

Lesson 4: Kingdom Communities

Part 1: Jesus as a Community Leader

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Can you imagine Jesus as the leader of your community?

- What do you think He would change?
- What would stay the same?

Facilitator Instructions: *If the group only focuses on changing political leaders, remind them that Jesus didn't change the political leaders while He was on earth. The disciples all expected Him to overthrow the political structure; however, He didn't.*

If the group is struggling to think of ideas then you can use some of these questions to prompt discussion:

- What would Jesus do about widows and orphans?
- How would He strengthen families?
- How would He promote safe drinking water, adequate housing and food, health services, garbage and sewer systems, and decent roads?
- What would be done about the education of children and adults?
- What would He do about alcoholism, drug abuse, gambling, and other addictions?
- What would He do about spousal and child abuse?
-
- How would He improve relationships between people?

Part 2: The Kingdom on Earth

In the Bible we do see an example of what it would be like if a community of believers started to obey God in all things and reflected God's Kingdom.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Acts 2:42-47, Acts 4:32-35 and answer the questions.

- What did the new believers do?
- Are these spiritual or physical things?
- What was the result?

- What results should we see in our communities when we have fellowship like the early believers did?

Part 3

Read the stories of two areas that have been seeking to build God's Kingdom.

Story 1:

A man in India went to visit a village where he had been working. He asked the village women what their community would look like if Jesus were the leader of the village. Sara, one of the more outspoken women, described a village where there was unity and solidarity. She knew Jesus was not honoured by how her village was divided. Each family lived only for itself. Because of her reply, the group of village women formed a health committee and a self-help group. The fourteen women in the self-help group began to meet regularly and with great enthusiasm. Group members collected small amounts of individual savings into a group account and they began to solve community problems together. Sara became the president of the committee and used her leadership gifts to plan and to mobilize the village to do the kinds of things Jesus would do if He were the leader.

Story 2:

Ladies from a Bible study in Uganda decided to serve their village as Jesus would serve. They carefully planned their first project: cleaning garbage from around a local bar. Two of the women courageously entered the bar. (Usually, the only women who go into a bar are the prostitutes.) They asked permission to clean up the garbage. The surprised owners laughed but agreed. The women mobilised the community, with many people volunteering. The group dug two pits: one for biodegradable garbage and the other for non-biodegradable materials. When bar patrons saw others cleaning up their trash, they helped. To the delight of the community, the bar owners continued to keep the area clean. Encouraged, one of the women decided to build nine fuel-efficient stoves for local families and to provide water storage pots for needy people. Next, the Bible study group undertook a larger project: a community market. The village women typically walk many hours, carrying their vegetables and goods to far away markets. A nearby market would allow them to generate income while keeping them close to their families, community, and gardens. Land was donated, but it was too steep to begin to build the market. The women from the Bible study prayed, and highway workers who were repairing a road nearby willingly came with a bulldozer and levelled the ground of the property at no cost. With God's help the small group of rural Christian women discovered and collected resources, saved money, solved dilemmas, and built a community market. Their spiritual lives grew as they served others on behalf of Jesus.

- What happened in each of the stories?

- Because of the people in the stories, did the communities move closer to how Jesus intended them to live? Why?
- What were some of the activities the groups did?
- How could you do the same in your community?

Part 4: Community Change in All Four Areas

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator Instructions: Ask each group to think of what changes they would like to see happen in their community under each of the headings—mental, physical, social, and spiritual (on flip chart or other paper). Remind the group that social is related to our relationships (for example, marriage, parenting, relationships between neighbours, and unity in the church). Physical includes things like money, work, and health. They can also refer back to the ideas that they generated in the first part of this lesson—Jesus as the leader of our community.