

Session 1 : Intro

WE ARE NEEDY AND WE ARE NEEDED



God has chosen to use ordinary people like us in his church - empowered with his extraordinary Spirit - to do most of the work in his Kingdom.

CHURCHES THAT HELP BEST ARE FULL OF PEOPLE WHO BOTH NEED HELP AND GIVE HELP. IN ORDER TO BE A HEALTHY CHURCH COMMUNITY, WE NEED TO LEARN HOW TO DO BOTH.

As we go through these next few training sessions, we will look at how to share our burdens, and be guided in how we can help others in our church to bear theirs.

Inspired by and using some material from
Side by Side by Edward T Welch: pub Crossway

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CHALLENGES:

- **We hide our needs** because we are afraid of what other people will think.
- **We don't want to be weak.** But we need to remember God loves to showcase his strength through our weakness.

**Anything that reminds us that we are dependent on God and other people is a good thing
- arrogance is not attractive!**

As small group leaders, we see our role as being needed. But in order to model authenticity to our group, we also need to show that we are needy. It doesn't always require a qualified counsellor to help someone. Our small groups can be just the places for this to happen in a loving way as we learn to build relationships with each other.

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FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Think about your own story of needing help. Who is it that has helped you most often? Most often it's friends - normal everyday people in our lives. Why do you think this is the way that God has chosen to use us to help each other?

Look at Exodus 17 v 12; Galatians 6 v 2

2. What would you say to someone who doesn't feel that they have anything to offer others? (Think about times when we might be 'helping' without even realising it - has God only made some of us people that help others?)

3. What can we learn from this discussion about how discipleship relationships might operate within the framework of the church?



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Session 1 : Part 1

WE ARE NEEDY - LIFE IS HARD



Think of a time when you were in a group and someone spoke about a struggle in their life. What happened to the group?

In all likelihood, it suddenly became more like a family. When someone opens up honestly, the assumption that we are 'sorted' is exposed as myth, and we begin to share one another's burdens more realistically.



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Session 1 : Part 1

WE ARE NEEDY – LIFE IS HARD



Our lives function at their best when we take our burdens to God and to at least one other person – the Psalms show us how to verbalise and pour them out. (Ps 62 v 8)

This diagram represents the circumstances that shape our lives. It's a bit like an x-ray of where we are.



The heart is at the centre. (We will look at the heart next time).

Our body: Our body is a blessing if it is healthy, but also brings us trouble because of physical or psychiatric hardship.

Our relationships: We need people and relationships in our lives, but because people aren't perfect, relationships are difficult as well as joy-filled

Our work: the job we have or would like to have; the money we earn (which influences how we see God). They are both hugely influential on how we are shaped.

Spiritual beings and the world: Spiritual beings have more impact on us than we sometimes remember, and we need God's power and protection more than we realise as we are attacked with lies and temptations as we try to live in a God-filled way. Living in an imperfect world means that we are also surrounded by a counter-Biblical viewpoint at every angle.

God and his kingdom: God is the external circle because he surrounds and envelops all things.

Firstly, we need to acknowledge the uncertainty of our lives as well as the difficult circumstances we go through, and then we need to pour them out to God. His desire is to speak to him honestly about what is on our heart.

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Session 1 : Part 1

WE ARE NEEDY - LIFE IS HARD



CONTEMPLATIVE ACTIVITY:

There are a lot of hard things attacking us in our lives.

For you, today, what are the top three areas from this diagram where you feel under duress?

Pray about the things on your list knowing that God loves us and gives us what we need.



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Session 1 : Part 2

WE ARE NEEDED – BUT WE HAVE THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



The reason we can even consider helping others is that **we live with the help of the Holy Spirit.**

God uses us as ordinary people to do the work of his kingdom. We will always be capable of saying things that are stupid or hurtful. But our prayer is that our ability to help others will increasingly show the fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5 v 22**).

The Spirit gives us wisdom and brings the truths of the cross into the details of daily life.

As Jesus is with us through the Spirit, and as we grow in him, his wisdom becomes a part of us.

The Spirit works in ordinary people

We can access knowledge from qualified people, but we don't always want or need that. As we saw at the start, God delights to use the ordinary man or woman.

(1 Cor 1 vv 26-29).

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- **Following what we have just been talking about - how are you qualified as a believer to help your fellow believers? (*You are qualified by the Spirit, and by your ordinariness and neediness, to be used by God*).**
- **How do you think the church can become stronger through being weak 'side by side'? What might this look like practically for your small group?**

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