

Summary

Pastor Sven delivered a challenging message titled 'Fight or Flight' that confronted the Adventist tendency to retreat from cities and communities. He argued that instead of fleeing to rural areas as many Adventists have done since the 1946 publication of 'Country Living,' Christians are called to be salt and light in the world. The pastor emphasized that 80% of the population lives in urban areas, yet Adventists have moved away from cities, limiting their evangelistic impact. He challenged the congregation to create 'centers of influence' - places like coffee shops, gyms, or creative spaces where people can gather daily and encounter Christ through relationships. Using the parable of the mustard seed, he illustrated how the church should grow and branch out rather than remain as a single isolated trunk. The sermon concluded with a call to action, urging members to engage their communities actively rather than huddle together in comfortable isolation, emphasizing that now is the time to fight for the gospel, not flee from the world that needs it.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather together in this small group, we thank You for bringing us here today. We ask that You open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us through Your Word. Help us to be receptive to Your Holy Spirit's leading and give us courage to step out of our comfort zones when You call us to action. May our time together strengthen our faith and inspire us to be the salt and light You have called us to be in our communities. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's one place in your community where you feel most comfortable spending time, and what draws you to that place?

Key Verses

- Matthew 28:19-20
- Matthew 5:13-16
- Acts 1:8
- Matthew 13:31-32

- Luke 8:15

Questions

- How do you personally balance the biblical call to be separate from the world while also being actively engaged in reaching people for Christ?
- Pastor Sven mentioned that many Adventists have moved away from cities based on Ellen White's 'Country Living' counsel. How do we properly understand and apply prophetic counsel in different contexts and times?
- What does it mean practically for our church to be 'salt and light' in the Lacey community? What specific ways could we increase our influence?
- The sermon challenged the idea of churches remaining as single isolated 'trunks' rather than branching out. What are your thoughts on church planting and creating multiple centers of influence?
- How do you respond to the statistic that personal invitation is the most effective way to bring people to church? What holds us back from inviting others?
- The pastor proposed various 'third place' ministry ideas like Creative Juices, gyms, and coffee shops. What opportunities do you see in our community for creating such centers of influence?
- What fears or concerns do you have about stepping out of traditional church methods to reach people in new ways?
- How can we ensure that as we engage more with our community, we maintain our distinctive Adventist message and identity?

Life Application

This week, identify one person in your life who is not a church member and pray about how you might build a deeper relationship with them. Consider inviting them to a community activity, offering help with something they need, or simply spending quality time getting to know them better. Look for natural opportunities to share God's love through your actions and words.

Key Takeaways

- Christians are called to be salt and light in the world, not to retreat from it

- The Great Commission requires active engagement with our communities, especially in urban areas where most people live
- Churches should function like branching trees rather than isolated single trunks, creating multiple centers of influence
- Personal invitation is the most effective method of evangelism, with one in three people accepting when personally invited
- Now is the time to fight for the gospel through community engagement, not flee from the world that needs Christ

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for challenging us today through Your Word. We confess that sometimes we prefer the comfort of staying within our church walls rather than venturing out to be Your witnesses. Give us courage to step out in faith and create meaningful connections in our community. Help us to see opportunities to serve others and share Your love in practical ways. May we be faithful to Your call to be salt and light, bringing hope and healing to those around us. Guide us as we seek to plant seeds of Your kingdom wherever You lead us. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.