



## Using “40 days” in your Sunday Services

As part of the Baptist Together “40 days of Good News” initiative, many churches in NWBA are taking up the challenge to invite people to be ready to share their faith, and help someone else become a follower of Jesus. By distributing the prayer card (pictured above) and encouraging people to pray for the opportunity to use it, we hope to stimulate hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of conversations about Jesus.

People are most likely to respond if they are regularly reminded and given space think about this, which is why we are encouraging churches to make this a feature in services EVERY SUNDAY from 10th April to 15th May. It is suggested that you SET TIME ASIDE in each service for this.

SUNDAY 10th APRIL - Try to make this a key feature in the service. Don't just leave the cards at the back of the room - give them out, there and then in the service. Invite people to read the prayer and firstly consider whether this is something that they need to pray for themselves. This is a simple but poignant opportunity to invite everyone in your congregation to consider afresh their relationship with the living Christ. Many will identify themselves as already being followers of Jesus - explain the second part of the challenge, which is to pray for the opportunity to share this prayer with someone else. A useful verse to share may be John 16:7-8:

*“ if I do not go away, the Spirit will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment “*

Through these words, Jesus reminds us that the Spirit is a work in the world. We are not asking people to win arguments or become street preachers, but to be open to where God may already be at work in people's lives, and to be ready to help them explore what it means to become a follower of Jesus. We are inviting people to PRAY for this to happen.

On this Sunday, and the following Sundays at a regular point in the service, you are encouraged to:

**DISTRIBUTE CARDS** - get people who already have them to find them in their bag or wallet and get them out. Give out more if they are needed, and have that physical, visual reminder of our desire to share the message of Jesus with our neighbourhoods and communities.

**THINK** - take a moment to reflect as a congregation on the people we are likely to meet in the coming week, perhaps some of the encounters that people have had in the previous week and to pray for those who, as a church, we have come into contact with through our everyday lives.

**SHARE** - it may be that people have stories to share of encounters and conversations they have had which can be an encouragement to others.

**PRAY** - for the people they care about; for the opportunity to have a conversation with someone about Jesus; for others in your church community who are also part of this initiative.

You could simply announce this in the notices; you could put the cards out at the back of the room and the chances are that most people will intend to pick one up, but never quite get around to it.

The image on the prayer card is part of the sculpture in the cloisters of Chester Cathedral which is inspired by the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, recorded in John chapter 4. This Gospel event has shaped much of the thinking around the LOVE - HOPE - ACCEPTANCE theme. We will also be putting together and sharing a prayer guide which explores different aspects of this woman's experience. This can be used as the basis for your weekly reflection slots during the “40 days” period.

We hope you find this resource helpful, but more importantly join you in praying that through it, people might discover for themselves what it means to be a follower of Jesus.