

Sunday 26th November 2023

Fruitfulness on the Frontline

8 The journey on

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. (John 15: 1-2)

Welcome

- Do you love or hate gardening? What do you love or hate about it?
- In the last session we looked at being a messenger of the gospel. Is there anything that you discussed in the last session that has been helpful to you over the past week?

Word

Read John 15:1-2 (at top of page)

1. Who is the gardener?
2. When you think about the ministry on our frontlines as God's work, how does that make you feel?

Read Matthew 28: 16-20

3. What does this reading tell us about being fruitful on our frontline? (particularly the last verse) Does that encourage you?

Prayer

4. Read 2 Chronicles 18:31. Jehoshaphat cries out to God on the frontline of battle. What kinds of things can you pray to God for on your frontline – be specific?
5. Share some ideas of how we can pray for our frontlines. (e.g. a quick prayer when you first sit at your desk each day, asking God to help you with specific challenges etc.)
6. Do we find it easier to talk to God than to listen?

Fellowship

Read 2 Kings 6: 15-17

7. How do these verses encourage us? What do they tell us about who we have to support us?
8. Do you think we make the most of the support we can get from other Christians? What can you do to support each other more? (think of practical things and commit to doing them)
9. On Sunday we only talked about the fellowship and support we got from other people in our church – but sometimes we can also get support from other Christians on our frontline. Does anyone have experience of this? If we do know other Christians on our frontline, how can we support each other better?

Bible reading

Read 2 Timothy 3: 16-17

10. Does reading the Bible with our frontlines in mind help us to be more fruitful? How?

Sometimes fruit takes a long time to ripen

We may spend time on the same frontline with the same people every day but we don't seem to see anything change. Sometimes fruit takes a long time to ripen. We need to be patient. The little things we do on our frontline, when nurtured by God, can grow beyond anything we ever imagined. We don't always get to see the end of the story – we don't get to see how something grows. We may have a conversation with a customer we never see again. We may minister grace and love to a colleague, but then they move jobs and we lose touch. But God is at work.

11. Sometimes fruit takes a long time to ripen. How does that make you feel? Do you need to be more patient?
12. Does it encourage you, to think that sometimes you don't see the end of the story, but you play a part?

The Journey On

We have spent several months thinking about being fruitful on our frontline. We have focussed on the 6Ms:

Modelling godly character

Making good work

Ministering grace and love

Moulding culture

Being a **M**outhpiece of truth and justice

Being a **M**essenger of the gospel

At the end of this series:

13. How do you see your frontline and the people there differently?
14. How do you see yourself differently? How do you see God differently?
15. Has it helped you to see that there are lots of different ways of being fruitful?
16. Which of the 6Ms has stood out the most for you in the series and why?
17. Which of the 6Ms do you find the most challenging? The easiest?
18. As a group, how might we ensure we maintain a frontline focus?
19. What individual disciplines might help you personally to continue to reflect on your 6M ministry?

Praying forwards

Briefly share any particular situations that God has put on your heart and take some time praying into these.

- Ask that, like Elisha prayed, you would have vision to see that you do not go out onto your frontlines alone.
- Ask for God's help as you seek to serve him on your frontline and for courage to take action when prompted.
- Ask that God would help you to remember what you have learnt and help you to find ways of sustaining a frontline focus as an individual, a group, and a wider church.
- Continue to pray for the people you identified last week

An idea for Bible reading & prayer during Advent:



Find it on the
'You Version' app
(seen as 'Holy Bible' on your front screen)

or sign up for daily emails

<https://licc.org.uk/ourresources/the-whole-christmas-story-devotional-journey-page/>

Even if your group isn't meeting over Christmas – can you keep in touch – maybe message each other about things you are learning from following 'the Whole Christmas Story'.