

A call to prophetic prayer and action

Vision: to reflect on the situation in our community and to explore the role that God is calling us to in response – both in prayer and action

Ezekiel 37:1-14 – the valley of dry bones

Questions to discuss:

1. How does God make Ezekiel aware of the situation that His people are in at the start of this passage?
2. How does God engage Ezekiel in responding to the situation that His people are in?
3. What different stages do you see take place among the bones ?
4. Who do these bones represent in our community as they call out “Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off”? Give as specific examples as possible, sharing any stories that illustrate those feelings.
5. How is God calling us to pray and act prophetically over our community and the issues it is facing, bearing in mind those three stages?

Act of Love: pray over the groups you have mentioned in your community that have lost hope or are at risk; ask God for words or images to help you pray prophetically and agree how you will pray and/ or act this week in response to what he shows you.

Going deeper:

Look together through a pile of magazines and prayerfully find images or words that you can cut out and collage to bring together a picture of what renewed life and hope look like in our community.

Notes for facilitator: see over page

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- *God sends His Holy Spirit on Ezekiel and then leads him through the valley so he can observe the situation himself. It is Ezekiel who sees that the bones are dry – not God who tells him.*
- *God asks Ezekiel what is possible for these bones in the future. When Ezekiel abdicates responsibility back to God, God calls him to step up and prophesy hope and life over them.*
- *The bones first come together; then they gain breath and stand on their feet as an army; and then they emerge from their graves and enjoy the land God has given them.*
- *God is asking us at this time to bring people together out of their isolation and struggles. He asks us to pray over them hope and strength and the presence of His Spirit; and to encourage people to emerge into the light where we can work together to bring hope to others.*

Many communities around the world, including our own, resemble that valley of dry bones: hopelessness, tears, pain, depression, loneliness, sickness and fear. But God looks at these situations of despair and shows us the following steps:

- **Commissioning:** God put his hand on Ezekiel (37:1) just as He put his hand on Jesus in Luke 4:18-19 with his mission to bring “good news to the poor” (physical, spiritual and emotional healing). God commissions us as individuals and the Church to do likewise.
- **Assessing the real situation:** God takes Ezekiel and puts him where the problem is. He asks if the bones can live. To Ezekiel, it seems hopeless; yet God calls him to pray and act. As a church, we must recognise things as they are; but be ready to respond.
- **Praying prophetically:** God calls on Ezekiel to speak life into the bones. As Ezekiel speaks, things start to happen. Prophecy is about speaking hope into dark places - not with empty platitudes but living hope in Jesus.
- **Acting:** The miracles come *after* Ezekiel has started to take action, based on the word of God. We need to bring God’s kingdom into the world by showing His compassion and love in action to the “harassed and helpless” (Matthew 9:36-38).