

# At the Pub

## Part 1

*By Zac Metcalfe*

In our current sports culture, going to the pub is very common practice. I have been a part of sports teams, where Thursday nights consisted of an hour practice, then 3 hours at the pub (not the formula for a winning culture it must be said!). Often the pub is where team things happen like the team being read out for the weekend or it's a place where the players player awards are given after the game.

There is an expectation that if you are part of the team, you get back to the pub after the game. This is often where the team gels and the players get to know each other personally as friends, rather than just teammates.

As you can imagine this is a perfect place for a Christian to be. It's a great place to befriend your teammates, it's a great place to love your teammates, it's a great place to show you are different, and it's a great place to share the gospel.

So get to the pub as often as you can!

In saying this there are some issues and temptations that going to the pub can present. Let's look at a few of them.

### 1. Drinking

The obvious temptation is drinking too much alcohol. As Christians we know that God commands us not to get drunk (Ephesians 5:18) and that it is not a behaviour of someone who is inheriting the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:10, Galatians 5:21).

It's ok to have a drink but just don't drink too much. If you are worried about drinking too much, drive to the pub and tell people you have to drive home, or just tell them that you don't drink at all. Then stick to your decision. Both these reasons are usually accepted these days.

### 2. Being involved in bad conversations

This is the one that I struggle with the most. When at the pub there are conversations that your teammates are having which are not good to encourage or sometimes to even be a part of. It could be conversations talking badly about your teammates or opposition, or most commonly, the officials in the recent game. It could be a story about your teammates picking up last night or how good looking that girl is in the corner.

It's hard to know when to speak up or when to just leave the conversation.

When in a conversation about a teammate or an umpire, only talk about them how you would talk about them if they were standing right there listening to you. Sometimes it still might be critical, but not demeaning to them as a sports person or as a human being. We don't want to gossip, we want to talk about our teammates (and other participants in sport) in a way that builds them up (as sports people and as humans) (Ephesians 4:29).

When our teammates start talking about girls (or guys) in a way that objectifies them or disrespects them, often it is a good call to just leave the conversation, or depending on the situation remind your teammates that they are talking about a real person, and what they are saying is not on!

I find that my teammates will intentionally bring these things up with me because they know that I don't agree with what they are saying (teammates just love to test you!). Recognise this, and just tell them what you think. Keep in mind what the bible says about how we should view women (and people for that matter) and make choices based on that.

### **3. Copping criticism and praise**

Often at the pub the game played that day is reviewed and reviewed and reviewed, often way too much! This is a time when conversation about teammates, opposition and officials as spoken about above come up. Inevitably (particularly after a few beers) you will start to be told how good and/or how bad a player you are. Criticism is good. It brings us back to earth, it humbles us, and it helps us improve. Praise is the hard one, because it can often do the opposite. When receiving praise, accept it, but remind the person you're talking to (and yourself) that you need the whole team to help you look good and without them you can't do what you do. Look for ways to praise others. Ask God to show you these before you get to the pub. And of course thank God for your talents, reminding yourself that God gives them to you and enables you to use them.

Remember, we with strain from these temptations because it's good for us, and it shows the world (our teammates) that there is something different about us. What a great opportunity to be a witness and glorify God! We need Gods help to not give into these sins of pride, slander and drunkenness (and whatever other ones may come up!). Thankfully we are able to, because Jesus has freed us from slavery to sin. So when heading to the pub, ask God for his help and to remind you how good Jesus is and let's do the pub God's way!