

# **The Methodology and Praxis of Effective Preaching**

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## **Abstract**

Every week thousands of people faithfully attend their places of Christian worship. They come to join in various expressions of sacramental devotion, to meet other Christians, to pray, to sing hymns of praise, to listen as Scripture is read and then to hear a man or a woman expound that passage of Scripture in a way that is relevant to them. They come to hear why and how God matters to them in their everyday lives through the lips of preachers.

The intention is that these preachers who expound the Word of God are faithful servants of God who diligently study and pray in order to deliver a sermon that will inform and inspire. As a result their listeners may themselves become faithful servants of God as they respond, week by week, to the call of God on their lives in spiritual and practical ways. However, it is sadly the case that many preachers lack the commitment to preaching that it demands and their sermons are dull and ineffectual.

The following is a discussion on the methodology and praxis of effective preaching which takes as a prerequisite the communicative nature of God and then investigates how Moses and the prophets acted as intermediaries between God and humanity culminating in the 'Word made flesh' in the person and preaching of Jesus Christ. Preaching as an 'event' will be explored in its remit to enlighten and motivate, as will the role of the Holy Spirit and the concept of the preacher as steward. Finally the sermon itself will be considered in terms of its production and delivery.

The practices and opinions of four preachers have been sought for this discussion. All are practising preachers and all are ordained. Three are serving in the Church of Ireland (in the roles of bishop, dean and priest) and one is a Roman Catholic priest. Structured interview was the mode of investigation used. Eleven questions were made available to the research participants in advance and this was followed by an interview where extensive notes were kept.