



Our Vision for Sunday nights

Because of our goal to proclaim Christ to everyone in Sydney's east, Evening Church aims to be:

A contemporary bible-teaching church with a casual feel – all are welcome, and especially for youth, students & young workers.

Our Values

Evangelical

By 'evangelical' we mean that all our ministry will be in accordance with the evangelical faith, as expressed in the 39 Articles and AFES doctrinal statement – in summary, that sinful humanity is saved by God's grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone, as revealed in the Scriptures alone.

Everything must come back to the gospel of Christ, because the gospel changes everything.

Expository

The true God has spoken to us; listening to him speak in all the Bible is the heart of our Sunday meetings. The expository and systematic teaching of the Bible is our regular diet, preaching Christ in all the Scriptures for they are centred on Him.

Evangelistic

'Church is for Christians, with a view to the outsider' ... so our Sunday meetings will always be accessible to outsiders from our post-Christian society. We intentionally address and challenge Christians and non-Christians, with the confidence that the one gospel is God's good news for all.

Thinking

capture the mind ...

The timeless truths of the Bible will be taught in a way that equips people to think critically about their culture and their life, knowing that there is nothing more practical than good doctrine.

Transforming

... and capture the heart

Jesus is Lord over all; our meetings will challenge people not to be comfortable but courageous Christians – always repenting, always assured, and always knowing that it is only by God's grace and his Spirit's work that we can grow like Christ. We want to make the truth clear and make it real.

Prayerful dependence

Sunday nights are permeated by a prayerful dependence on God's sovereign grace. We will model kingdom-centred praying, using prepared, spontaneous and corporate/liturgical prayers.

A loving community

In a world of individualism & consumerism, our meetings will encourage & embody serving others – so that we are actively sharing our lives, loving our neighbour & taking initiative in growing Christ's kingdom. We celebrate the unity the gospel brings in drawing together a multi-age, multi-ethnic community under Christ.

Appropriate feel

We want to be culturally appropriate for the youth, students and workers we are ministering to. The feel needs to be contemporary, energetic, welcoming, well prepared, reverent, creative and joyful. Sundays are the high-point of our life together, and should be memorable for all the best reasons.

Welcoming

We are always concerned to welcome newcomers, both publicly and personally – and making sure we're moving from friendly to friendships.

Growing

As we proclaim Christ to Sydney's east, we pray & plan to grow, and we welcome the changes & sacrifices this requires.

Music

The words of our songs must be Christ-centred and reflect the evangelical understanding of Scripture. The music should be contemporary, energetic, well practiced & played, to serve not perform, and help us express emotion Christianly.

Gender

Our meetings reflect the Bible's wonderful vision of how God designed men & women for a differentiated and complementary ministry.

ⁱ With thanks to Dominic Steele, as this draws on Christians in the Media's *Mission, Ten Year Vision, Values and Objectives* document, April 2006

for musicians ...

- > practice is important – so that the music doesn't attract attention to itself but to the words about Christ
- > song-leaders need to bravely lead in enthusiasm, joy & smiling, so that the congregation will follow suit
- > *contemporary* evangelical music means we need to keep introducing new songs, while limiting ourselves to one hymn per week (= any song with old-school language, pretty much anything written before 1960!)
- > to help the meeting run smoothly, it'll help for the musos to stay up the front if two songs aren't far apart

for bible readers ...

- > prepare well by practising reading the passage aloud from the ESV
- > on the night, introduce yourself, give the page number & book/chapter *twice*, don't rush

for those praying ...

- > prepare well (ask your small group leader to help you if it's your first time)
- > introduce yourself, briefly explain what you're praying for, then lead us in talking to our heavenly Father

for preachers ...

- > consciously address both Christians and non-Christians [think about the questions an unbeliever would have about the passage]
- > continue to put the demands of the gospel in the context of the grace of the gospel, so that we avoid both moralism/legalism and hedonism/licence. Or in other words, keep proclaiming Christ from whichever part of the Scriptures, as they all testify to Him.

for meeting leaders ...

- > the meeting should run from 6.00 to 7.15 [prepare well, so that you're prepared to adapt on the night]
- > be purposeful with every part of the meeting, & think how the songs relate to each other and the bible talk. Remember that our priorities will be seen by what we leave out.
- > make sure the high-value truths are before us every week – Christ-less and cross-less Christianity are no Christianity at all.
- > you are the most important person in welcoming first-timers: show us your smile, share your warmth and leave the jargon at home.
- > make sure the welcome time or asking people to fill in slips aren't straight after the first song(s)
- > all 'ministry matters' need to come in by Saturday, and should have Powerpoint slides where possible. We aim to restrict ourselves to one major announcement each week, and several smaller ones.
- > include one piece of liturgy every fortnight. When we have confession, make sure that we are assured of our forgiveness because of God's precious promises in the gospel of Jesus.
- > call the readers & pray-ers early in the week (don't just email)
- > arrive by 5.30 sharp, and make sure everyone knows what they're doing (eg, the musicians know when to stay up the front where there's a short gap between songs)
- > be creative – there is so much more we could do with Sundays!
- > help us rejoice and have fun as we meet as God's family