

Place: Boundaries and Context

Understanding our 'place'

Starter Task

Describe where you live then respond to questions about that place.

If we are going to effectively plant/pastor churches, we need to know the 'place' we are in. This starts by understanding and defining a community's **boundaries**.

"By boundaries we don't just mean lines on a map. We do consider the physical boundaries that define a community, but we also take into account the psychological and spiritual boundaries that accompany them"¹

Crosscombe and Krispin, 91

Boundaries of a place = **how people function in real life**

Geographically - What lines can you draw?

Historically - What is its story?

Demographically - What people and things do you see?

Ethnically - Where are those people from?

Culturally - What things do people do?

Linguistically - How do people speak?

Economically - What do people have?

Spiritually - What/who/where do people worship?

Ideologically - What are people's worldviews?

Why?

"When we take the time to understand our neighbourhoods, we can become part of that neighbourhood and effectively reach the people in that area in partnership with what God is already doing".²

"Effective church planting is missionary work"³

How?

First.. **Go...and Go slow**

"It takes a year or two of living in a community before we can begin to understand that place and learn to communicate in it. We don't need to be in a rush."⁴

¹ Coz Crosscome and Bill Krispin, Place Matters: The Church for Community, (Fort Washington, PA.: CLC Publications 2017), 91

² Crosscome and Krispin, 106

³ Ed Stetzer, Planting Missional Churches, (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 115

⁴ Crosscome and Krispin, 104

- *Walk the community*
- *Visit local establishments, Pubs, Shops, Cafes, Hangouts, Parks.*
 - o *Take Kids with you.*
 - o *Get people in the plant to do this work?*
 - o *Do you have any cultural insiders?*
- *Know the bus routes, tubes etc.*
- *How do people define the boundaries, where will people let their kids go?*
- *Chat to people - Community Gatekeepers*
- *Mapping*
- *Graffiti Prayer list*
- *Do people believe in God*
- *What have churches done before?*
- *Ask the question, what is God already doing?*

Second... **Research**

Read!

Watch

Google maps

Nomis

Estate agents

ONS.GOV.UK - Draw your own boundaries

What do we do with this information?

- Write it up
- Make a map
- Pray
- Use it to create your plan
- Use it to train/equip your team/elders
- Let it help shape pastoral care
- Let it help shape your week structure
- Let it help shape preaching/application
- Use it to partner with what God is already doing in the community