

SESSION SIX: WHAT NEXT? (1 hour)

We recommend you read through these notes before leading the session. They are intended to help you understand the purpose and journey of the session, and to help you keep the group focused on the core issues.

OVERVIEW:

The focus of this week's session is how God is calling you as a group and as individuals to respond to the challenges we've explored during the course. We recommend getting the group to engage with at least a couple of these core ideas:

- God has called us to participate in his work to bring his kingdom to earth. It is his mission, not ours.
- God invites us to get to know him in the midst of a shared task. There are things about God we will only discover when we join him in his work.
- There is a cost to being a disciple and we must be willing to lay down other priorities to be part of this mission.
- We each have a unique role to play in this work; we are invited to bring our hearts, our gifts and our creativity to serve what God is doing.

START (10 min):

Watch the vox pop clip in which the people you met in session 1 talk about what this course led them to do. Do you relate to any of their experiences?

Share the ways in which you feel God has been leading you in the last week, in deciding how to take action as a result of the course. Where are there overlaps with others in the group?

DISCUSS (20min):

Read Romans 12:1-21 and answer these questions together.

1. In verse 2 we are urged not to conform to 'the pattern of this world'. How would you describe the kind of life the world is expecting you to live?
2. Verses 4-8 remind us that we all have a unique part to play in God's work. What part do you think you play, or could play?
3. Verses 9-21 give us a long list of counter-cultural behaviours. Think back over the stories you have heard during this course, especially those you just watched in the DVD clip. Where can you see examples of these commands being lived out?
4. Which do you think you could put into practice in the context of your local community?

Some thoughts on the questions:

1. *Whatever culture we live in, it can be difficult to distance ourselves enough to recognise the ways in which it pulls us away from the life God calls us to. Our families and friends have a certain expectation of how we will live, perhaps in conformity to their values. In the UK, the 'pattern' of living often prioritises comfort, security, an ever-increasing income and a lifestyle that expands to fill it. Are these the things we also prioritise?*
2. *People will have varying levels of confidence in what they can contribute, and awareness of what their gifts are, so be encouraging and affirming, particularly of those who are less*

confident. If this discussion opens up a real need in the group to discover your strengths and gifts, there are some resources you might find helpful in the notes at the end.

3. *Connecting the Word of God with other people's service is a big help in working out how we put this teaching into practice ourselves. Have the group found the practical examples encouraging, or intimidating? Perhaps they have had their own experiences to share. What kind of stories do we want to have to share?*
4. *Verses 9-21 give us a long and potentially overwhelming list of behaviours, so try to focus people down on one command, and on a specific context – their community. Encourage them to think about specific actions they could take as a response.*

REFLECT (5 min)

Watch the Al Gordon clip on mission and worship.

PRAY (15min):

If it's appropriate, spend some time worshipping God in music and song. Give thanks for all that you have learned and been challenged by and the ways in which you have changed over the past few weeks. Pray for wisdom for the group in taking the next steps forward.

ACT (10min):

Letter writing activity

Give everyone a piece of paper and an envelope. Read the following quotation:

'We cannot do everything. And there is a sense of liberation in realising that this enables us to do something, and to do it really well. It may be incomplete but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and worker. We are workers, not master builders. We are ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.' Oscar Romero

Ask everyone to write a letter to themselves answering these three questions:

- What has challenged you most during this course?
- What would you most like to do differently, as an individual, because of the journey you've been on?
- What can you do as a group to respond to the journey you've been on?

Explain that no-one else is going to read the letter unless they show it to them. Give out envelopes so that the letters can be sealed in self-addressed envelopes, and gather them up so you can post them back to each person in two months' time.

Put a date in the diary for the near-future, to plan together for how to take action in your community. Don't let the opportunity pass you by!

EXTRAS:

Go to the website for some further activities and resources to continue the journey.

Extra film clip - MOSAIC Sparks (6 min)

Follow up activities

- Discovery – a course to help you go deeper in mission in your community
<http://www.communitymission.org.uk/resources/courses/discovery.aspx>
- Connected Church – a way to build bridges with a church in the developing world
<http://connected.tearfund.org>

Suggested further reading

Fran Beckett, et al, *Rebuild: Small groups can make a difference* (Crossway)