

## “That’s the way to do it!”

We are offering a series of reflections for individuals and churches who may be finding it difficult to provide midweek prayer and shared learning from Scripture. You can use these by watching the YouTube video, reading the relevant Bible passage and then reflecting on the questions below. To help make this a shared activity, you are encouraged to reflect on this together with friends using an online conference package, or simply arrange with a friend for them to watch it too. Then ring each other up, share your thoughts and responses and then pray for one another, and pray together for our world.

**Read Acts 6:1-6**

If you can, watch the YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/XrqwoltwU1w>

The book of Acts tells the story of how the Early Church appointed 7 deacons to oversee the distribution of food to the needy widows. It is easy to see this as an organisational role, but as we reflect more carefully, we recognise that this was a key spiritual task. The issue for the Early Christians was not that they needed someone to organise the distribution of food – they did that quite naturally; the problem was that they were not distributing food in a way that reflected their values and identity as the Body of Christ. They spoke of being one in Christ, but in reality, they were reflecting attitudes of inequality and discrimination in the way they undertook this task. This serves as both a challenge and an encouragement. It challenges us to think about how we go about things and to consider whether our approach reflects who we are as disciples of Jesus. But it also encourages us to recognise that even when so much of our shared life is restricted, there are still ways in which we can reflect our Christian identity. As you reflect on this story, here are three things you might consider:

**How does this story challenge the way I do things?** Take some time to reflect on the ordinary and everyday tasks that you undertake - the things you do at home, at work, within the community – and of course the things you do or are planning to do within the life of your local church. Things like the ordinary and everyday task of caring for the widows which the early believers undertook. And as you reflect on them, pause to ask yourself – am I expressing the values of God's Kingdom in the way that I do them? Is my identity as a follower of Jesus reflected in the way that approach them? What would people learn about the Kingdom of God by observing the way that I go about my life?

**How do I reflect the values of God's Kingdom?** We might also turn the question above the other way around. Reflect on what you know about the Kingdom of God – those words of Jesus that matter to you – those aspects of Christian discipleship that you see as important. What are the things that Jesus did and said that inspire you? How can you more intentionally reflect those things in your everyday living? The apostles knew all the words of Jesus – even to the point where they didn't want anything else to distract them from proclaiming them. But even they had overlooked the fact that they weren't being lived out in the community of believers that they led – it took a delegation of disadvantaged widows to point it out to them. How can we avoid the same mistake and seek to reflect our identity as God's people in our day to day actions and activities?

**Whose are the voices that I need to listen to more?** The conclusion above leads naturally to this third area of reflection. Who are the equivalent of those Greek widows in our culture and society? Who are those that we are called to champion in our commitment to a Kingdom where the narratives of discrimination between slave, free, Jew, Gentile, Male, Female are called to be overthrown? Whose voices do we need to make sure are heard? Whose cause do we need to pay attention to?

### PRAYER

God of all things and God of all people, help me to live out my life in ways that reflect who I am in you. Even in the midst of what might seem ordinary and routine, make me mindful of the values of your Kingdom, draw me into the purposes of your Gospel and help me to reflect the likeness of Jesus in all that I say and do. And so may the reality of who you are be seen in the person I am. AMEN