

Session TWO: Experience

The purpose of this session
to explore the needs and opportunities in our communities

Timings of this session
around 90 minutes

You will need
to keep a record of what you discover together

Welcome everyone to the session: [10 minutes]
and ask everyone to share something they found helpful from the first session.

Introduction: [15 minutes]

The New Testament is bursting with stories of people serving their community, challenging attitudes, and transforming lives.

Below are three short examples for you to explore. There are no right or wrong answers, just opportunity to reflect and share your thoughts inspired by these readings.

Larger groups could split into smaller groups and take a passage each.

Story A: Mark Chapter 10 verse 51

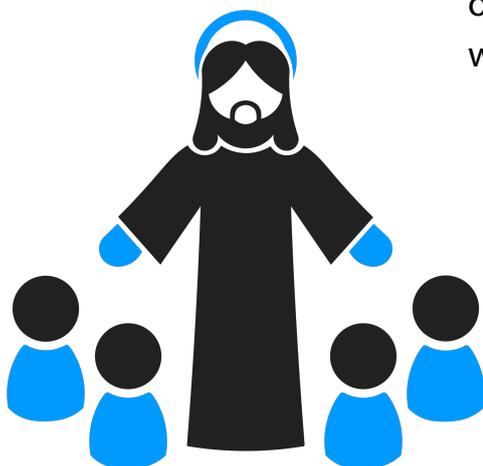
Jesus said to him, 'What do you want me to do for you?'
The blind man said to him, 'My teacher, let me see again.'

Story B: Matthew Chapter 10 verse 8

'Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.'

Story C: John Chapter 4 verse 21b

... 'the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.'



Pause for prayer:

[5 minutes]

Generous, loving God,
we're good at writing lists –
requests for you to do something and make the world better.
We're not good at speaking out for truth and justice,
claiming your healing for ourselves and those around us
and living in the light of your transforming love.
We fear to name the patterns of abuse and neglect we see.
We avoid taking on power and evil when it stares us in the face.
Give us new strength to face reality,
in our own situation and the communities we're part of,
so we may act on what we find
and follow you through the pain and joy you offer us,
in the company of Jesus.
Amen.

Sharing our experiences:

[20 minutes]

At the end of our last session you were invited to consider life in the community where your church building is situated, thinking about

- Who lives there?
- Who works there?
- Who plays there?
- Who learns there?

Spend around 20 minutes now sharing together the examples you have brought. It would be helpful if someone kept brief notes of what is shared.

- *Think about ...*
- *Think about the life of our church today, and going forward. What are the challenges and opportunities, and how do we **feel** about them?*
- *What would '**life in all its fullness**' look like in our community?*

Challenges:

- *Thinking about all we have just shared together about our community ...*
 - ▶ What challenges face people in our community, post Covid?
 - ▶ Challenges often present new opportunities. How can we bring people together to respond to the challenges around us?
 - ▶ What resources do we have to give which could bring new life to our community?

Opportunities:

- *Thinking about other churches and community groups you work in partnership with ...*
 - ▶ Who do you currently work with?
 - ▶ What other community groups **could** you work together with?
 - ▶ What do we gain by working together with others?

To finish:

Discuss together ...

- Is there a local issue or need, a particular community group, or a new opportunity which has excited you?
- Is God calling your church to respond?

Homework:

Before next session ...

- Introduce yourself to a local community group to find out what issues they are now facing.

Closing prayer:

*Jesus came to bring new life to all,
life in all its fullness! **Amen.***