

VISION 2023



Over the past year at King's, we focused on three things we felt God was calling us to:

1. *Rediscovering church as family (after a long pandemic!)*
2. *Recalibrating ourselves to the Great Commission*
3. *Receiving the Holy Spirit in power*

We're still all about those things and feel God leading us to dig deeper into them in 2023.

On Sunday, the elders shared more about the vision for the year ahead from Isaiah 54. If you didn't hear that, please do catch up online. Today, we're going to discuss how we can apply some of the key points to our personal lives and our life as a small group.

Read **Isaiah 54** together:

54 *"Sing, O barren one, who did not bear;
break forth into singing and cry aloud,
you who have not been in labour!*

*For the children of the desolate one will be more
than the children of her who is married," says the LORD.*

² *"Enlarge the place of your tent,
and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out;
do not hold back; **lengthen** your cords
and **strengthen** your stakes.*

³ *For you will **spread out** to the right and to the left,
and your offspring will possess the nations
and will people the desolate cities.*

⁴ *"Fear not, for you will not be ashamed;
be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced.*

In the context of barrenness, God's people are called to sing for joy!

We may not yet be seeing all we want to in our church, our city or our nation. But instead of dialling down our expectations of what God wants to do or becoming cynical, let's respond with joyful praise. God is calling us to sing and proclaim His promises in faith.

Discussion question:

- The Bible commands the people of God to *"sing for joy"* over and over again! (e.g. Ps. 67, Ps. 98, Ps. 149, Isa. 12, Isa. 26, Isa. 42, Isa. 49). How can we, personally and as a small group, get into habits of singing for joy, even in seemingly dry seasons of life?

In 2023, we feel God calling us to **lengthen, strengthen** and **spread out**.

1. **Lengthen** our cords

Through prayer

Prayer takes us forward in faith, going ahead of where we currently are. When the early church was faced with pressure to retreat or give up, they responded in prayer which led to advance (Acts 4:23-31). So, we need to be a church family that prays.

Discussion questions:

- Do you have any examples from your own life where united prayer with other Christians has led to breakthrough?
- How can we make prayer a bigger part of our individual life and the life of this small group?

***Idea:** come along to Sunday Night Prayer meetings in the Side Hall (6.30-7.30pm) to join with others in prayer. Praying with others stirs our faith and can be helpful in teaching us how to pray!*

2. **Strengthen** our stakes

The Holy Spirit

Above all, we need more of the Holy Spirit to strengthen us as individuals and as a church! We need to keep asking for His presence and power in every area of the church's life, and our own lives.

Discussion question:

- How can we make more space to receive the strength of the Holy Spirit in our individual lives and small group meetings?

Church Family

We're asking that God would specifically strengthen us as a church family.

Discussion question:

- How can we ensure we're cultivating relationships across barriers in church (e.g. generational barriers, racial barriers, background, etc.)

***Some ideas:** sign up for the Church Weekend Away (19th-21st May); join a serving team; host a student lunch; go on a Cake Walk; invite someone round who you wouldn't naturally hang out with.*

3. Spread out

Everyone a Witness

Every Christian is called to tell other people about Jesus, and every church is called to be involved in spreading the Good News.

Discussion question:

- Last term, we spent most of our time in our small group discussing the Great Commission and how we can each grow in personal evangelism. How can we keep growing and spurring one another on in sharing our faith regularly?

***Some ideas:** go along to the Street Café together one Saturday; use and pass on the TryPraying booklet that every person in King's will receive on 19th March; pray for our non-Christian friends and colleagues in small group; invite non-Christians to come along to small group to meet other Christians (socials, etc.).*

Local Expressions of King's

Members of King's are scattered across Edinburgh and the Lothians, giving us the opportunity to reach many different local communities in our city and beyond. In March, a group of people living in the north of Edinburgh (led by Rosalie Faithfull) are starting a lunchtime Alpha Course at a community centre in Granton. The small groups in the north of Edinburgh are working together to deliver flyers to homes in that area.

Discussion question:

- What could it look like over the coming months and years for us to reach people together in our local area with the Gospel?

What's next?

The elders felt that as we follow God in this coming season, we are to be defined by three characteristics: **obedience**, **courage**, and **faithfulness**. In the coming weeks, we will be producing a Bible study on each of those characteristics.