

Living on Mission at The Taste of Wheaton

by Janet Click

For a while, I've wrestled with what living on mission looks like in the context of my life in Wheaton. I am not a missionary called to the farthest places of the globe, but I am a follower of Jesus and I am called to live a life on mission—but what mission?

As a follower of Christ, I am commanded by Jesus "to go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." I've recited Matthew 28:19 since grade school and because of that, I don't think I absorb the weightiness of it as I should. It is not a request, a thing to strive for in the future—a maybe someday when I know more or I have more time or I don't have all these other things to do—I will work towards sharing the gospel. No, it is a command for now. What a tremendously huge call and purpose we have on our lives as believers. And we are not left to go and make disciples in our own strength. Acts 1:8 says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Wow. We have the power of God upon us through the Holy Spirit to be God's witnesses, telling people about him everywhere—in Wheaton.

With this at the forefront of my mind, I along with several other College Church people volunteered to staff a table at the Taste of Wheaton. I didn't go into the event with the intent of explicitly sharing the gospel. I wanted to be a warm and friendly presence as a representative of the church, welcoming members of the community to participate in life at our church through various ministries such as STARS, children's and adult ministries. I also wanted to connect with young families and invite any moms of preschoolers to Mom2Mom, a ministry I'm involved in serving with at College Church.

But when I woke up Saturday morning, I was starting to regret that I had signed up to sit at the table for four hours that day. What was I thinking? I was feeling nervous and I prayed, "Lord, use me this morning how you want to use me. Bring those who are seeking you and seeking truth to the table. Give me discernment in conversations. Help me not to miss any opportunities for gospel conversations." As I ran out the door, I grabbed a Bible just in case.

The first hour of the Taste of Wheaton, Chris Tews and I chatted with runners who had finished the Cosley Zoo Run for the Animals and promoted the Run for the STARS. Every time we saw a family with kids, we invited the kids to play games for a prize. While the kids played, we talked with the parents about the great free summer programs we have for kids at the church and in neighborhood backyards and handed them fliers with information. I had some wonderful conversations with moms during the morning about Mom2Mom. In fact, the Monday after the Taste of Wheaton, a mom came to the Mom2Mom park play date who had received a flyer from College Church at the Taste of Wheaton. It was great to see this mom—and I'm sure other families, as well—get connected to our church because of our presence at the Taste of Wheaton. My prayer and hope is that through these connections, there will be gospel fruit.



By far, my most exciting conversation of the morning took place when Carolyn Litfin was working with me. A woman came up to the table and asked if she could take two of the free prizes we were giving away, one for her and one for her friend fighting cancer. I said, "Of course!" We chatted briefly, but I could tell the woman was lingering.

I decided to use the question Wil Triggs had provided as a prompt for conversation. "We are collecting people's questions," I said. "You can write down a question to God and put it in the box, and if you'd like a pastor will get back to you. If you could ask God any question, what would you ask?"

She looked up at me and said, "I do have a question for God. Why does he allow suffering?" I listened as she described some of the suffering she has seen in her life, and I prayed silently, "Lord, help me." Then I started talking. I can't recount everything I shared, but Carolyn and I both talked with her about how all good things come from God and how God works all things—even the bad—together for good. We shared the gospel and the hope that can be found in Jesus with her. We invited her to a summer Bible study Carolyn is hosting, and got her contact information to follow up with her. And we prayed with her that God would help and guide her as she seeks truth.

I don't know what the Lord has in store for our relationship with this woman. But I do know that I learned important lessons at the Taste of Wheaton. When do I slow down enough in my life to be available to others who are spiritually curious and searching for truth? How often do I pray that God would bring someone to me who is searching so that I can share the good news of the gospel with him or her? How often do I engage people in spiritual conversations by asking questions? Do I believe that I have the power of God in me, equipping me for the work of evangelism?

My four hours of serving at the Taste of Wheaton reminded me that the spiritually curious are all around us. Will you pray for God to bring someone into your path who desperately needs to know him; then pray for boldness and open doors to share the good news of Jesus with them and be ready to truly obey Jesus' command to go and make disciples in his power.