

# **LESSON 5: GOD WANTS THE CHURCH TO HELP**

## **Part 1: Your Church**

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Make a list of all the activities your church does.

**HIT PLAY NOW TO CONTINUE**

## **Part 2: Church and the Community**

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1. What do people in the community think about the church?
2. What do people in the community think the church does?
3. What do people in the community think about Christians?
4. Do people in the community want to come to church or do you have to go and invite them?
5. How do you think the people in the community would feel if the church wasn't there anymore?
6. Do you think this makes God happy?

**HIT PLAY NOW TO CONTINUE**

## Part 3: Isaiah 58

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Read Isaiah 58:1-10 and discuss:

- What were the people doing?
- What was God's reaction to these people?
- Why did God react in this way?

HIT PLAY NOW TO CONTINUE

## Part 4: Salt and Light

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Read Matthew 5:13.

- What are some uses for salt?
  
- Why does Jesus say that Christians are "the salt of the earth"?

Read Matthew 5:14-16.

- How can we shine more brightly?
  
- What should be the result of doing good deeds?

## Part 5: Salt and Light Stories

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Story 1 – Saris (Dresses) for Hindu Women

The church members in this church considered themselves an oppressed religious minority. They were fearful of ministering outside the Christian community. After learning that they should demonstrate Christ's love to the entire community, the pastor encouraged the women of the church to investigate community needs during the next week.

At the next week's service, the women reported they had found twelve Hindu women who each had only one sari (dress). In the hot climate, the saris must be washed daily. If a woman has only one sari, she stays inside until her washed sari has dried in the sun. The pastor asked if there were women in the congregation who had three saris and who would be willing to donate one to those Hindu women. Enough women volunteered to meet the reported need. The following week, the women of the church visited the homes where the women had only one sari, and they offered a second sari. The Hindu women were so impressed with this gesture that they invited the Christian women to pray for them. Some of the pregnant Hindu women also asked the Christian women to pray for their unborn children.

## Story 2 – Water for the Community

In one area the people faced a huge water shortage. After learning about God's desire for the church to reach out to their community, the church leadership decided to explore what they could do on their own to meet the need for water. They found a place to rent equipment that could be used to dig wells by hand. At first, people rejected the idea—they thought that the water was too deep. If hand-dug wells were possible, they reasoned, why hadn't they been dug before? However, the church leadership decided to try. They rented the one-by-one-meter collapsible steel cylinder and winch. They moved it to their community and began to dig for water at the back of the church property. When water was struck at forty-five feet, everyone celebrated enthusiastically.

Non-church members, however, were not pleased. They thought that church members would keep the water for themselves. But instead, the church invited the community to share in God's blessings of their successful well. Soon, representatives from nearby parts of the rural community began to ask church leaders if they would help dig wells near them. The church responded positively. In little more than a year, fifteen wells were dug by hand—one more than eighty feet deep.

The people were so impressed by the way the church showed God's love that when the church invited the community to come to hear the message of God's love, the building was filled with people who were curious to know more about the God and His people who had provided water.

- What did these churches do?
- Were they rich churches?
- What resources did they use?
- Why did they do these things?
- What was the impact of their actions?

## Part 6: Sheep and Goats

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Matthew 25:31-46.

1. What was the difference between the sheep and the goats?
2. What are some of the things that the sheep did? Are they spiritual things or physical things?
3. How often does your church do the things mentioned by Jesus?
4. What would be the impact on your community if all the members of your church did these things?

## Part 7: Planning to Help

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Think of some specific ideas of how the church can help people in these situations – hungry, thirsty, naked, lack of shelter, sick, imprisoned.