

SMALL GROUP STUDIES LEADERS NOTES

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY MOBILISATION BIBLE STUDIES



tearfund

Following Jesus where the need is greatest

The ministry of Jesus Christ

Mark 1:14-45; Luke 4:18-19

This series of bible studies are designed to be used in your small group, however they also contain additional 'Going Deeper' background notes at the end for a deeper understanding and for use as a sermon guide. The studies have been created from Tearfund's work around the world using the Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM) process.

CCM is Tearfund helping the local church work with its community, sharing a vision to address local needs using their own resources. Around the world it is an approach that has brought remarkable transformation to local churches and their communities

OVERVIEW

The major focus of Jesus ministry was the announcement that God's Kingdom had now arrived on earth. Although the people of his day expected that God would act in such a way at the close of this present age, what was radically new about Jesus' message was that this end-time hope had arrived ahead of time with him! This was such an important new departure for the human race that the only appropriate response is for people to *repent*. This really means a whole change in the way we think and act, a realignment of our whole lives because of the new way in which God is now acting.

Jesus final instructions to his disciples included the commission to continue his ministry in the power of the Spirit. So, if we want to understand the precise nature of the ministry to which we are called, then our starting point has to be a study of the ministry in which He engaged during his own time on earth. The objective of this study is to help us grow in our understanding of what Jesus did, so that we might do the same.

INTRODUCTION

When you were growing up, did you have a particular hero/idol/someone whom you really wanted to be like?

Were there particular ways in which you tried to copy them?

STORY

Rose is from Oleicho.

When her Church did the Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM) Bible Studies they were challenged by looking at the ministry of Jesus. They realised there were many things that he did that they did not do. They noticed that wherever he went he healed the sick, so they decided that they too must take seriously the responsibility to pray for those who were ill in one way or another.

Six people were identified who had a passion for and gifting in healing prayer and they set aside Thursday's to pray for the sick. The healings that followed meant that word got out and people now travel from all over the district to be prayed for. Every Thursday the Church is full as people gather to worship and for prayer. And they don't go away quickly - they stay until they are healed!



The Church has become a permanent healing center and is looking to build a dedicated House of Prayer so that the Church building can be used for other purposes, as well as healing the sick! The team of six are supported by the church, who look after their land and animals for them so that they have what they need and are free to dedicate themselves to this ministry.

DISCUSS

Read Mark 1:14-45 & Luke 4:18-19

- Q** Imagine you had to recruit a successor for Jesus who would do exactly the things Jesus himself did. Based on these verses, try and put together a job description for this person, but try not to use any 'religious' language.

Announcing the arrival of God's Kingdom - God's power to turn back the destructive forces of evil in the world; calling people to repent i.e. change their minds and hearts about God and to get into line with His will; recruiting other people to follow him and to share in his work; teaching people about God and about how people might experience Him; healing the sick; demonstrating God's power and authority; showing God's compassion and mercy; restoring dignity to people

- Q** One of Jesus' main concerns was to make known the good news that God was acting today to restore broken lives. How widely, would you say, is this Good News understood by people in our community?

- Q** What are we currently doing which helps people to hear this Good News; and do you have any ideas of other ways in which we could do this more effectively?

Worth thinking not just about 'organised' Church initiatives and activities, but also ways in which individual believers are being encouraged and equipped to speak and act for Jesus in the course of their everyday lives

- Q** Jesus paid a good deal of attention to those who were sick in body, mind or spirit, and those who felt on the margins of society. What would you say were the most damaging sicknesses or social needs which affect our community?

This might include loneliness, addictions, the influence of e.g. loan sharks, fear, debt, unemployment etc

- Q** People suffering from leprosy (vv40-45) were right at the bottom of the heap in Jesus' time. People feared catching this very contagious disease, so lepers were forced to live on the edge of communities and forced to alert people to their presence by shouting 'Unclean' if anyone came near them. Many, including many lepers, thought that their sickness was a sign of being cursed by God. What groups or types of people might be the modern day equivalent, in our community, of the lepers of Jesus day? Why?

Q What strikes you most about the way in which Jesus deals with the man suffering from leprosy?

He has time for him; he is motivated by compassion, a deep feeling of care for the man; he touches him - a very radical and risky thing to do; he shows the man dignity and expresses solidarity with him; he is willing to help him

ACTION

Break into twos or threes:

Q Of all the things we have discovered about Jesus' ministry in this study, what is the one area in which you would most like to imitate him more faithfully and effectively.

Q How would you go about doing this?

- Challenge each person to pick at least one area to focus on in the coming days and weeks.
- Talk about how you can support each other in it.

PRAY

Pray for one another asking God's Spirit to bring this about in our lives.

GOING DEEPER

The major focus of Jesus ministry was the announcement that God's Kingdom (the presence of his power and authority to overcome evil and its consequences) had now arrived on earth. Although the people of his day expected that God would act in such a way at the close of this present age, what was radically new about Jesus' message was that this end-time hope had arrived ahead of time with him! This was such an important new departure for the human race that the only appropriate response is for people to *repent*. This really means a whole change in the way we think and act, a realignment of our whole lives because of the new way in which God is now acting.

Jesus not only talks about this new Kingdom reality, but he also demonstrates its presence in the way he ministers to those who have fallen victim to the reign of evil which has prevailed on earth since the Fall. All the consequences of sin and evil are now turned back through the ministry of Jesus. Not only does his teaching appear to have particular authority and bite, but the sick are healed and the demonised experience deliverance in the face of God's superior power.

Jesus ministry is by no means, however, simply a manifestation of raw power. Rather it is a demonstration of deep love in action. Jesus responds to the request of a leper for mercy with a profound show of concern arising out of deep compassion for a person in great need. *Compassion* literally means 'to be stirred in the deepest place of our inner being'. The leper clearly understands Jesus' ability to heal him. He has, however, a real uncertainty as to whether or not Jesus might want to (he asks Jesus if he is *willing* to make him clean), no doubt linked to the popular opinion that lepers were somehow under God's curse.

The task of God's people is rooted in Christ's mission. Simply stated, Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom in word and deed, so the Church must do the same. Jesus delighted in spreading the good news among the hurting, the weak, and the poor. It is not surprising that throughout history God's people have been commanded to follow their King's footsteps into places of brokenness.

Brian Fikkert - When Helping Hurts

Jesus' interaction with the man gives us a great model for our own involvement with the most broken people in our own communities. Jesus shows solidarity with the man, not only by expressing his willingness to heal him, but by touching this 'unclean' man, so bringing himself not only under the risk of contracting a contagious disease, but also under the condemnation of the Jewish law. Jesus goes into the place where the man is, in order to lift him out of it and to restore him. We too are called to stand with those who are broken and marginalised, to extend God's compassion to them, and to see them healed and restored.

We're Christians passionate about ending poverty. We go to the places of greatest need, responding to disasters and helping communities to see their own potential to overcome poverty. We won't stop until poverty stops.



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