

Joining in with God's mission

discussion guide

based on **Luke 10.1-9** (Linked to sermon of 25/9/16)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

These suggestions and questions are only a guide. Feel free to add, chop and amend as is most appropriate for your group!

This was the third part of our 'developing our church vision' series. Please see the attached handout which is another excerpt from the vision document the PCC have put together.

Intro: How are you doing at regularly praying the prayer we looked at last week (Ephesians 1.17) for each other? Why not pray it again now?

1. Which church or Christian ministry outside of St James' by the Park do you feel most grateful for at the moment? Why?

Read verses 1-3. The pattern is that Jesus is about to go ... therefore the 72 are to ask God to send people, then go themselves. They are to be the answers to their own prayers.

2. Evangelism seems to get harder, but other people say that our society is more spiritually open than it's been for years – maybe not open to institutional religion, but searching for spiritual answers. Do you think the harvest is plentiful where we are? Do you think Jesus would say it is?

3. Why do you think Jesus encourage the 72 others to pray and in the next breath tells them to go?

4. What do you make of Jesus sending '72 others' (rather than just the 12) and in pairs? What might the equivalent be today?

5. What do you make of Jesus sending them ahead of him? Where will you go with Jesus on mission this week?

Verses 3-8 give various instructions about how to do mission. Verse 3 talks about the danger aspect of mission; verse 4 talks about reliance on God and having a clear focus; verses 5-9 talk about seeking out those who are spiritually open and investing time in getting to know them, on their terms not yours.

6. Pick one or two (not all!) of the phrases from these verses and unpack them some more. How might they relate to you today? eg what can we do to protect ourselves and each other from 'wolves'? where is God asking you to focus your mission – and what genuine needs will you have to say 'no' to in order to fulfil that mission? how can you tell who is spiritually open?

7. Read verse 9. Have you ever offered to pray (there and then) for a friend or stranger who's ill? How did they respond? If there's someone that you have been praying for who doesn't know you've been praying, could you tell them this week?

8. How would you explain 'the Kingdom of God is near you' to a friend who isn't a Christian?

9. Look at the attached excerpt from the vision document the PCC have put together explaining the triangle and toberone. Take a minute to draw a triangle each reflecting how strong you personally feel in the 3 areas of 'up' 'in' and 'out'. Is it an equilateral triangle, or lopsided? Share your answers. How can you help each other to become more equilateral?

Spend some time praying:

- that the Lord of the harvest would send workers into his harvest field in Shirley
- that the Lord would open your eyes to see which of your friends are 'people of peace' who are spiritually open
- that the Lord would give you opportunities this week to speak of the hope that is within you (1 Peter 3.15)
- for our links with Churches Together in Shirley, the diocese of Winchester, and our mission partners around the world