



Modern Slavery: Our Response

A SMALL GROUP RESOURCE





Leader's note:

Everywhere he went, Jesus was confronted with overwhelming need. Poverty, injustice, sickness and even death seemed to follow him.

Instead of ignoring the need, or feeling overwhelmed, he squared up to it and loved each person individually.

Sometimes we can feel overwhelmed by the immense need in our world around us. But God doesn't call us to scroll past it on our twitter feed. He calls us to do one thing at a time for one person at a time. And by doing this, we can make a difference. This session will delve into the world of modern slavery in our locality and our nation and will ignite faith in us to make a difference.



Icebreaker

Share a time when you felt overwhelmed by a need. Maybe you're a mum

with small children, or you have teenagers with messy bedrooms or a time at work when there was too much to do.



Bible Passage: Read Luke 8:40-56

Jesus was on his way to an emergency - a

12 year old girl was dying. The crowd was pressing in around him. But he still stopped for this lady and she was healed.



Today's Context

According to the Global Slavery Index, there are 136,000 people in slavery in the UK at any one time. This means that 1 in every 492 people are a victim of slavery.

In 2018, 6,993 people were rescued and offered a place in the National Referral Mechanism, a government system designed to provide safe house accommodation and support for a short period of time.

What about your area?

Take the population of your town or city. Divide this by 492. This will give you a rough estimate of how many people are in slavery where you live.

On a search engine, look up 'National Referral Mechanism end of year summary'. Find the report for the previous year. You will find the numbers of people rescued from slavery in each County. Take some time to look through these statistics as a group.



Discussion Questions

How many of us avoid certain news stories because we feel the need so deeply?

If we were on the way to an emergency, would we stop for one person who also needed us? Why or why not?

What does Jesus's example here teach us about responding to overwhelming need?

Did we know the modern slavery statistics in our area? How do we feel about seeing them?



08000 121 700

Action

- Look up and download the 'Safe Car Wash' app from the Clewer Initiative.
- Use this app every time you go to a car wash.
- The Modern Slavery Helpline number is 08000 121 700. Call this number if you have any suspicions of modern slavery locally.
- Tell one person every day for a week about the modern slavery statistics in your area and challenge them to tell one person every day for a week, passing on the awareness raising.



Pray

- Pray for your town or city.
- Pray for awareness to be raised so more people can be found.
- Pray for God to change our hearts so we can respond to need like Jesus does.
- If you have time, go on a prayer walk around potential slavery sites for example car washes, nail bars, construction sites and farms.



Leader's note:

Exploitation is not new. And God's heart beats for justice for all. This week, we are going to be thinking about why God asks us to respond to slavery. What particular mandate has he given to us as his church?



Icebreaker

Share something from the past week that you have noticed as you are

becoming more aware of modern slavery where you live.



**Bible Passage:
Read together
Isaiah 58:1-12**



Today's Context

Rebecca had been trafficked into the UK from Slovakia after being promised a job in a hotel. Instead, she was locked in a flat and repeatedly raped day and night.

She tried to escape once, but her employer caught her and stabbed her feet so she couldn't run again.

But Rebecca was determined and, once her feet had healed, she attempted escape again.

This time she succeeded and was taken to the police who referred her into the government's safe house system. She was given a place in a safe house where she could have some time to recover, received medical and psychological care and legal support.

However, once her limited time in the safe house came to an end, Rebecca found that she was facing homelessness.

As an EU citizen, Rebecca was not entitled to housing benefit and needed to look for a job. In the meantime, she had no family or friends to stay with and no income to pay for somewhere to live. Rebecca's options were very limited and it looked as though she would be sleeping on the streets. Vulnerable as she was, this would mean she would be targeted again by traffickers offering her somewhere to live and a job like many others before her.

Rebecca's support worker referred her to Hope at Home.

Find out the rest of the story next week.....



Discussion Questions

After reading Isaiah 58, what can our response to Rebecca's story be?

In what ways do we avoid doing the things God asks of us?

How can our lives outside of a Sunday meeting be an act of worship?

What home comforts might God be asking us to 'fast' or sacrifice in order to see broken lives restored?



Action

- Could your group become a Hope Hub?
- Hope hubs support local hosts and guests in your area, raise funds and pray regularly for the local work of Hope at Home.



Pray

- Pray for your church to begin to respond to modern slavery in your area.
- Pray for homes for survivors who would be homeless otherwise.
- Pray for Hope at Home guests to rebuild their lives in a positive way



Leader's note:

Isaiah 61 is a famous passage as Jesus declared it in the synagogue right at the start of his ministry. The words Jesus spoke were fulfilled in the hearing of the listeners. The year of jubilee was one of restoration, justice, hope, love, healing, freedom and good news for everyone. We, his people, are now kingdom-carriers. As Christians, our mission is to take this 'year of jubilee' good news to the rest of the world. This session will look at how we can do this.



Icebreaker

Share a moment from the week when being a Christian has made a difference

to the people around you.



Bible Passage:
Read Isaiah 61:
1-3 followed by
Luke 4:16-21



Today's Context

Steve and Hannah were just about finishing raising their three sons. Two had left home for Uni and one was in the process. Steve ran his own business and Hannah was a teacher. They were also involved in church leadership and decided that if they wanted their church to embrace the broken, they needed to model it themselves.

So, they became Hope at Home hosts.

When Rebecca was referred to Hope at Home, Steve and Hannah were ideal hosts.

Welcoming Rebecca into their home was both a learning curve and a joy. They laughed together often and their dog took a real shine to their new guest.

When Rebecca first moved in, she was planning to find a job that offered night shifts as she struggled to sleep. After a few weeks, she began to sleep so well that she looked for a day job instead!

Steve and Hannah gave of their time, their love and their home to Rebecca. She joined in with the family, eating meals and discussing life together.

Hosting wasn't always an easy ask and there were bumps along the way, but Steve and Hannah were so convinced that they had a role to play in seeing lives restored that they sacrificed some of their usual comforts and gave of themselves to love Rebecca.

After six months, Rebecca found a job and moved into her own flat. All that Steve and Hannah had given her, had born fruit and she was able to live independently.



Discussion Questions

Why did Jesus say these words had been fulfilled when he read it out in the synagogue?

What words would you use to describe what Jesus brought with him? Give some examples of Justice, freedom, love, good news, hope etc.

How did Steve and Hannah bring these words into Rebecca's life?

In what ways, as followers of Jesus, can we bring these into the lives of those around us?



Action

- Choose one thing from the last question to put into action this week.



Pray

- Pray for God to use you to bring his 'year of jubilee' to the world around you. Ask him to show you how he wants you to do that.
- Pray that there would be enough hosts for survivors of slavery who need them.
- Pray for the church to rise up and bring those words of love, good news, justice, hope etc to our nation.



Leader's note:

The Israelites loved to look back at all God had done for them. And their response to this was often worship. We are the same. But what exactly is it that God wants from us as a response? Today's session will be investigating just that!



Icebreaker

Tell the rest of the group one good thing that God has done in your life over the last week.



**Bible Passage:
Read Micah
6:1-8**

Looking back at all that God has done for us, our only response can be to offer ourselves to God. Sometimes we offer things that God isn't looking for, though. God asks us to act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with our God.



Today's Context

In 2018, 64% of survivors of modern slavery rescued were asylum seekers. 12% were from EU countries.

This means that 5315 people, on leaving the safehouses, were unable to claim benefits. Some asylum seekers are housed in Home Office accommodation but are not legally allowed to work. People from the EU can work, if they are well enough, but cannot claim housing benefit. Many of these 5315 people will leave the safehouses to sleep on the streets.

It is well known that traffickers particularly target vulnerable homeless people (see The Passage report, June 2019). Offering food, a job and a bed to sleep in out of the cold lures people in and soon they find that they are victims of modern slavery once again.

Hope at Home takes referrals direct from safehouses for survivors who are at risk of being destitute. We place them with hosts who offer them acceptance, a warm bed, family, meals and a safe place to call home. Instead of being vulnerable to re-trafficking, they can begin to rebuild their lives.

We believe that no survivor of modern slavery should ever have to sleep on the streets. We also believe that God places the lonely in families.

Our families.

Is this what the Lord requires of us?



Discussion Questions

How do we respond to God's goodness in our lives?

What do we offer that God might not be looking for?

What does it look like to act justly? What actions can we take to do this in our everyday lives?

What is mercy and why should we love it?

Who do you know who walks humbly with God and what does this look like in our own lives?

If these are the things that the Lord requires of us, how can we grow in them?



Action

Choose one action you will take to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God. Share this with one another person and hold each other accountable.



Pray

- Thank God together for his goodness in our lives.
- Offer yourselves to him and ask for his wisdom to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly.
- Pray for victims and survivors of modern slavery across the UK. Pray they will meet with Christians who are able to love and support them.