

## Before next time...

*'He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.'* (Micah 6:8)

Rooted in the desire for all of creation to experience his kingdom and shalom, God shows a special compassion and protection for the poor and marginalized throughout the Bible.

What do these passages show about God's concern, and how his people are to act?

Job 31:16-23                      Deuteronomy 14:28-29, 15:7-11; 15:12-15

Leviticus 25                      Amos 2:6-7                      Isaiah 1:10-17

Matthew 11:1-6                      Matthew 5:43-6:4                      1 John 3:16-17

How might we as a church, or as a Growth Group, or as individuals demonstrate in practical ways our 'love for the city' and God's concern for the marginalised? Brainstorm as a Group, think about it on your own, and talk about it next time.

Here are some suggestions:

- **Serving the homeless.** SLEAP is a Christian charity that seeks to provide accommodation to young people who are homeless by linking them up with Christians who can provide a home for a while. The church office has more details.
- **Serving through local charities.** How about linking up with St Catherine's Hospice or Derian House and trying to raise money, or getting involved as a volunteer? How about offering to help with one of the local charity shops?
- **Serving young people.** How about offering to help out with the local Youth Club? Or to get involved in one of our church schools as a governor, or to offer go in and hear children read?
- **Serving the elderly.** How about offering to join our team who visit Clough House and take a monthly service? Or offering to visit people during the week on behalf of the church? There is a desperate need for a good, Christian run Nursing Home. Could you give and pray towards such a scheme?
- **Serving those with disabilities.** Could you volunteer to be part of our Good News Group? Would you like to support that ministry in prayer? Or perhaps be part of a volunteer group that works amongst people with learning disabilities? Crossways and other local charities are doing a good work.

*What is our town doing? How could you get involved and be salt and light?*

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## Session 6 Work Cultivating The Garden

### Recap and Bible Study

*Last time we saw how important it is to have congregations that are gospel-speaking, neighbourhood loving & community transforming. Only the gospel of Christ enables us to build an alternate city together. This session's theme is the gospel and our work. You might like to begin by discussing the 'before next time section'...*

- Read together Matthew 6:19-24

1. Why does Jesus tell us to store up 'treasures in heaven' rather than 'treasures on earth'? What does Jesus mean when he says 'for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also'? Can you think of examples?
2. How do you think v22-23 is linked both with what Jesus says before (in v19-21) and with what he says after (v24)? How can we ensure that our sight is good?
3. Why does Jesus push us to go for God OR Money (Mammon)? What is his point?
4. How do most people you know spend their time, energy and money?
5. How might you and the Growth Group go about storing up treasure in heaven?

## Watch the DVD

Use this space to jot anything down you find helpful from Tim Keller

Was there anything from the DVD which was new to you, or which you thought was particularly striking? Anything you were not sure about?

1. What was the biblical basis for Tim to say that 'work is good and has dignity'? How does that change the way you view work? How does it compare with how most people view work?
2. In the DVD it was suggested that Christians are good at separating their faith in God from their every day work. Why is that wrong? How do Paul's instructions to Christian slaves and masters in Colossians 3:22-4:1 give us an insight into how we bring the gospel to bear on our work?
3. If we adopted that approach, how might it transform the workplace?

4. One of the problems that Tim alluded to was 'overwork'. How is that a problem and what affect does it have on the workplace and the rest of the community? Why do people 'overwork'? How could the gospel transform that attitude and lead to i) hard work but also ii) proper rest?

5. Tim asked,

*"Do you see your workplace as a place to share the gospel as well as a place to let the gospel shape how you work?"*

How could you i) share the gospel with people at your place of work? (or amongst the people you meet each day) and ii) allow the gospel to shape what you do and how you approach it?

6. Have a look over the page at the section 'Before next time'. The suggestion is that we think of how we might get involved in supporting work amongst some of the marginalised in our town. Rather than starting up a 'Christian' ministry, how about showing our love for the town by getting involved in something which already exists? If you want to act as a group one idea is to invite someone from a ministry to come and talk about their work. You could then explore how you could be involved in prayer, in money, in volunteering etc. Discuss this as a group, think about it in the week and then come back and decide next week what to do.

## Spend time in prayer

- pray for each other's 'work' - that God may claim it!
- pray for our church to be a city on a hill and for each of us to be salt and light