

Time for God – Take 2

Purpose: To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service/passage.

Week beginning Sunday 28 October 2018 What does it take to see?

Pray that we would be as concerned about spiritual insight as we are about our physical sight. Pray that we would be ready to help others to see Jesus and to feel able to express spiritual needs, however tentatively.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). Mark 10:346-52. (Note that because of Harvest last week we are a week out from the lectionary).

Background Jesus continues his preaching/healing/teaching/encouraging trips and the crowds continue to gather. Among those who heard that Jesus was to be heading his way was a blind man called Bartimaeus. As with so many with a disability he was marginalised. However, he was not to be side-lined and he kept shouting out until Jesus took notice of him. Perhaps that in itself was a bit of a miracle given the crowds – but he was heard, he was asked what he wanted (obvious really but I guess Jesus wanted him to voice his need) and it was met – he got his sight back. It changed his life – but it was further evidence to onlookers that Jesus was someone really special.

Possible questions/points to consider

1. We are told that our desire for change is related to our discontent with things as they are. To what extent would this have been a factor for Bartimaeus? What did he want to change? What do we need to change in our lives? How might we be more self aware of these issues? What spiritual aspects of our lives would be part of the changes we'd want? If Jesus were to ask us "What do you want me to do for you?" what would we say!?
2. Bartimaeus knew clearly what he wanted from Jesus. Many around us would have little idea what they would want from Jesus – wouldn't have a clue who Jesus was or his significance. How might we play a part in helping them to meet with Jesus? Try to focus less on the obstacles and difficulties and more on the opportunities or openings (however small).
3. Crowds can get in the way – folk can be pushed aside or to the back. How do we minimise the risk of doing that with people in our community? What steps might we take that would be intentional in trying to include people who might otherwise be marginalised?
4. Eyesight is still very important and as Christians we can be involved in supporting those who need help with sight – but how might we take more seriously the need to develop spiritual insight? Let's think what initial steps we could take to help people open themselves up to even the most basic spiritual steps? Don't make assumptions – be as basic as you like – 1,2,3, A B C.
5. And if we've been Christians for a while – what further steps might we be taking to help ourselves and those around us in the Church to grow in our faith? To improve our spiritual insight?
6. We can be reluctant to talk about our faith – sometimes out of fear of showing up what we perceive to be its shortcomings. How do we overcome that fear? What encouragement does Bartimaeus offer? What can we learn from Jesus' openness and response to him? Why is it that many people see Church people as people who are out to "get" something from them rather than to "give"?
7. Please discuss/consider anything else that arises from the passage or service.

Prayer Lord thank you that you are open to meet our deepest needs. Help us to go beyond the practical physical needs we have and to be prepared to express our spiritual needs too. Make us more aware of people round about us who have all kinds of needs that you can meet and to get alongside them (without threatening them!) so that they might reach out to you and receive your love and grace. Amen.