

## Something or someone out there is listening to what you say

Simon Cooper

April 30, 2013



I had a hope while we were living elsewhere that when we moved back in to our home I would start a small group in our street. I would put a letter through every door and... and it was far enough off for me not to really have to do anything, and not have a true sense of what it required.

And so when we moved back in nothing happened. But it is still there in my heart and it won't leave me. You could say it's a vision that I have in me.

This evening I caught the train into Paddington to meet someone from the congregation. And then after around 7.45 pm I was going to go on into the office at 43LG, but decided to head home instead.

I saw one of my neighbours sitting on a bench waiting for the train, and waved. She didn't see me. It must have been the fourth person I had waved at today who *didn't* see me. People had sunglasses, bright early morning sun, mentally preoccupied on the school run, so it didn't bother me...

You know that feeling when people haven't seen you, what do you do? I decided to walk on: "anyway, I can carry on with what I was writing. I'll go and sit in the end carriage so that we don't bump into each other." But something felt wrong. It didn't really fit with what was in my heart. What's the point in having a neighbour if I walk on just because I couldn't catch their eye? Especially when they looked like they could do with a chat.



So I hung around after the ticket barrier and said hello again. And we got on the train and talked, and I got

to mention about my vision for a small group in our street where we could study together and share in our faith. I mentioned how I had been at the local residents meeting last week which had been good, but it would be nice to have something that is less about looking at planning law, and more about looking at God's plan...

She said she used to be in a small group where she used to live. She said she would be interested. Even better she helped me solve my dilemma about how to go about it. As I shared about how I didn't really want to organise it all on my own, and didn't really feel like doing a mail shot to the whole street, ...she gave lots of good advice:

“Why not ask people verbally first, and then if people are interested put a note through the door to confirm and maybe it could only be once a month, every week would be too much... etc.”

And then we talked about the snakes and turtles and lizards her partner keeps and his gardening, and we said good bye at our front gates.

And then I remembered, just over a week ago in church, I had verbalised the need to go forward with what was in my heart. Someone had been listening.....and maybe that someone had encouraged and spoken to me through my kind neighbour.

At the start of my sermon I had read out a list of questions and issues that people have shared in our home services. One of them was mine: (the one in bold).

“Questions we need to talk to someone about rather than keep hidden inside our hearts:

- I often can't pray and I don't understand why.
- **I want to reach out more to people in my street but I don't know where to start and need more spiritual power.**
- I don't have a spiritual mentor or someone I can go to for discussing my spiritual life
- I am frustrated going to church and sitting there and feeling nothing is really changing in the world. ...and this challenges my faith
- I believe in the idea of living for the sake of others, but find myself most of the time thinking about myself. ...that challenges my faith.
- I see a problem in our community and I can also see a solution for it, but I need to share my vision with others.