

Fruitful Churches – Reflection Session Results and Summary

At each of the five Fruitful Churches Reflection Sessions, the reflections (on Post-its) from each table group were collected and then collated to produce the tables on the following pages. The top strongest results for each question have been shown in bold type in the tables and these are then used to produce the bar charts. However, for some churches, the other topics further down the list, could well be the subject which, for them, is the area they should concentrate on. We pray that the Holy Spirit will guide each church to discover where their areas of concern and action will lead them.



As already stated during the process, not all churches will want to tackle every highlighted practice of a Fruitful Church in their first months (year?) of being a Fruitful Church, but hopefully they will analyse which of the practices they need to concentrate on first. Then, following that, which issues within those practices they see as their priorities.

A brief summary of the reflections is given below, but for a more comprehensive understanding of the reflections, the reader should refer to the full tables.

Week 1 – RADICAL HOSPITALITY

We need to provide people with a warmth of welcome that goes the extra mile. To do this we need to be Christ-like - taking the initiative to invite all, including the stranger; accepting all without question; seeking to understand and meet their needs (practical and spiritual) as they see them – so that they see the radical hospitality of Christ in action in us. PH

Week 2 – PASSIONATE WORSHIP

Passionate worship is built on an awareness of God that generates a sense of expectancy and awe. Such worship must be the best we can achieve; relevant to our lives, fresh, focused and well prepared. It is not confined to any particular style but does require a positive fellowship. PH

Week 3 – INTENTIONAL FAITH DEVELOPMENT

We develop our faith to be more like Jesus; a life-long journey helping us to deal with life as we find it. This is best done in small communities provided we are purposeful and deliberate. However, we are very different people in many ways; thus the challenge of being in a group that suites us and meets our needs. Growth in faith will strengthen us as individuals and prosper our collective work for the Kingdom. PH

Week 4 – RISK-TAKING MISSION & SERVICE

We need to reach out in to our communities to understand the needs of people (the many areas of “poverty” in their lives) and help to meet those needs even, or especially, where it requires us to move out of our own comfort zones. Our support needs to be practical (especially home mission), financial and prayerful. Our loving and appropriate service is usually the best, first way of showing the all-embracing love of Christ for them. PH

Week 5 – EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY

Although Robert Schnase in his books focuses on financial generosity, the Reflections Sessions we have been part of have embraced how extravagant generosity in the use of skills and talents might enrich the life of the church. Our churches are blessed with people possessing many skills and talents, but we need to find the right ways to release that potential. It is significant that the reflection which produced the highest rating in this exercise was ‘Selfless Generosity’. RB

Fruitful Churches Week 1 – Radical Hospitality Reflection Session Results

The following table columns show:

- 1) The number of Post-its.
- 2) Their approximate percentage.
- 3) The gist of their common traits – the strongest top reflections are in bold type and are shown as bar charts on page 3 of the results.

Question 1 – Identify the most important things highlighted in the video.

27	31	Giving a warm welcome
20	23	Getting/going outside of the church
9	10	Sharing non-threatening love
7	8	Take the initiative to invite – especially young people
6	7	People’s needs and listening to them
6	7	Cater for AAW and families
4	5	Taking risks – thinking outside of the box
2	2	First impressions count
2	2	Being faithful
2	2	Provide a comfortable building
1	1	Being prepared
1	1	Communication
<hr/>		
87		

Question 2 – Who or what is a guest?

16	57	Anybody/anyone/a stranger who is welcome
3	11	An invitee
3	11	Someone searching
3	11	A recipient of hospitality
1	4	A potential disciple
1	4	Someone we would welcome as we would Christ
1	4	The unexpected visitor
<hr/>		
28		

Question 3 – What might a guest need and expect?

15	21	A warm welcome
14	20	Acceptance
13	18	A listening ear and friendship
11	15	Guidance as to church protocol, procedures and facilities (the loos!)
7	10	Their practical needs met
5	7	Their spiritual needs met
4	6	To have a non-threatening experience
1	1	Love
1	1	To hear the Gospel message
<hr/>		
71		

Question 4 – What is the difference between Hospitality and Radical Hospitality?

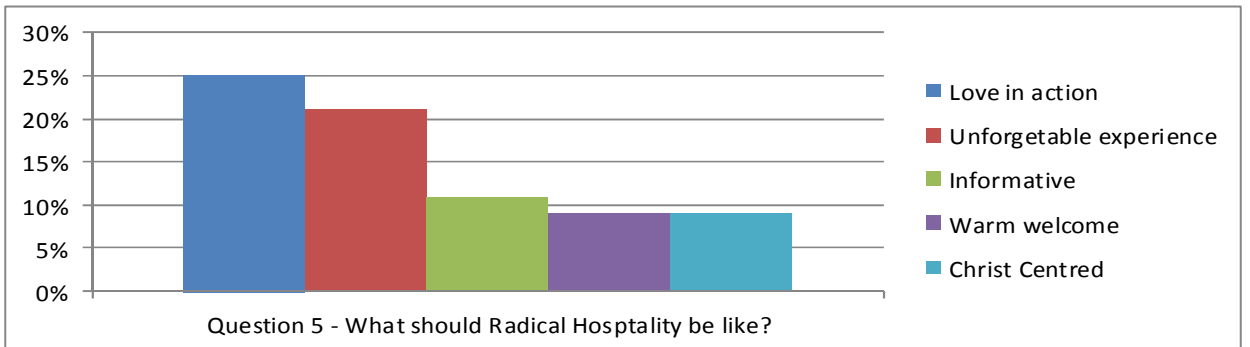
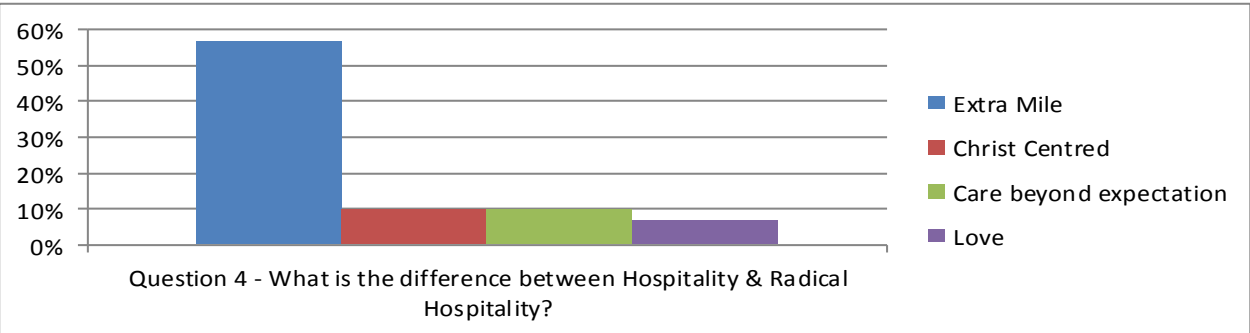
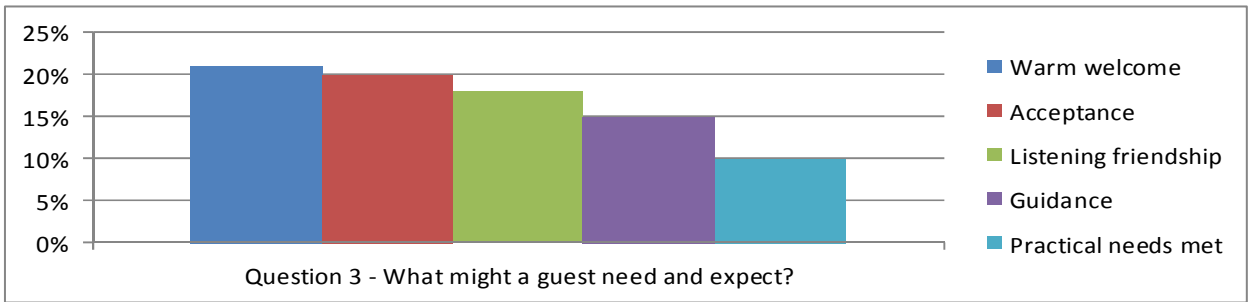
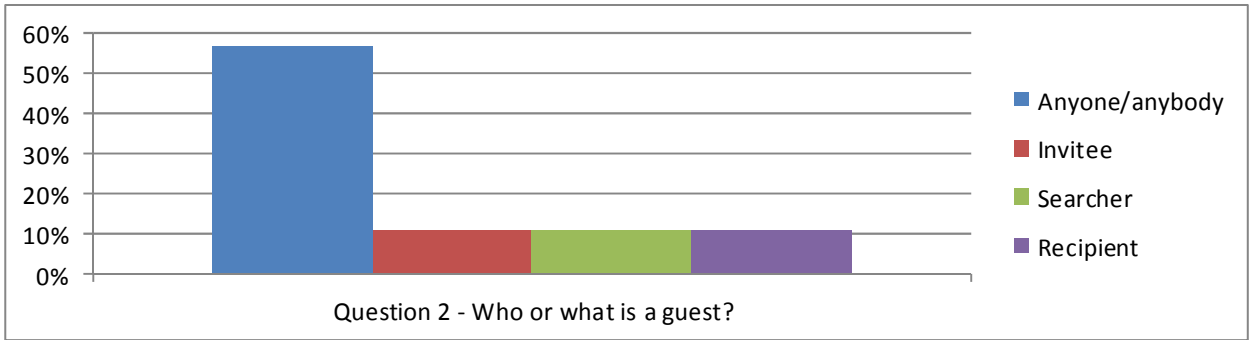
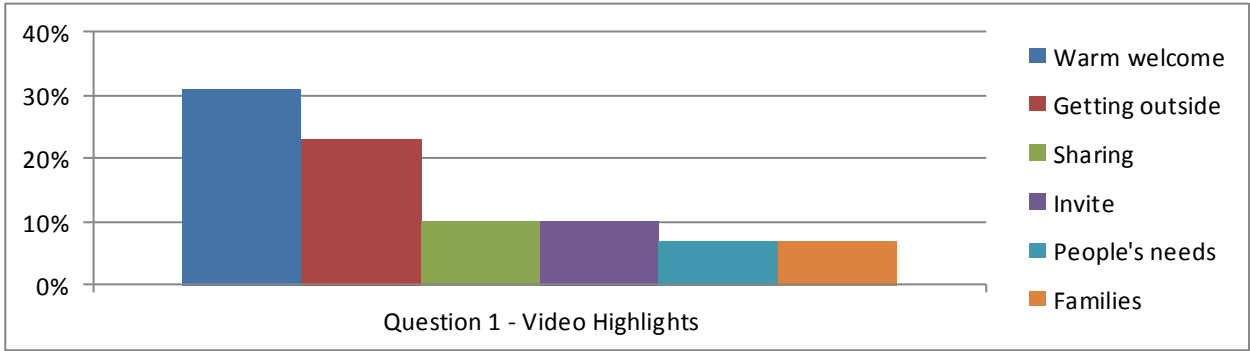
16	57	Going the extra mile
3	10	Being Christ and/or Holy Spirit led
3	10	Exceeding the visitor's expectations – selfless care
2	7	Showing love
1	4	Speaking to someone outside the normal circle
1	4	Being unlimited in one's efforts
1	4	Meeting people's practical needs
1	4	An experience of 'magnificent' friendliness
<hr/>		
28		

Question 5 – For a guest, what should Radical Hospitality be like?

14	25	Seeing God's unconditional caring love in action
12	21	Receiving an unforgettable experience (positive I assume?), feeling included and having a desire to return <i>and</i> fresh coffee!
6	11	Offering full information about church life beyond Sundays
5	9	A warm meaningful unconditional welcome for all
5	9	Christ centred
2	4	Being aware of a common goal involving everyone
2	4	Genuine
2	4	Not risk adverse ie. Risk-taking
1	2	Using Social Media for better communications
1	2	What <u>you</u> would expect of Radical Hospitality
1	2	Fulfilling a guest's needs
1	2	Unobtrusive collection/acquisition of their details
1	2	An eagerness to offer their gifts
1	2	Knowing it's community wide
1	2	No apparent barriers
1	2	If we knew – we would do it!
<hr/>		
56		

Notes:

The topics shown on the right hand side of the following bar charts only give the minimum title to the topic; please refer to the results above for a full description.



Fruitful Churches Week 2 – Passionate Worship – Reflection Session Results

The following table columns show:

- 1) The number of Post-its.
- 2) Their approximate percentage.
- 3) The gist of their common traits – the strongest top reflections are in bold type and are shown as bar charts on page 3 of the results.

Question 1 – What did you think the three most important things on the video were?

18	25	A sense of expectancy and awe
14	19	Working together is important
14	19	Flexibility and a range of styles in worship
6	8	Giving our best, not mediocre
5	7	Encountering God
3	4	Good preparation
2	3	Passionate in participation
2	3	Offering ourselves to God
1	1	The church exists for those outside
1	1	It's not about giving a performance
1	1	We need to be bold about our faith
1	1	Good preaching is important
1	1	Worship needs to be cohesive
1	1	Prayer is important
1	1	We need to do research and look outwards to find the needs
1	1	Guitar and organ help worship
1	1	Technology can aid worship
<hr/>		
73		

Question 2 – What happens when our worship is at its best?

24	29	Change happens in people's lives
16	19	We experience God
14	17	Worship is inspirational and sincere
9	11	We feel uplifted
6	7	The Holy Spirit is felt to be present
4	5	We feel challenged by God
3	4	We let go and let God
2	2	We feel confident to invite others
1	1	Faith grows
1	1	We trust God
1	1	There is good preparation
1	1	There is good leadership
1	1	We get out of worship what we put in
<hr/>		
83		

Question 3 – What makes worship passionate?

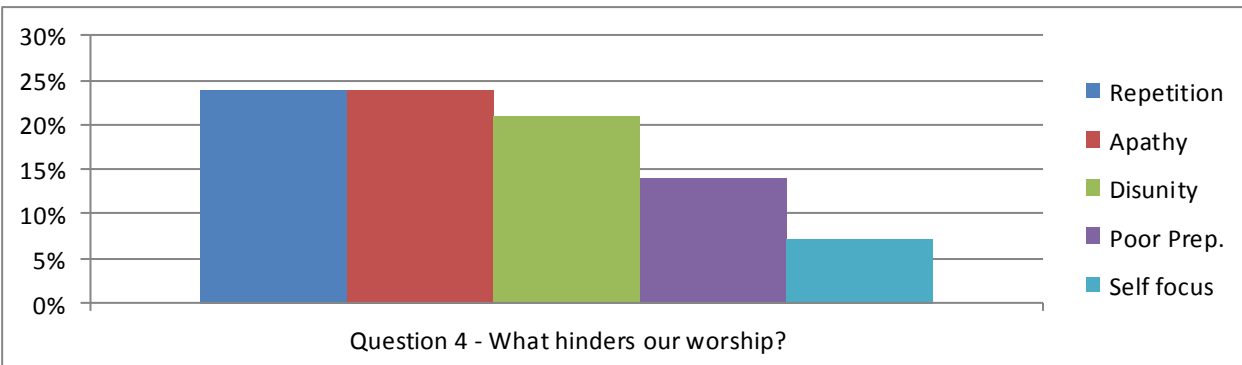
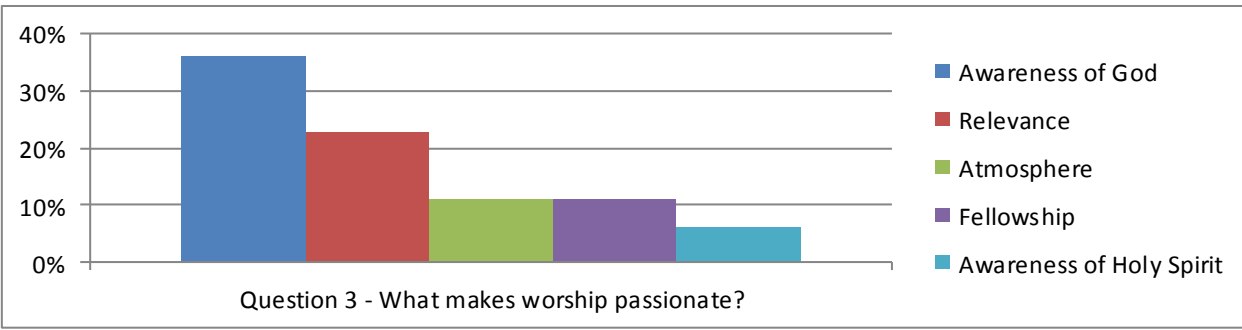
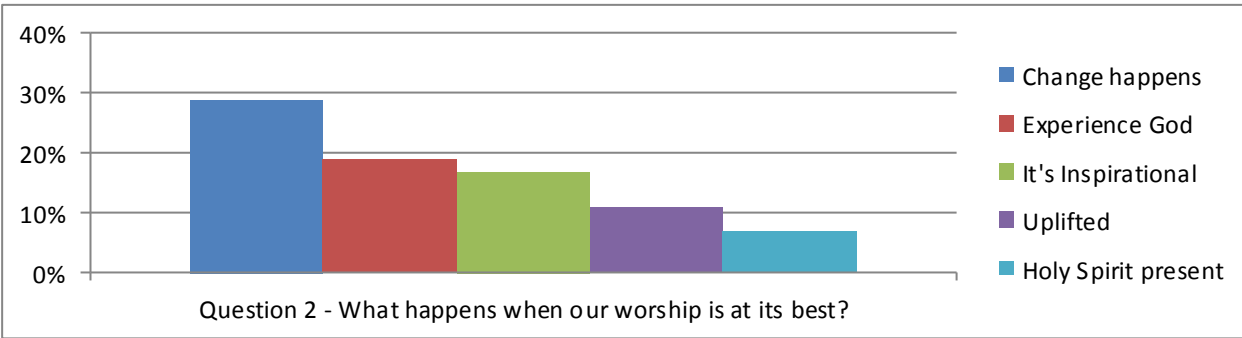
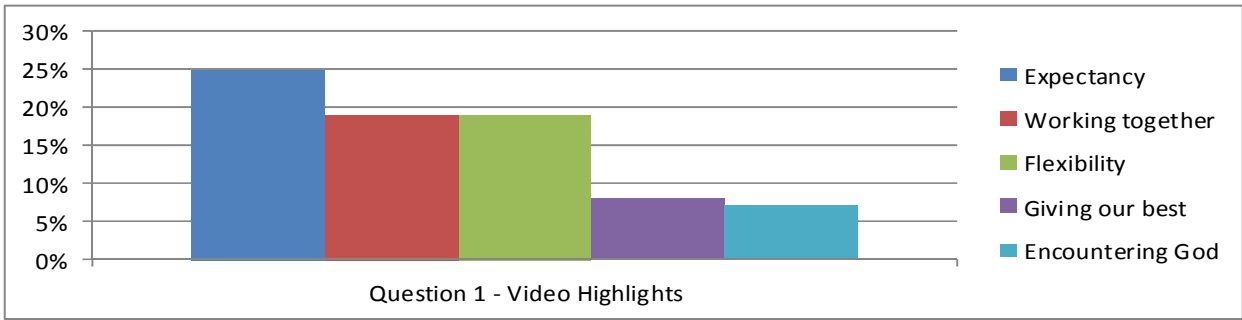
29	36	An awareness of God
18	23	The relevance of the worship
9	11	The atmosphere
9	11	The fellowship
5	6	An awareness of the Spirit
3	4	Good preparation
2	3	The Word/Bible
2	3	Good leadership
2	3	Our emotions
1	1	One size does not fit all
<hr/>		
80		

Question 4 – What hinders our worship?

7	24	Repetition of services and too long sermons
7	24	Apathy
6	21	Disunity of the congregation
4	14	Poor preparation
2	7	Too much focus on self, not enough on God
1	3	When leadership is poor
1	3	Noise of traffic and thoughts of the world crowding in
1	3	WE are the problem!
<hr/>		
29		

Notes:

The topics shown on the right hand side of the following bar charts only give the minimum title to the topic; please refer to the results above for a full description.



Fruitful Churches Week 3 – Intentional Faith Development

Reflection Session Results

The following table columns show:

- 1) The number of Post-its.
- 2) Their approximate percentage.
- 3) The gist of their common traits – the strongest top reflections are in bold type and are shown as bar charts on page 3 of the results.

Question 1 – Identify the most important things highlighted in the video.

18	23	Group support and encouragement
13	16	Growing our faith and and spirit to be more like Jesus
11	14	Sharing and tackling real life issues and experiences
10	13	Important to cater for different needs and gifts
9	12	Studying the Bible and learning together
8	10	Make an effort to grow purposefully
4	5	Reach out beyond the church into the community
2	2	Witnessing to others
2	2	Explain church practises and jargon to newcomers
2	2	Need to do more than Sunday worship
<u>1</u>	1	Leaders need to be fed too
80		

Question 2 – What does Intentional Faith Development mean?

14	47	Purposeful and deliberate commitment to grow in faith
7	23	Become more like Jesus guided by the Holy Spirit
4	13	Continuous development and lifelong learning
3	10	Reach out and help others find faith
<u>2</u>	7	Give more time to grow in faith
30		

Question 3 – What currently helps you most to develop your faith?

30	36	Sharing our faith in fellowship groups
10	12	Prayer
8	9	Good preaching and teaching
8	9	Outreach - serving and explaining our faith to others
7	8	Bible study and personal quiet time
5	6	Music to worship and lift the spirit
5	6	Inspiring personal relationships
5	6	Contemporary style of worship
2	2	Engaging and challenging leadership
2	2	Testimony
2	2	Retreats and missions
1	1	Seeing God in the everyday
<u>1</u>	1	Hope in the future of the church
86		

Question 4 – What would help you most to develop your faith?

10	15	Good preaching and teaching
10	15	Fellowship groups for study and prayer at convenient times
6	9	Service and outreach with other churches
4	6	More testimony
4	6	Personal life challenges
4	6	Retreats, missions and teaching events
4	6	Commitment to give more time and priority
3	4	More relaxed, flexible and spontaneous worship
2	3	Strong leadership
2	3	Personal devotions
2	3	Openness to new ideas
2	3	Testing our faith in everyday situations
2	3	Welcome into an open church during the week
1	2	Pastoral visiting
1	2	Live music
1	2	Circuit based study group
1	2	Films and visual aids
1	2	Pruning out dead wood
1	2	New families
1	2	Spiritual insight
1	2	Identifying needs
1	2	Answers to difficult questions

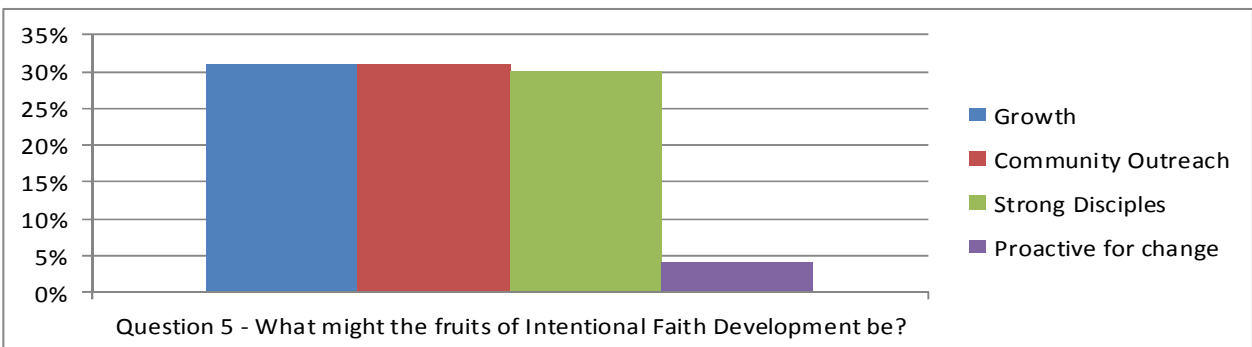
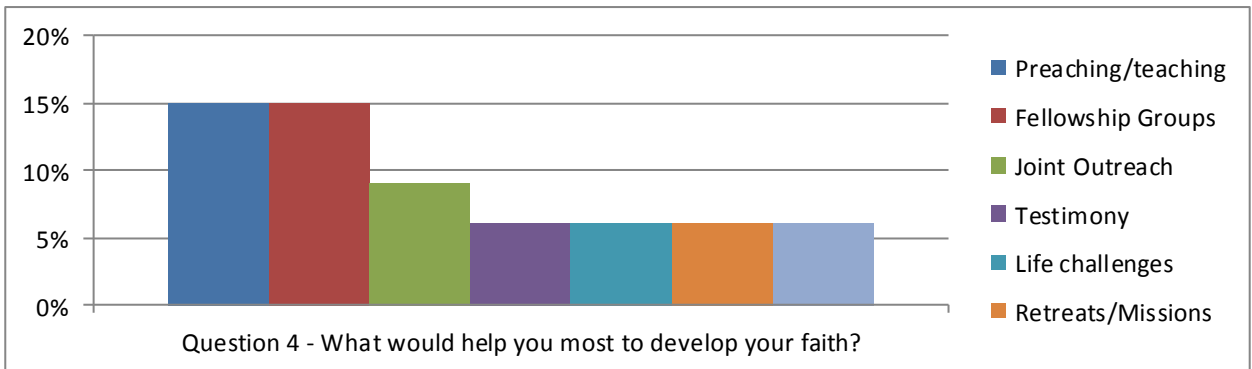
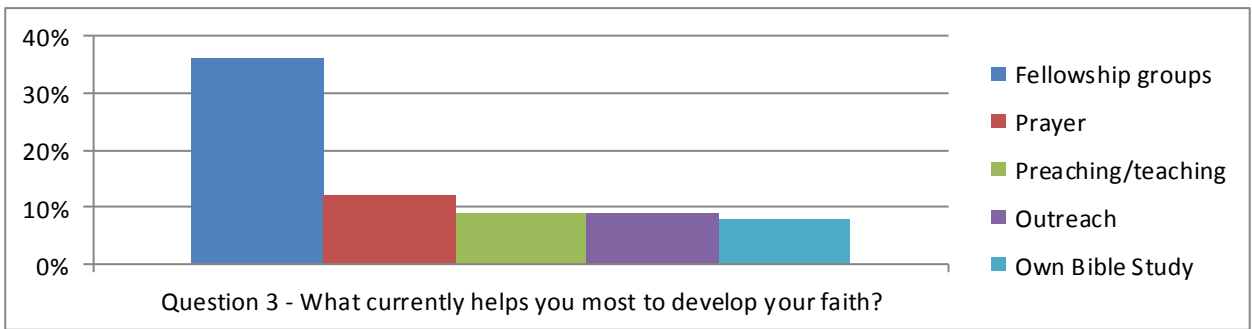
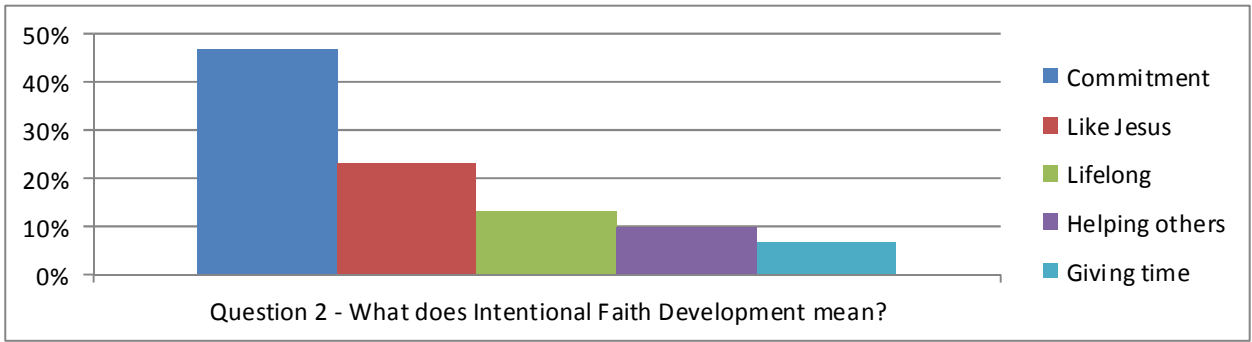
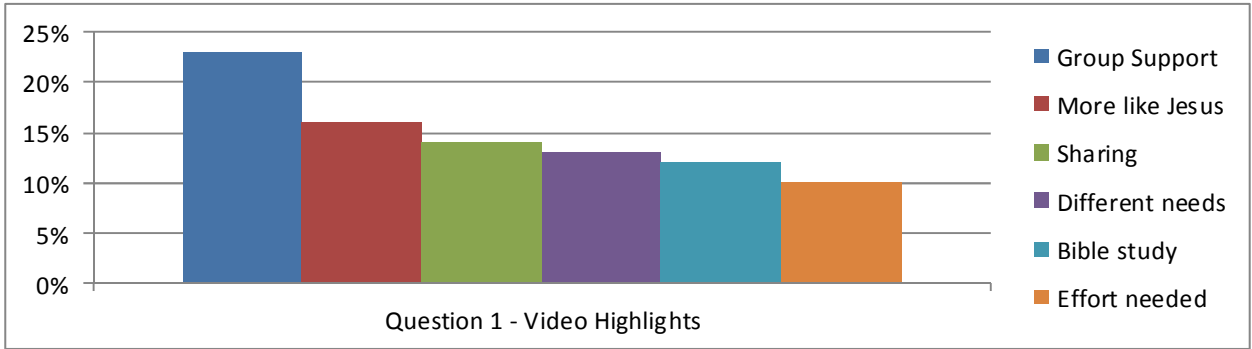
64

Question 5 – What might the fruits of Intentional Faith Development be?

18	31	Church growth, spiritually and numerically
18	31	Positive outreach into community
17	30	Stronger disciples of Jesus
2	4	More proactive for change
1	2	Deeper mutual respect and acceptance
1	2	Pull together in the same direction

57

Notes: The topics shown on the right hand side of the following bar charts only give the minimum title to the topic; please refer to the results above for a full description.



Fruitful Churches Week 4 – Risk-taking Mission and Service

Reflection Session Results

The following table columns show:

- 1) The number of Post-its.
- 2) Their approximate percentage.
- 3) The gist of their common traits – the strongest top reflections are in bold type and are shown as bar charts on page 3 of the results.

Question 1 – Reflections on the video.

15	21	Outreach into the community (more important than bums on seats)
12	17	Get out of your comfort zone and take risks
10	14	Identify the needs of your local community
9	13	Know and use your strengths and skills
9	13	Befriending everyone
9	13	Everybody working together as a team
4	6	See opportunities and respond quickly
1	1	Be mindful of people's idea of church
1	1	Use our building as a community resource
1	1	Car owners helping non-car owner
<hr/>		
71		

Question 2 – What does it mean to 'love your neighbour'?

8	20	Being aware of the needs of our neighbours and responding
8	20	Being non judgemental
6	15	Acts of kindness
6	15	Putting others first
5	12	Listening
4	10	Love everybody
4	10	Treat others as you would like to be treated
<hr/>		
41		

Question 3 – Are there different kinds of poverty?

16	27	Social poverty i.e. Loneliness
13	22	Financial & material poverty
10	17	Poverty of spirit
7	12	Lack of love/emotional poverty
3	5	Poverty of health
3	5	Educational poverty
2	3	Moral poverty
2	3	Poverty depends on what you think important
1	2	Poverty of purpose
1	2	Having lots of money doesn't make you happy – poverty of riches
1	2	Something lacking – out of balance in life
<hr/>		
59		

Question 4 – What meaningful role could our churches play in supporting missions, both overseas & at home?

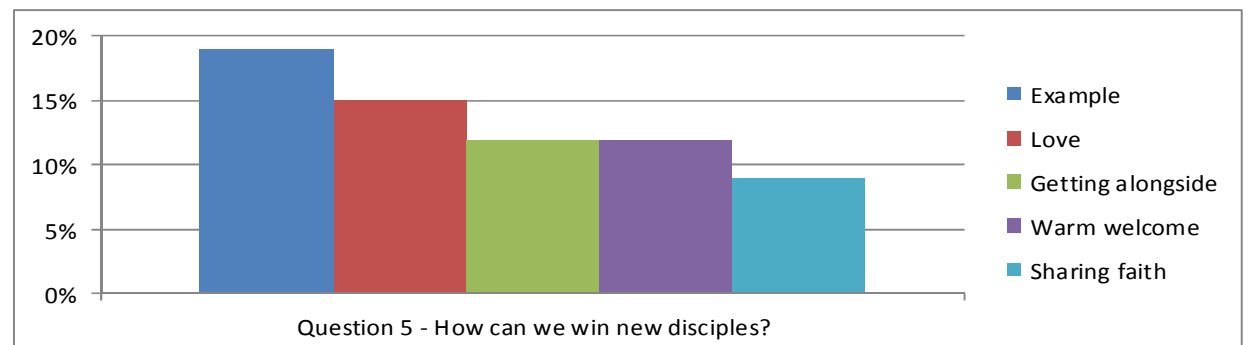
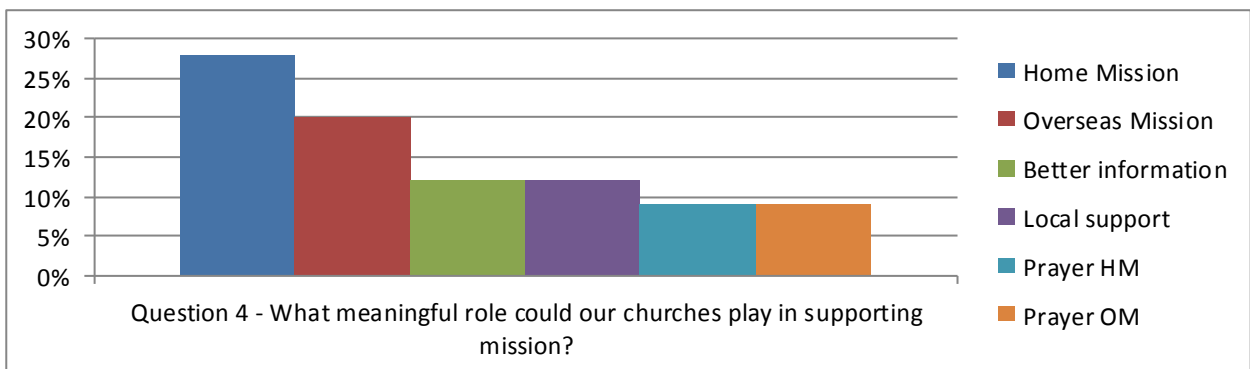
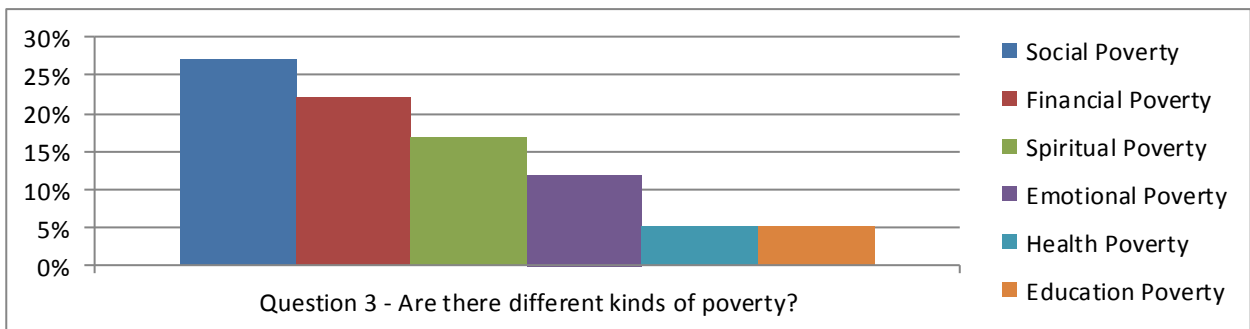
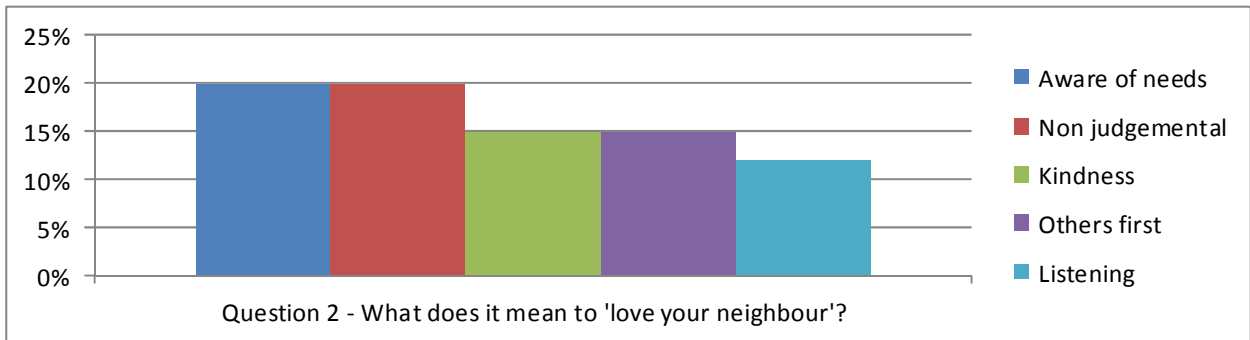
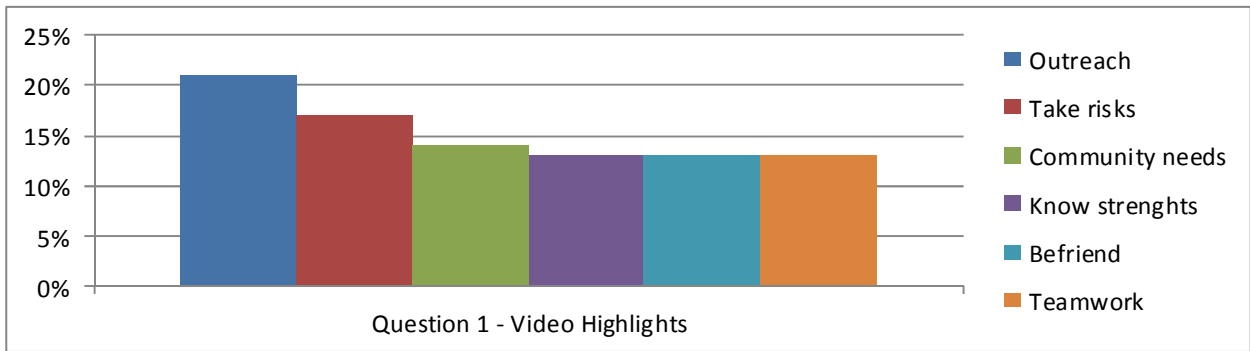
21	28	Missions at home: practical projects like food banks, odd jobs, visiting lonely
15	20	Missions overseas: financial support
9	12	Need to be better informed/more aware about both overseas and home missions (as a circuit)
9	12	Missions at home: financial support including free use of our premises for help groups
7	9	Missions at home: support them with prayer
7	9	Missions overseas: support them with prayer
4	5	Campaigning for justice
3	4	Missions overseas: practical support
1	1	Missions overseas: keep contact with missionaries
<hr/>		
76		

Question 5 – How can we win new disciples for Jesus amongst those we minister to?

14	19	By our example: we need to demonstrate Jesus in our lives
11	15	By our loving actions
9	12	Get alongside people appropriately
9	12	Prayer: for them & for our ministry with them
7	9	Discussing/Sharing our faith with them
5	7	Begin with social needs and win people's trust
5	7	Invite to church activities
5	7	Sowing the seed
4	5	Be open to the Holy Spirit
2	3	Take opportunities
1	1	Perseverance, don't give up
1	1	Good leadership
<hr/>		
73		

Notes:

The topics shown on the right hand side of the following bar charts only give the minimum title to the topic; please refer to the results above for a full description.



Fruitful Churches Week 5 – Extravagant Generosity Reflection Session Results

The following table columns show:

- 1) The number of Post-its.
- 2) Their approximate percentage.
- 3) The gist of their common traits – the strongest top reflections are in bold type and are shown as bar charts on page 3 of the results.

Question 1 – Thoughts on what Extravagant Generosity is:

24	32	Selfless generosity
14	19	Giving time, talents and money
8	11	Helping others
5	7	Christ-like love
4	5	Going outside our comfort zone
4	5	Real listening
4	5	Learning to receive and give
3	4	Real friendship
2	3	Sharing skills and resources
2	3	Total commitment
2	3	You are blessed when you give
2	3	Be an encourager
<hr/>		
74		

Question 2 – Identify one personal skill:

13	15	Empathy and love
12	14	Listening
10	12	Admin/Organisation
9	10	Pastoral skills
6	7	Cooking and baking
6	7	Art and craft
5	6	Children's work
4	5	Teaching and preaching
4	5	Singing
3	3	Encouragement
3	3	Communication and Audio visual
3	3	Humour
2	2	Concern for the homeless
2	2	Welcoming
2	2	Healing and prophecy
1	1	Praying
1	1	Peacemaking
<hr/>		
86		

Question 3 – Why do churches struggle to identify individual’s skills?

15	28	Cliques or people not stepping aside
12	22	Lack of encouragement
11	20	Feeling shy or inadequate
7	13	We don’t ask what they are
5	9	Lack of advertising
1	2	Apathy
1	2	Fear of rejection
1	2	Fear of commitment
1	2	A few doing too much
<hr/>		
54		

Question 4 – What can we do about it?

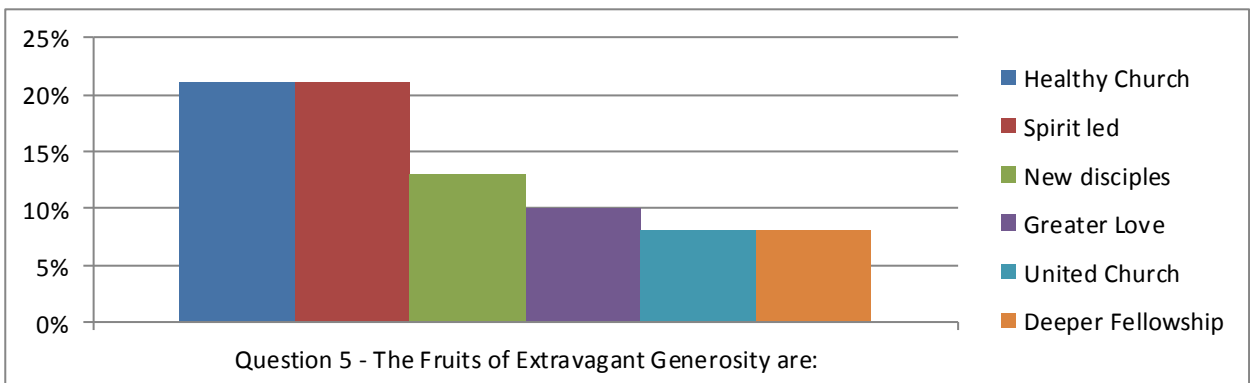
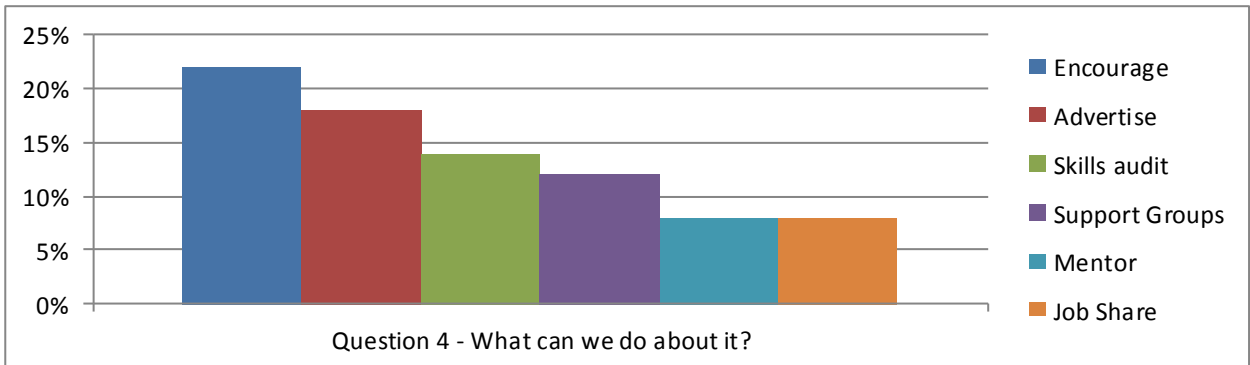
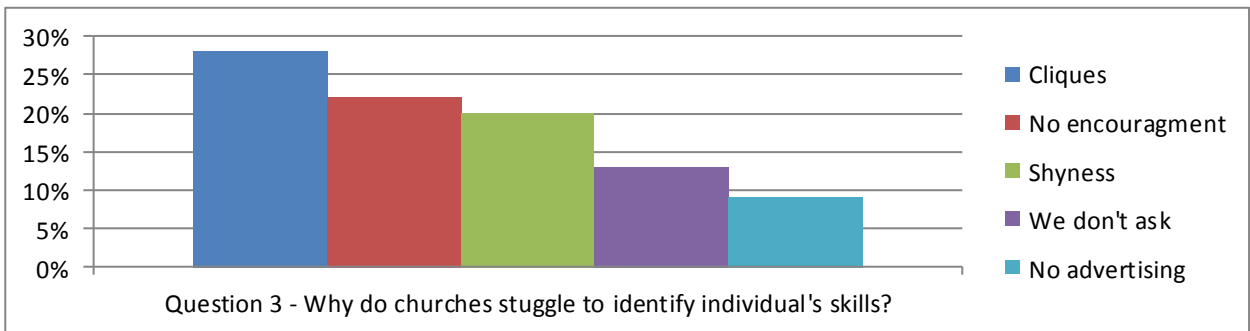
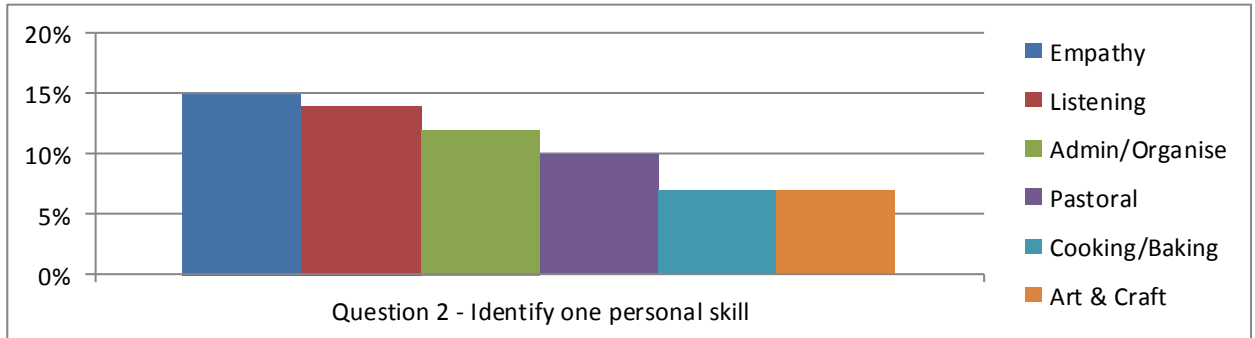
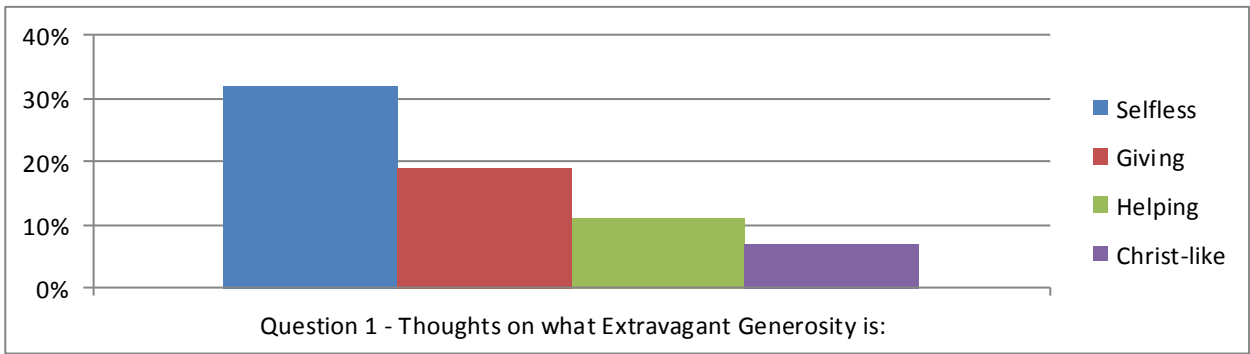
11	22	Give encouragement
9	18	Advertise and/or ask for help
7	14	Do a skills audit
6	12	Form support groups
4	8	Mentor and shadow
4	8	Job share
3	6	Be specific about money
3	6	Allow new brooms!
2	4	Listen and get to know people
<hr/>		
49		

Question 5 – The Fruits of Extravagant Generosity are:

8	21	A healthier and/or more vibrant church
8	21	Spirit led people
5	13	New disciples and growth
4	10	Greater love/tolerance
3	8	A united church
3	8	Deeper/richer fellowship
2	5	Effective witness
1	3	New forms of outreach
1	3	Broader and more diverse community
1	3	Safe environment
1	3	Strengthening of faith
1	3	Revival and healing
<hr/>		
38		

Notes:

The topics shown on the right hand side of the following bar charts only give the minimum title to the topic; please refer to the results above for a full description.



This project was supported by a grant from the Methodist Church 