to enslave us.

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Embracing the pain of others

Read Acts 2:42-47

Make a list of the things in this passage that the believers in the early church did. It's quite a long list!

How do you feel about this picture of the early church?

How would you feel to be connected to a community of believers like this?

Noddy suggested that a distinctive of the early church was their willingness to endure suffering and to embrace other people's pain. Yet as time went on, the formation of the church has introduced structures that in some ways have distanced believers from the suffering and pain of others.

- **Do you agree with this? Does your church experience bring you closer to suffering, or take you further from it?**
- **Can you think of a time when you have embraced someone else's pain?**
- **How did this experience grow your faith?**
- **What holds you back from embracing more of others' pain?**

Noddy's challenge to all of us was to be willing to ask God to give us the name of a person that we could disciple – even if it means embracing their pain.

Write down the name of someone you know (someone who isn't a believer) who you know is carrying a measure of pain or suffering. Pray for them. Ask God to give you an opportunity embrace their pain.

You may also like to pray for each other and for these people before you close.