

### **Glen Funnel – “Do you not have a Home Group?”**

After the ‘excitement’ of the Burger evening, the congregation of Invercross church were hoping, that given Eilidh was organising the meetings of the music group, congregational life would calm down. To be fair, it did for a few weeks, but then a young couple with three primary school age children appeared one Sunday morning. It was slightly embarrassing as there was no Sunday School, but the family didn’t seem to mind too much. They seemed to be very enthusiastic and everyone wondered why they had come.

Logan felt that it was his role to speak to them after the service and so he introduced himself and began chatting with them. They were on holiday from Yorkshire and were planning a move to Scotland, the wife had Scottish roots and they had decided that they wanted to get away from the bustle of Leeds and settle fairly near to Glasgow. The house that had been the estate factor’s house, just outside the village, was for sale and the family had been attracted by it. It was quite grand really and the couple thought that it would make a great place for their children to grow up. They both worked remotely and thought that Invercross would make a good move for them. However, having worshipped at a lively Community Church in Leeds, they wanted to check out the local church before making any firm decisions

Logan felt slightly uncomfortable about the comparison that could be made, so he asked quite directly: “Do you not think that this is a bit of a Christian backwater for you?” “Well,” said Andrew, the husband, “we go where God leads us, we’ve been to churches where we felt really at home, but we’ve also been to churches where we knew God wanted us to be there, but it wouldn’t have been our choice.” “So you’ve moved about quite a lot then?” “Yes, it’s because of our previous jobs, although we can now both work remotely, so hopefully settle down. Our aim is always to worship

God and get involved, so we can serve whichever congregation we’re in.” “What do you mean by serve the congregation?” asked Logan. “Well, to join one of the local homegroups, to get involved in Bible study and get to know the other group members – as part of the Body of Christ.” “Oh,” responded Logan, “you’re not going to find that here, I’m afraid.” “Do you not have a Home Group?” Andrew asked, never having been to a church before that didn’t have one. It was then as if the Holy Spirit tapped Logan on the shoulder and he replied: “Well, we are in vacancy at the moment and currently looking for our new minister. In fact, we are in a slightly challenging situation, because the new minister will only initially be here for five years; our challenge is to increase the congregation significantly over that period, so that he or she can be reappointed, otherwise, they won’t be able to stay and we’ve no idea what would then happen.”

Andrew looked intrigued; he’d never come across a situation like this before. Logan felt encouraged and continued: “We’ve recently started to reach out to the new villagers – those that have moved into the new houses. At the meeting we had last month, we discovered that there are now a number of musical people locally and they are meeting with Eilidh, our Worship leader and beginning to learn some modern Christian songs, and they’re going to start playing in church. Some of them are really keen, and we’ve never experienced anything this before.” “Perhaps this is why God has prompted us to come here,” said Andrew’s wife. “I used to sing in the worship group in our last church.”

Remembering about the three faithful members of the congregation who had been praying about the congregation’s future, Logan began to wonder if God really did have a plan for them, so he asked them to come back to his house for soup and a sandwich, which he was sure his wife could organise. A couple of hours later, after a very pleasant lunch and a good chat, Andrew felt that they really needed to make a move and get back to their

B&B; the children were beginning to get a bit restless, although they had been really good. Armed with Logan's phone number, they departed, saying they needed to go and pray about what they had experienced and learnt.

Logan felt more excited than he had done in years and couldn't really understand why. He rang Eilidh and explained to her what had happened. She was very interested, but slightly puzzled as Logan wasn't known for inviting strangers round to his house, none of the incomers had ever been. "It must be a move of the Holy spirit," she thought to herself. As for Andrew and family, they went back to their B&B, the kids went out to play and Andrew and his wife, Mary, sat down to think and pray.

Logan had forgotten about the home group question, so after high tea, he rang Eilidh again and explained to her. "That's brilliant," she said, "it only takes a few people to get a home group up and running." "Would you be able to do it?" asked Logan. "Yes," she replied, "I've done it before." "What would it involve?" was the next question. "Well, the format I've been used to is that we meet, have a cuppa and a piece of cake or a biscuit and a blether, then usually sing a couple of worship songs, or perhaps listen to them on YouTube, and join in of course. Next, we would do some Bible Study, in a way that everyone can join in; and then finish up by praying about what we've discussed and also for anything people ask for prayer about." Isn't it a bit like a service then?" "Well, it is in a way, but it's different because it's just a small group, so the dynamics are different and the rule is that everything said within the group is confidential. You get to know the others at a different level – a spiritual level." "Would all the congregation need to get involved?" "No, well not initially anyway. As they get to hear about the group, others may want to join it. We might even end up with more than one group, then we can mix the existing members with the new members whom I'm sure will be interested." "How on earth would this fit with our new

minister?" Logan asked. "I would like to think that he or she would be delighted." Eilidh replied.

Back in the B&B, Andrew and Mary were mulling over their morning's experience. Andrew said "I'm beginning to think that this is where God wants us to come. They're obviously going through a difficult time, the bit about the musicians sounds interesting, and the fact that they had a meeting with the villagers. And as for having to increase the congregation to keep their minster, they need God's help and perhaps that's where we fit in. Andrew rang Logan a couple of days later to say that, they strongly felt that it was where God wanted them to be and they were going to put in an offer on the house. Logan explained that he'd spoken to Eilidh about a home group and said that if their purchase was successful, they could become part of the first home group that Glen Funnel Kirk would ever have had.