

Rooted and Growing



Small Group Series

A prayer for you from Ephesians 3:14-21

For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name.

I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.

I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

NOTES

Session 6 Mission Planning: *Every Church/Circuit is encouraged to create a mission action plan to respond to how it feels God is at work in and through its life and in its specific context. What might that plan look like for your church/circuit?*

In preparation for this session, reflect on these questions:

- What has encouraged or challenged you from these sessions?
- What is exciting you about what you have been hearing and learning with others from your church/circuit?

Small group session:

1. Reflecting on your own experience of **these sessions**, what has stood out...
 - for you personally? for your church? for your circuit?
2. As you think about the development of a **mission plan** for your church or circuit (and its link to wider district plans)...
 - What hopes or concerns do you have?
 - What values do you see at the heart of your mission plan? Are these linked to any scripture passage/bible story which has particular significance for you?
3. Reflecting on your church/circuit **mission plans**, you may just be starting or may already have some plans in place....
 - What do you imagine as a clear vision for the future?
 - What kind of overall vision or mission statement have you already developed (or perhaps are in the process of developing)?
 - How have you already identified particular needs within your community that may inform your future plans?

Take away:

- What gifts, skills, resources, or time do you have that you would like to offer in to mission plans?
- How might feedback from above begin to shape a mission plan?
- What action might you take in response to this session?

Rooted and Growing is a 6 session small group series to aid Mission Planning rooted in Our Calling

Mission Plans, which are contextual and flexible, are critical to how we respond to the grace of God. Our reflections and conversations help to identify what is important and what God is calling us to. We can only plan effectively if we fully recognise that we are participating in God's mission in our local context and in our own lives.

These sessions are written to help you reflect personally and together as a faith community in planning for the future.

- *How can you join in with what God is doing to further the mission God has called you to?*
- *How can you plan effectively with others in your church/circuit?*
- *How might that shape your mission plans as a community of Methodists in your circuit?*

This series aims to explore these questions in relation to Our Calling, to consider what God is saying to you and your church/circuit, and how you might share and respond to what you are discerning.

The sessions include:

1. **Responding to Our Calling:** *Your church came into being in response to the call of God, in order to fulfil a mission.*
2. **Worship:** *The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love.*
3. **Learning and Caring:** *The Church exists to help people to grow and to learn as Christians, through mutual support and care.*
4. **Service:** *The Church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice.*
5. **Evangelism:** *The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ.*
6. **Mission Planning:** *Every Church/Circuit is encouraged to create a mission action plan.*

Session 1 Responding to Our Calling: Your church came into being in response to the call of God, in order to fulfil a mission.

NOTES

In preparation for this session:

- Reflect on the areas of Our Calling and watch the video on the Methodist Church website if you can <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/our-calling/>
- How does your church (and how do you personally) express the calling of the Methodist Church 'to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission'?

In this session, consider the following:

1. Reflecting on the areas of Our Calling...
 - Which is of greatest/least priority for you? Why?
 - Which seems to have greatest/least priority for your church? Why?
2. Reflect on Mark 1:14-20/2:13-17; Matthew 10:1-15; Luke 10:1-12
 - What stands out to you most in these passages?
 - What helps or challenges your vision for a church that 'responds to the call of God, in order to fulfil a mission'?
3. In looking to God and drawing on scripture...
 - How might God prioritise the areas of Our Calling for you/your church/your circuit at the moment? Why?
 - What obstacles need to be addressed and what opportunities need to be explored (practical, financial, cultural, other)?

Take away:

- How might the points explored begin to shape your response personally and as a church community in planning for the future?
- What action might you take in response to this session?

Session 5 Evangelism: *The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ.* But what does that look like in practice?

NOTES

In preparation for this session, reflect on these questions:

- How have you witnessed to God's love?
- What opportunities have there been to share your faith recently?
- Are there any particular people you should pray for or invite to consider Christian Faith?

Small group session:

1. Reflecting on your own experience...
 - How would you **describe evangelism** as you have experienced it?
 - What and/or who has helped you to follow Jesus?
2. Reflecting on Luke 4:16-19 and Mathew 28:19-20...
 - What stands out to you most in these passages?
 - All disciples of Jesus are called to listen for, speak of, and live out the Good News.
Thinking of this and drawing on the passages, how would you **define evangelism**?
3. Reflecting on your church's **evangelism**...
 - Do you have a clear message that is meaningful to those outside the Church?
 - What attracts people to the Christian faith?
 - In what ways are you as a church reaching out in evangelism to those outside the Church?

Take away:

- How confident are you in witnessing to others about your faith in God and what helps you in this?
- What new opportunities do you see emerging for you and/or your church to reach out to others?
- What action might you take in response to this session?

Session 2 Worship: *The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love.* But what does that look like in practice?

In preparation for this session, reflect on these questions:

- What is the pattern of your prayer life? How easy or hard do you find it?
- What has recently spoken to you in worship or reading/studying the Bible?
- When has God been close to you? Has God felt distant?

In this session, consider the following:

1. Reflecting on your own experience...
 - How would you **describe worship** for you personally?
 - What stories are you reminded of about Jesus and worship? Or from other bible passages?
2. Reflecting on Romans 12...
 - What stands out to you from this passage?
 - Drawing on this and other stories discussed above, how would you **define worship**?
3. Reflecting on your church's **corporate worship**...
 - What helps us to centre our worship in God?
 - Where and when do we feel God's presence in worship?
 - How do visitors experience our worship?

Take away:

- What is God saying to you about your personal worship life?
- Where is God challenging/encouraging the church/circuit in its worship life?
- What action might you take in response to this session?

Session 4 Service: *The Church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice.* But what does that look like in practice?

In preparation for this session, reflect on these questions:

- How are you serving your neighbours?
- What issues of justice are you involved in? Are there any you need to take up?
- How could the church support you in your commitments?

In this session, consider the following:

1. Reflecting on your own experience...
 - How would you **describe service** that has been important to you?
 - When you think of Jesus engaged in service, what pictures/stories come to mind?
2. Reflecting on Luke 10:25-37...
 - What stands out to you most in these passages?
 - Drawing on this passage, and ideas from above, how would you **define service**?
3. Reflecting on your church's **servicing**...
 - How are you involved in service to the community?
 - How do you give attention to the moral issues raised by daily work?
 - How do you use your premises and money in serving the community?

Take away:

- How are you being a good neighbour locally in your context and within the wider work of challenging injustice?
- Where is God prompting you/the church to be more involved?
- What action might you take in response to this session?

Session 3 Learning and Caring: *The Church exists to help people to grow and to learn as Christians, through mutual support and care. But what does that look like in practice?*

In preparation for this session, reflect on these questions:

- How and what are you learning at the moment?
- Who or what has God given you to care for?
- How have you practiced generosity and hospitality recently?

In this session, consider the following:

1. Reflecting on your own experience...
 - How would you **describe learning and caring** that has nurtured you as a disciple?
 - What are some of the key aspects of **discipleship** reflected in the ministry of Jesus?
2. Reflecting on Matt 25:31ff; Mark 10:13-16; John 15:5-8; Acts 2:42-47
 - What stands out to you most in these passages?
 - Drawing on the passages, how would you **define discipleship**?
3. Reflecting on your church's **learning and caring**...
 - What church activities help most to deepen your faith in God?
 - How effective are your small groups in linking faith to everyday life?
 - What makes it easy for people to join with you?

Take away:

- What helps you to grow and learn as a follower of Jesus? How can you ensure those things are accessible to you at the moment?
- How are you receiving and offering support and care?
- What action might you take in response to this session?