

## Shepherd-Shaped Mission (Luke 2:8-20)

Popular passage at this time of year. Take a slightly different angle: reflect briefly on what shepherds tell us about mission.

### Familiar themes:

- God chooses surprising people – nightclub bouncers. None of us can rule ourselves out of being used by God
- Act (go to Bethlehem)
- Speak (glorifying and praising God – all heard about it or wouldn't have story).

Foundations often overlooked:

**Began with a personal encounter with God** – what drove shepherds to Jerusalem was not someone like me telling them to do it, or a new technique for mission, but compelling encounter with God.

*Mission a natural outworking of worship and discipleship.* Graham Tomlin: 'Get worship right and mission takes care of itself' – if people encountering God, their faith grows and taking message out is natural. Cultural clothing of worship not that important – only real question is: are people encountering the living God? – anything else not worship.

**Received as good news.** We're all evangelists for the things we love. If read a great book, or watch a great film, or see a great show, or join a great club, you'll tell your friends, no problem. I think for a lot of us, the unspoken issue is that we're not sure it really is good news. Doubt if God is good, or if he loves us, or if cost of following Jesus is worth it. If nothing else, may this Advent/this Christmas renew our confidence that it is exactly what the angels say it is: good news!

And may God bless our encounters with him, that we may speak and act of the glory of God to our friends, neighbours and community.  
Amen.