

## Discipleship in Today's World: 'A Balanced Life'

According to recent surveys the average Briton works between 3.5 and 5 hours longer per week, per person, than any other nation in the EU. This has led to an epidemic of depression, stress-induced disease, lower levels of parental engagement, relational breakdown and diminished productivity and creativity – and that's just the managers!

All of this highlights the need for today's disciples of Jesus Christ to live balanced lives. The model is provided by Jesus himself; he achieved a balanced lifestyle by maintaining 3 key relationships: with God (UP), others (IN) and the world (OUT). These can be pictured as 3 points of a triangle. Also in Luke 6: 12-19 we can see how this worked out practically in Jesus' life:

**UP:** Jesus spent a whole night in prayer before calling his disciples (12). It was his regular habit to spend quality time with his Father; in order to know the Father's will for his life and ministry.

**IN:** Jesus called his disciples to spend time alongside him and to teach them kingdom life and mission (13-16).

**OUT:** Jesus brought God's love into a dark world, by teaching, healing and releasing those in bondage to sin and Satan (17-19).

The challenge for us is to maintain these 3 growing relationships in balance in our own lives. In what direction are we stronger or weaker? Consider your own life and the life of your church:

- \* UP: Are we giving adequate time to intimacy with God in worship, prayer etc?
- \* IN: Are we neglecting the support and encouragement of fellowship with other Christians?
- \* OUT: Are we keeping our faith alive by sharing the gospel with others?

If you want to know more about how the triangle can help you lead a balanced Christian life read 'A Passionate Life' by Mike Breen and Walt Kallestad (NexGen, 2005).

**The Rev Paul Hardingham continues his series on discipleship**

The grace of God on you distil,  
The grace of Christ bedewing fill,  
The grace of Spirit flowing still  
Each day and night upon you pour  
Of this life's share for you in store;  
O day and night upon you pour  
Of this life's share for you in store.

Poems of the Western Highlanders