

Series Title: 'Lifelong Labouring'

Subtitle: 'Making it count'

Primary Aim: *To help us to make our lives count by developing a vision for lifelong labouring amongst the people who live and work all around us. We frame this vision in a series of seven invitations to follow, grow, build, labour, go, serve & pray. As we begin to see what it means to follow and grow as disciples we also begin to understand what it is going to take to grow faith in the lives of others also.*

1. Jesus is Enough: An Invitation to follow

Passages: Luke 5:1-11, 9:23, Matthew 8:22, 10:37-39 & 19:16-30

Blurb: We will begin the series by thinking about what it means to follow Jesus as we examine Jesus' invitation to Peter to come follow and follow Him. Following Jesus is not going to be easy and it will involve sacrifice and death. Following Jesus is going to involve faith and it needs to be worked out over a lifetime. Finally following Jesus involves fruitfulness in the lives of others as we call others to join us in following Jesus.

2. Growing to Maturity: An Invitation to Grow

Passages: Luke 8:4-15, John 15, Hebrews 5:12-14 & Corinthians 3:1

Blurb: This session is about spiritual growth and we begin to wrestle with the conditions required for growth. We will examine the Parable of the Soils and think about the kind of hearts needed for growth. We will examine also John 15 and think about what it means to remain in Christ. We finish by considering the implications of immaturity and begin to explore what it might mean to help others to grow in their faith.

3. Building to Last: An Invitation to Build

Passages: 1 Peter 2:4-11, 1 Corinthians 3:1-15

Blurb: This session switches the metaphor for growing to building. Peter says that we are being built together into a spiritual house. In 1 Corinthians 3 Paul develops this building analogy as he talks us through the building analogy. First stage is *Preparation* as we determine purpose, determine place and prepare to build. Second stage is laying the foundations and upon this everything else rests. Final stage is the building itself and it is a team effort to make things work. To finish we consider what it might mean to build in others in such a way that we build to last.

4. God's Harvest: An Invitation to Labour

Passage: Matthew 9:35-39, John 4:27-38, 1 Corinthians 15:58

Blurb: Jesus says that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. First step is to define what a worker (or co-worker) is and see how workers are those involved in the harvest. The workers are still few and the fields are ripe for harvest. Within the harvest there are different roles: some sow, some reap and others establish and conserve. We are to give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord who refreshes us by His presence and grace. There is a harvest to be had amongst the hearts and minds of those around us – we must invest deeply for the sake of those who Satan has blinded from the truth.

5. A vision to give your life for: An Invitation to Go

Passages: Matt 28:18-20, Mark 16:14-15, John 21:20-21, Acts 1:8, 2 Sam 18:18

Blurb: This session seeks to flesh out what it means to work in God's Harvest. We see from Isaiah 6:1-9 and Luke 17:7-10 that God uses the unworthy, inadequate and unqualified. God's vision for our labouring is borne out in the Great Commission and through it we see the power of multiplication (2 Timothy 2:2). Even for the disciples some doubted! God gives us promises for how He will multiply our lives (Isaiah 43:4 & 55). We finish considering what (or rather who) we want to leave behind!

6. The Worth of the individual: An Invitation to Serve

Passages: Genesis, Psalm 139, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Acts 13:36

Blurb: This session looks at the intrinsic worth we have in God's sight because we were made in His image: created rational, relational, real and responsible. Even though that image became marred at the fall we are still fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:13-14) and are in the process of redemption because of Jesus blood shed on the cross (1 Peter 1:18-19). Having seen our intrinsic worth we now look at the kind of people God uses in His purposes (e.g. Paul and Timothy) and the kind of heart (1

Sam 16), vision (Acts 13:36) and skill (1 Sam 17 / Ephesians 4:12) required for effective service. We serve prayerfully, in our weakness and out of an overflow of our relationship with God.

7. The Lord of the Harvest: An Invitation to Pray

Passages: Matthew 9:35-38, Exodus 3-4, John 17

Blurb: Our priority says Jesus is to pray for labourers (Matthew 9:35-38). We will see that when we pray God often calls just as He did with Paul & Barnabas (Acts 13:2-4) and with Moses (Exodus 3-4). Jesus gives us a model for our prayers in John 17 as He prays for the glory of God, the wellbeing of His disciples and for the fruit of their labours. Involvement with people is the heartbeat and starting point of Jesus' prayer and it is a great motivation for us to get praying.