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Listening for Mission

Session 3: In-depth Listening

Welcome

By this time, you will have basic information about the community/ kind of people you are seeking to serve. Watch the story of *Somewhere Else* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVOJuau8Qog>) and see how a new community began as one minister walked the streets of Liverpool, watching, praying and listening.

Word

Read Acts 17.16-34 (Paul in Athens).

- What aspects of Athenian culture does Paul find out about?
- How does this shape his approach to sharing the message about Jesus with them?
- How does this story speak into your situation as you seek to reach a particular community/ engage in a particular project for God?

Pray for each other and about what God is saying to you.

Worship

"What you worship as something unknown, is the One I am proclaiming to you... In Him we live and move and have our being. As some of your poets have said, 'We are His children.' " Acts 17: 23, 28

Sing praise to God for his greatness and his presence in all places and cultures. Then praise God for particular signs of his presence in the community to which you seek to reach out. Name the people and places / events and give thanks for God's presence in each one.

Witness

Here are some of the questions you will probably need to find answers to, exploring them with the community which you seek to serve:

- Are there needs that can be met by loving service?
- What are the hardships and difficulties, joys and pleasures in people's lives?
- What do people most value? What do they place a low value on?
- How do people relate to God? Do they ever think of going to church? Do they pray?
- How do they get to know new people?

Discuss how best you can do some in-depth listening to the people you are seeking to serve and plan to do this. Here are some ideas – choose one or two which are most relevant to your situation or invent your own ways:

- Set up one-to-one meetings with representatives of the community and talk in depth with them. (You could ask some of the questions above.)
- Stand on the street or at a meeting place and, using a video on a mobile phone, interview passers-by, asking the questions.
- Invite a group of people to a pub meal or other informal meeting in a relaxed setting. Provide something to eat and drink and a warm welcome and ask those who come to tell you about their wider community.
- Offer a meeting place, or some practical help, or join in an activity in which many from the group you seek to serve participate. As you do things together, you will more naturally be able to get to know the people who you are alongside. Most of us will only share ourselves with those we are coming to know and trust.

NB: These small group notes are based on the Booklet "Listening for Mission" available from www.freshexpressions.org.uk.