

WORKSHOP C: CHURCH LEADERS' WORKSHOP NOTES

Charles Jardine

Shared his experiences of being hard of hearing, having difficulty picking up words at either end of the sound spectrum. Conversations are awkward. And with an ageing population the problem is going to increase. Those in relationship with the deaf can get easily frustrated, so they also need support. Gadgets can help but relationship is the key.

Discussion with regard to raising awareness and supporting deaf people in a typical church building

- Training church personnel, ie in welcoming, and drawing alongside, using simple sign language.
- Voice projection, eg. face listeners directly, speak slowly, avoid big hi-lo range.
- Church sound equipment, eg. optimise ordinary and impaired hearers' reception.
- Church visual equipment, eg. show main points, which facilitate 'the jigsaw'.
- Written word (during and after services), eg. ensure the essentials are covered
- Guidance about info/agencies/providers, etc. of suitable remedies for deaf people, ie. NHS, AoHL, etc...

Simon James-Morse from Goldstone Church

Not an expert and still developing. We learn from deaf people themselves. At church, an important principle is that all are made to feel welcomed.

Techniques include, speaking in short sentences; using words that can be signed; using a series of different words to say the same thing. Preparation is key. Have available recordings of services and sermon notes. (Speakers on the floor can help people to feel vibrations through their feet.)

Group contributions

- Visual material important.
- Sermon notes help people to follow teaching and supports the message.
- Clear signage in the church buildings is enormously helpful so that deaf people can feel at ease and more confident in their surroundings.
- Simple outlines of services and what is happening is helpful.
- Every effort should be made to remove any fears and anxieties.
- Relationships between people supporting deaf people should be a shared responsibility of the church.
- Attitudes are important and any training should be for all in the church.
- Clear and appropriate lighting is important.
- If any videos are used then subtitles are essential.
- A useful exercise can be to replicate deafness and give people a task.
- If singing and words are up on a screen then an arrow alongside is better than a bouncing ball, indicating each word.