



university ministry

the MINISTRY PAPERS

missed opportunities...

Rosemary is a first-year uni student. She has recently moved here from a small country town. She has always been a church goer and her parents are particularly concerned that she join a good bible-teaching church.

The first weekend she is settling into university, her parents come with her to church. She is welcomed warmly. The church seems friendly and teaches the Bible well.

But a few weeks in, Rosemary is struggling. It seems like the people she has met at church are only friendly on Sunday. She has not been encouraged to join a growth group and apart from the first couple of weeks, no one invites her to be part of their lives.

At the college where she is staying, she is making more and more friends. She is quickly finding out that the party lifestyle is pretty exciting and enjoys the attention from non-Christian boys. Pretty soon Rosemary stops going to church. The small part church played in her life was no competition for the huge bombardment from the world.

Paul is a Christian fourth year student, he has been a regular attendee at church, but he has not been part of a growth group nor involved in ministry. Pretty soon, he will be leaving to work in a small country town with a small struggling church.

Paul has not been equipped to minister among the people he will soon live amongst.

LEADERS:...before taking someone through this paper, review the two key introductory MINISTRY PAPERS: 'the ministry training church' and 'meeting one to one'.

Connect. Grow. Serve. After **connecting** to God through trusting in Christ, a vital way we can **grow** is through a growth group and a vital way we can **serve** is through a ministry team.

This MINISTRY PAPER is designed to help your university ministry team leader introduce you to what it means to be part of serving in the **university ministry** team at our church.

It's much more than a training tool, it's all about relationships: who you minister *for*, who you minister *with*, and who you minister *to*...



*Ephesians 4 is a great starting point for all our ministry teams... read **Ephesians 4:1-16***

1. Who are we ultimately ministering *for*? Explain.

2. What do we learn here about those we minister *with*?

3. What do we learn here about those we minister *to*?

4. We must 'speak the truth in love'. What is this? Why is it crucial?



5. What personal challenges are you aware of in terms of playing your part in this ministry team?

6. What role will being actively involved in a growth group play in enabling you to carry out this ministry well?

flexible & fixed

Many of our ministry teams are focused on a particular age group or demographic, e.g. kids club, youth group, university ministry. That makes sense because each of these groups has its own particular needs. Each group has its own special challenges and opportunities. However, it's sometimes easy to recognise only what's **unique** about each group. It's easy to forget what **all people**, whatever age or stage, have in common. This section of the paper helps us think through what's **flexible** and what's **fixed** in our ministry to university students...



read **1 Corinthians 9:19-23**

1. What is *flexible* in Paul's approach to ministry?

2. What is *fixed* in Paul's approach to ministry?



3. Referring to the 'profile of a university student' opposite, in what ways will ministry to uni students need to flexible?

4. In all of this, what needs to stay fixed in our ministry to university students?



challenges and opportunities

Have another look at the 'profile of a university student'. Think through the particular challenges and opportunities of this ministry...

what are some of the challenges ?	what are some ideas for facing these?
what are some of the opportunities ?	what are some ideas for making the most of these?

profile of a student

new experiences, challenges and responsibilities

for many students, university presents a new period of freedom, perhaps living away from home for the first time in their lives. For many, this is exciting, for others it is difficult and may result in feelings of loneliness and homesickness.

temptation—peer influence

one of the most dangerous aspects of this new found freedom is the new temptations they will face. While they may have previously been shielded by Christian parents or peers, they are now vulnerable.

transitory

many uni students are imports from towns around the country and even the world. The most likely scenario is that they'll be with you for 3-4 years. The time for direct impact on your church may be limited. But the impact can be widespread as your students move to churches throughout the country and world.

a lot of expendable time

the typical student has between 20—25 contact hours per week and long periods of vacation. This is not to say that university is completely without stress, but that the freedom of time provides for a variety of ministry possibilities.

not much money

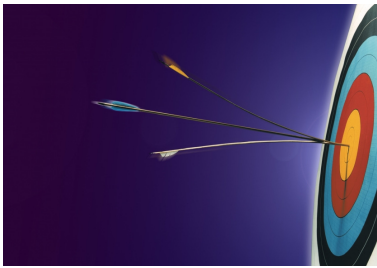
at the same time, because students are on a low income, many work long hours to support themselves while at university.

plenty of stress

this is often perpetuated by bad time management but also due to peak times of assessment on the university calendar.

thinking through life direction

university presents a major life change and with it, much reflection about future life direction; where to go, what to do. It's an important time to put the gospel of Jesus on the agenda and to think about a life of service to him.



staying on target

Hopefully the previous page generated lots of discussion about gospel ministry to university students. On the **'flexible'** aspects of this ministry, there are certainly many **good** approaches possible. But it's when we come back to the all-important **'fixed'** aspect—the gospel of Christ—that we can get clearer about the **best** approach. We need to remember our key goals in seeing every person grow to maturity in Christ. We also need to keep thinking through the steps or pathway people travel toward maturity. In short, we need to stay on target with what the ministry is there for...

carpe diem

Seizing the day is extremely important when it comes to new uni students. The uni environment is seductive and hostile to a life of following Jesus. So be sure to do as much as you can for new first years. Make every effort to see them established in a newcomers group and ensure that they are welcomed to your church. Hospitality is key.

Uni students aren't necessarily with you for long, so ministry needs to be as intentional as ever with them. In the pathway below, think through what it will mean to move them along in their growth and equipping.

For the more established student in your church, it won't be long before their course is finished and they may move away to the next phase of life. Consider how you might seize the time you have with them to see them equipped for a life of service to Jesus Christ.

Starting well is important, but so is finishing well. For this reason think about how you might send your students off. A good suggestion is a 'uni leaver's event' where you can encourage and pray for the students who are finishing up. How exciting to send them out, grounded in Christ, and ready to serve in their new church.

stage	strategy
Christian?	personal evangelism
initial church contact	welcoming team
maintaining contact	hospitality
getting acquainted	newcomers group
getting involved	joining/linked to a growth group
getting equipped	active in growth group
trained for ministry	taken through ministry paper
training others	take others through paper
leading growth group	apprentice leader

These ministry papers have been developed with a connect. grow. serve. pathway of Christian maturity in mind. The mature Christian in our church will live out and grow in their Christlikeness through...

- 1. being actively involved in a growth group = grow
- 2. being actively involved in a ministry team = serve

Making the most of the opportunities discussed on page 2 will mean staying focused on these two simple goals. It will mean encouraging university students to be actively involved in a growth group and in a ministry team. Through these two simple goals, all the important relationships in the believer's life are addressed.

growth group goal	ministry team goal
a growing relationship with God , especially through personal Bible reading and prayer	according to the needs of the church according to the gifts of the individual believer
growing relationships with other believers , especially through the growth group	
growing relationships with those in their family/household , as servants	
growing relationships with unbelievers , especially through personal evangelism	
growing relationships with the whole church in mission, serving in a ministry team	



Thinking through the goals above, why might **evangelism** be the priority for the 'on-campus' part of university ministry?

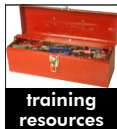
How can this priority be reflected in how we approach this ministry?

getting equipped

Evangelism is a priority for the on-campus aspect of University ministry. In terms of growing relationships with unbelievers within which the gospel can be shared, such opportunities abound in university life. Students need to be prepared to make the most of these opportunities. That means equipping them with useful gospel outlines, such as Two Ways to Live. Given the diversity of thought encountered on campus, it also means using resources that equip students for evangelism in such a challenging context. Such resources are discussed below.



But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. **1 Peter 3:15a**



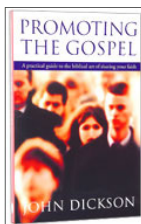
training resources

Many MINISTRY PAPERS are being developed to help in this area of equipping (e.g. personal evangelism, personal apologetics, cults, etc). Also see www.afes.org.au/_resource. The resources below are also worth getting to know.



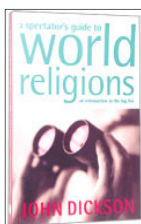
two ways to live (Matthias Media)

This well-known evangelistic tool has been developed into a user-friendly and effective training course. It equips the believer with two basic and essential things: (1) a sound and thorough knowledge of what the gospel is, and (2) the ability to share it with someone else clearly and naturally when the opportunity arises.



promoting the gospel (John Dickson)

In this excellent introduction to evangelism, John Dickson takes a step back and looks at the broader issues such as how we pray, how we act, the way we spend our money, as well as the way we talk about our faith. He also tackles the issue of gifted evangelists, along with the role we all have to play in evangelism. It's a book that equips us as the Christian community to promote the gospel.



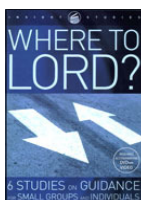
spectator's guide to world religions (John Dickson)

A terrific plain English guide to the biggest five religions of the world. A great strength to Dickson's approach is allowing each religion to shine its own light rather than conducting a comparative study. As a result, the uniqueness of Christ and the gospel of grace is even more apparent. This book is excellent for equipping university students in understanding and engaging with many of the new ideas they face at university.



tough questions (Matthias Media)

This set of five Bible studies is designed to explain what it means to be a Christian and to present a non-Christian with the challenging message of Jesus. The studies are all based on passages from the Gospel of Mark, and focus on five 'tough questions' that arise in the narrative: Are you so dull? (7:1-23); Who can forgive sins? (2:1-12); Who do you say I am? (9:27-38); What must I do? (10:17-31); My God, my God, why? (14:53-65, 15:1-41)



where to Lord ?

Based on the book by P. Jensen & T. Payne 'Guidance and the Voice of God', *Where to, Lord?* uses a mix of Bible investigation, group discussion and video input to interact with what God is saying about the important topic of guidance. Clarity on how God speaks to us is essential in evangelism, as in all of the Christian life.

opportunity taken!

Angus moved to town four years ago to study. He'd been involved in church with his family in the town he'd grown up in. He thought he probably should find a church but wasn't sure where to start...

During O-Week Angus was greeted by some students who told him about the on-campus activities of the Christian group. He was invited to a BBQ where he could connect a bit more with these Christians and also find out about a good bible-teaching church. At church, he met Christians of all ages—a real church family.

There were still lots of temptations being put before Angus in the uni environment, especially from non-Christian peers. But through his growth group at church he was developing deep friendships that encouraged him to grow in Christ and choose to live consistently with Jesus as his Lord. Not only that, through the prayer and support of this group, along with extra equipping through the on-campus ministry, Angus was able to exert influence on his non-Christian friends the other way. He started sharing the gospel with them and inviting them to outreach events.

Angus also started thinking differently about his 'career'. He still studies hard, serving Jesus in his work. But he realised that his time at uni wasn't just about getting equipped for work, but for ministry too. Angus grew in his ministry to others, e.g. encouraging others in his growth group; service and hospitality in his share-house.

Encouraged by his growth group leader, Angus also got involved in the church's kids church ministry. The kids church leader trained Angus over a couple of years to be a competent leader. Angus was ready, if needed, even to start a kids church ministry in the town he was sent to for his work. He was also now weighing up full-time ministry in the future...