

## We attract those who don't easily fit in other contexts of church

In West Wales a small but enthusiastic Narberth Baptist Fellowship continues to meet in a renovated car port which is now a chapel, writes minister Linda Edwards.



**W**e meet every Sunday evening with enthusiasm and hope, thanks to the abiding power of the Holy Spirit.

We attract those who don't easily fit in other contexts of church. When we first started in the year 2000, one of our earliest members had a picture or vision of a huge field which had just been harvested so that the bales of wheat had been stacked - but there on the perimeters of the field were the gleanings. Of course, in history the gleanings had been left for the poor to collect.

We all felt at the time that we were here for the gleanings, for those Christians who, for whatever reason, felt they could not join the main harvest of mainstream Church. Although we are only 12 to 15 in number, throughout the years more than 150 people have had fellowship with us, including people who live on their own, those who need a lift, those who prefer smaller groups and are cautious of bigger ones.

We meet for worship, prayer and for the study and commentary on the scriptures. Every week I print off a large print copy of the Bible passage being studied, for each person. We study whole books of the Bible making sure that we have the context of the text and taking note of the Jewish roots, and the culture of Jesus' day.

At the time of writing, March 2023, we are on chapter 26 of Matthew which has taken us over two years to complete! I prepare a short reflection/commentary of 15 minutes then it is open to the whole fellowship to make their comment or to ask questions. So often one of our fellowship has insight or is inspired by God to add to what I have prepared. This is the ministry of the body of Christ.

We all eat together afterwards. It's a small but close community. We've seen physical healings, improvement in wellbeing - and the theological grasp of these folk is growing. They increasingly minister to each other and were able to carry on and lead when I was seriously ill last year.

I'm sure we're not unique – and I think there will always be gleanings.

### Glean - Verb

'Gleaning' was the practice of going into a recently-harvested field and picking up whatever grain remained. God commanded Israel in Leviticus 19:9-10 to deliberately leave some behind for the poor and needy of the land to get food. God blessed Ruth and people were generous to her.

*Ruth the Moabite said 'Let me go to the fields and glean grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favour.'*

*Naomi said to her, 'Go ahead, my daughter.' So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters.*

Ruth 2: 2-3



Ruth Gleaning | James Jacques Joseph Tissot | [thejewishmuseum.org](http://thejewishmuseum.org)