

SESSION 8:

THE JOURNEY ON

'When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked. "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.'

2 Kings 6:15-17

Key Questions:

How has our journey through the 6Ms helped us to see our frontlines, ourselves and God differently?
How can we ensure that what we have learned has an on-going impact upon our lives?

Aims of the Session:

To share personal reflections from the past seven sessions and leave feeling affirmed and confident.
To make some specific decisions that will help us to continue living with a 6M perspective.

Materials Required:

Bibles, pens and something to write on



Thinking Back (5 mins)

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?

Perhaps you could pray for the people on your frontline again at the end of this session.

"...there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Luke 15:10





PLAY FILM to end - approx. 12 mins

Questions to Discuss after the Film (10 mins)

- In the film, Claire was fruitful in a range of ways over the years, through both thick and thin. How does this help you to think about being fruitful on your own frontline?
- Claire worked in her role at the surgery for twelve and a half years before seeing any visible changes in her colleagues' relationships with Jesus. How does her story encourage you?

Questions for Personal Reflection (20 mins)

In the film we saw how the head teacher's way of viewing her frontline was totally re-framed. Rather than complaining or feeling sorry for herself, Judith found herself thanking God for trusting her with all of the challenges the day had sent her way.

Using the questions below, take a few minutes in quiet by yourself to reflect on the different ways God might have been changing the way you see things. You might find it helpful to write down your thoughts.

- How do I see my frontline and the people there differently?
- How do I see myself differently?
- How do I see God differently?

Now go around the room, allowing each person to share what they feel has been the one most significant change in the way they see things.

- Are there any common themes to what people in the group have been learning?

Once everybody has shared, ask one person to pray a prayer of thanks to God for all that he has been teaching the group.



Group Discussion (15 mins)

In discussing the questions below, try to arrive at some specific decisions that you want to take as a group and as individuals. Write down any points that need to be implemented. To the right are some possible things to consider and add to.

- How might we ensure that as a group (whatever materials we use next) we maintain a frontline focus?
- What individual disciplines might help me personally to continue to reflect on my 6M ministry?



...Frontline-focussed prayer each week ... Join the prayer journey (see next page) ... Share some of your own stories in the Sunday service ... Invite your church leader to visit your frontline ... Keep a 6M journal...

Praying Forwards (15 mins as a group)

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.

'Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

Matthew 28:18-20





FRUITFULNESS ON THE FRONTLINE.

SESSION TRANSCRIPTS



SESSION 8: THE JOURNEY ON

In a fast-moving world, we increasingly expect things to happen fast, faster... now... Press a button, out pops the coffee like a song and it's on your phone in four clicks, have a baby and the only thing preventing you posting the picture of the child within ninety seconds of the birth, on Facebook and on Instagram is the fact that the midwife has not yet weighed the little cherub. We're used to getting things instantly, and that can breed impatience. And when it comes to the Christian life we can burden ourselves with similar expectations: I became a Christian yesterday, how come I am still a little short tempered? You know, I've prayed for my work colleague seven days in a row; how come they haven't become a Christian... Well, fruit takes time to ripen.

As we come to the end of this series, I hope that you've seen fruit on your frontline, hope you've seen ways in which God has worked through you in the past, seen ways in which God is working through you right now. I hope that you've already have some stories to tell of how God has been at work.

But of course, sometimes fruit takes a long time to ripen.

Let me tell you a story.

Claire's been working as an administrator in a doctor's surgery for thirteen years.

But the last six months have been particularly special. As she put it, "It was as if God had entered the building."

One of the doctors who was from a Hindu background had been ill and she offered to pray for him. And he got better. He must have told one of the other doctors because she came along to Claire and asked her to pray for her family, which of course she did. And then she invited five of her colleagues to an Alpha course in her church, and all five came. And all five became Christians. And then the female GP was ill herself and one day she came up to Claire and said, "Would you pray for me?" It was the end of the day and Claire was actually about to leave. "What, now?" said Claire. "Yes now" So she put down her bag in the middle of the office and she prayed for the doctor, right there and then, in front of two other colleagues who were working.

It's a fantastic story, it's a fantastic story but it's really only a bit of the story. Claire, before that extraordinary six months, had been working in that doctor's surgery as an administrator for twelve and a half years and there'd been a lot of good fruit along the way.

Claire had prayed all those years, she'd sought to care for colleagues, she shared how she was growing as a young Christian all those years, she sought to create a good and kind atmosphere in the surgery. She tried to be patient with people who were struggling with pain, with disability, with suffering, with loss. Struggling sometimes just to hear clearly, struggling sometimes to understand some form. And over those years quite a lot had changed for Claire: she got engaged, she got married, she had a son and then she'd got divorced. On the other hand, not much seemed to have changed in her colleagues' relationship with Jesus, though a number of them did comment positively on the changes they'd seen in her through those years, through thick and thin. They'd caught a glimpse of what it might mean to walk with Jesus - through thick and thin. So Claire had done good work, Claire had modelled godly character, she'd extended grace and love and she'd created a context in that doctors surgery of kindness, not just efficiency.



Praise God for all of it. Fantastic fruit. Fantastic fruit.

And then in that last six months a lot of other good fruit – people being healed, people becoming Christians. Why then? As Claire put it: “God had been working in me and through me all those years I just think it was God’s timing.” It was just God’s timing.

God had been in the building throughout those thirteen years, God had been working in and through Claire throughout those thirteen years. God had been working in her colleagues throughout those thirteen years.

Different fruit ripening at different times.

Of course, on our frontlines, we may not get to see how one fruit leads to another – we may move away or the person we’re praying for may move away. We start an initiative but we don’t get to see how it grows. We don’t get to see the end of the story. But God is at work.. We trust him and he chooses. We’re not actually in control of our own fruitfulness are we? It’s not something we can manufacture. We can’t stick ourselves in the spiritual greenhouse, or pop ourselves in a grow bag, or pour on the baby bio, and just hope for a bumper crop.

Jesus does it. He is the vine we are the branches.

We can’t make ourselves loving but we can ask Jesus to help us love. We can’t make other people become Christians but we can ask Jesus to show us how he wants us to contribute, break up the ground, pull up the weeds, plant the seed, water and leave him to do what only he can do – give life. We trust him, and God chooses to trust us.

Let me tell you about the head teacher of a primary school; we’ll call her Judith.

On a very cold February Monday, Judith turned up at work to discover that the heating had broken and several hundred small children were about to arrive.

That’s how her day began.

And her day ended with a very angry child making things very difficult, a troublesome child who’d been troublesome rather too often before. And so, reluctantly, Judith had to exclude him, it’s not something any head likes to do. That was how her day ended. Not the bestest of days on her frontline.

But when she got home, after what was really a rather grim day, after a day when she might well have been justified in having a mega-whinge, or soothing herself with a glass or two of medicinal wine or a huge tub of quadruple chocolate ice cream, something strange happened. As she put it, “I found myself thanking God for trusting me with all that.”

It was for her a completely different way of seeing her frontline. God trusted her with it as God trusted Moses with the Israelites. These were the people God had given her... to love... these were the challenges he was expecting her to handle – with him.

God is trusting us with our frontlines, trusting us to be his people there, trusting us with the people there, trusting us with the challenges, trusting us with the tasks, and we are not alone...

There’s a marvellous moment in the life of Elisha in 2 Kings 6 – the King of Aram has realised that the



reason his surprise attacks on Israel are all failing is not because Israel has planted a spy in his court or a bug in his palace but because God is listening in to his plans and it is God who's telling Elisha and Elisha who is warning the King of Israel. So the King of Aram, recognising that his security systems can't stop God listening in, decides to try to capture Elisha. He fails several times. Finally, he tracks Elisha him down to the city of Dothan and sends his troops to surround the city. Here's what happens:

"When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked.

"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."

I can't promise you horses or chariots of fire but God, the King of the Universe, does promise to be with us, and that makes all the difference in the world.

God surely is at work on your frontline, surely wants to teach you things there, the Lord surely does have a role for you there, surely wants you to be a blessing there.

So as this series come to an end, do think about how, as a group, you might help one another to be fruitful on your frontlines over the long haul.

Perhaps you want to continue to pray each week for someone else's frontline, for them, for a task they've got to do, a change they'd really like to see, a person in particular need, or a particular person's salvation.

Perhaps once every three months or so you might want to go over the Ms as a way of reflecting on what God might have been doing, a kind of Six M.O.T, as a way of encouraging one another, as a moment to give praise and thanks, as well as to pray.

Perhaps you've thought of lots of different things you might do to bless your frontline, but you probably can't do it all – develop deep relationships with everyone, have a gospel-rich conversation with every person you encounter, root out every smidgen of injustice and untruth, and transform the culture into a new Eden, you can't do it all. For freedom Christ has set us free. For purposeful, spirit-led fellowship with Him in His service not for self-driven, guilt-tinged, anxious hyperactivity.

I wonder, what is God stirring in you? It may be to focus on a particular person or a particular issue. Maybe you aren't sure, so maybe, like Peter the litter-picker, you simply want to ask: "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

It might be a tiny thing, a mustard seed so small you can hardly see it... but a mustard seed grows... So

Wherever your frontline,
 whatever you do,
 whoever you are with,
 the Lord be with you.

The Lord be with you.



Where Next?

Take a *Fruitfulness on the Frontline* Prayer Journey

Praying for our frontlines is powerful. When we pray, God changes things – he changes our frontlines, the people around us and he changes us. Sometimes though, we need a little help to keep momentum in praying – this is designed to do just that.

By signing up for the *Fruitfulness on the Frontline* 40-day prayer journey, you'll receive a short prompt to pray each day via email. that will also remind you of the 6Ms in this series.

The prompts will be tailored for you and a prayer partner to help you support one another on your frontlines. To find out more and to sign up for the journey, visit www.licc.org.uk/fruitfulness



Read *Fruitfulness on the Frontline* - the book

If you'd like to dig deeper around this framework, or are looking for something to read alongside the sessions, Mark's book is a great next step. Brimming with more real-life stories, the combination of fresh biblical insights, humour and practical steps will not only spark your imagination further, it will enrich your sense of wonder at greatness and grace of the God who not only gave his life for us, but invites us to join him in his glorious, transforming work.

www.licc.org.uk/fruitfulness



Map a Journey On for You and Your Church

LICC have a range of resources, speakers, training and support if you'd like to map out a journey for growing in fruitfulness on your frontline. The interactive map of our resources is available at www.licc.org.uk/fruitfulness.

There's lots for people and for churches too, like Neil Hudson's book about whole-life discipling churches – Imagine Church. Whether you feel you're just getting started, trying to live it out, or want to explore further, we hope you'll find the right next step for you in your life with God on your frontline.

Find out more at www.licc.org.uk/fruitfulness



Good news for the 98%. And the 2% too. About The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity

The vast majority of Christians (around 98%) spend the vast majority of their waking time (around 95%), in non-church related activities. So just imagine what the impact might be on our neighbourhoods, on our schools and clubs and workplaces, on our whole nation if all of us were really able to help one another to make a difference for Christ right where we are, out on our daily frontlines?

That's LICC's focus: empowering Christians to make a difference in God's world, and envisioning and equipping church leaders to help them do it.

Founded by John Stott in 1982, and now led by Mark Greene, LICC's growing team seeks to combine biblical wisdom, cultural insight and practical ideas to offer individuals and ministers (the 2%) a wide range of resources. We speak, run courses and workshops, and offer consultancy to churches. And if you click on our website you'll find a trove of free material – clips, articles, downloads – as well as simple sign-ups for our themed prayer journeys and our punchy weekly emails – Word for the Week and Connecting with Culture.

So, if you're looking to make a greater difference where you are, or you'd like your church to become the kind of community that's committed to frontline mission, check out what's available online or get in touch.

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LICC has over 1,000 supporters – please become one of the next 1,000 to enable LICC help Christians and churches to make a difference where they are. For a monthly donation of £10 or more, become a Friend of LICC.

We'll send you *Imagine* how to reach the UK (DVD) and *The Great Divide* by Mark Greene – two inspiring insights into challenges and response we can make to living faithfully as Christians in the world today. And once a quarter you'll receive our magazine and a recent audio or video recording of a recent talk or event. Go online to www.licc.org.uk/licc-friends/join or call us on 020 7399 9555.

Thank you. 

