

LIFE GROUP GUIDE

HOMELESSNESS

INTRODUCTION

In Cape Town, we are all faced with homelessness, even if we ourselves are not sleeping rough. We may face it from the comfort of our home when someone rings the doorbell asking for food, or at the traffic lights or taxi rank when someone asks us for shelter money. We face it when we see people sleeping in doorways, under bridges or in makeshift shelters.

Whilst it is heart wrenching to hear people's stories of homelessness and see people living without a home, we may well struggle to know what to do and need to ask the Lord: "How do you want me to respond to people who are homeless and ask me for help?"

We hope this Discussion Guide will bring new insights and tools for you to engage with this topic and hear what the Bible has to say about this issue as well.

SESSION ONE

RESOURCES NEEDED FOR THIS SESSION

- Bibles
- Copies of [God, the Bible and Homelessness](#)
- Computer with internet for watching this [video](#)



OPEN IN PRAYER

Pray for this time – that God would open your eyes and hearts to a new revelation, a new perspective, or a next step you can take on your own personal journey of justice.



ACTIVITY ONE

ASK THE GROUP

What are your initial thoughts, perceptions, assumptions or experience with the homeless population?



ACTIVITY TWO

Watch this video together, [New Hope Stories](#)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What did you think about this video / story? What was new or interesting?
- What (if anything) was changed about your perception of the homeless situation in Cape Town after watching this video and hearing testimonies?



ACTIVITY THREE

Ask each person in your group to read a paragraph of this article, [God, the Bible and Homelessness](#), out loud- like a reading relay



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever thought about or pictured Jesus as homeless? What did you think when you read the line, "Jesus experienced homelessness. He said "Foxes have dens and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head" (Luke 9:58)"
2. What do you think these scriptures are saying to us? (see the context within the article)
 - "They will build houses and inhabit them... They will not build and another inhabit" (Isaiah 65:21- 22).
 - "provide the poor wanderer with shelter" (Isaiah 58:7).
 - "Do not move an ancient boundary stone or encroach on the fields of the fatherless" (Proverbs 23:10)
 - "The LORD will tear down the house of the proud, but he will establish the boundary of the widow" (Proverbs 25:15).



CLOSE IN PRAYER

Have the group pray for the thoughts and feelings that have been stirred as you've studied God's Word. Pray about the issue of economic gaps in our city and ask the Spirit to guide you in response.

LAST IMPRESSION FEEDBACK

Take one last round of feedback from the group. Ask them to give you a one or two sentence answer to one of these questions:

- What are you leaving tonight thinking/feeling?
- What does this mean for you/your family?
- What are your questions to research or next steps to take?

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION...

If your group seemed engaged and provoked by this topic, consider having this conversation carry on another week or two. Here are some ways you can structure a few more Life Groups around this topic.

HOMEWORK FOR SESSION TWO

Read [this article](#) about ways to give with dignity, and consider going through this [Devotional Material](#) each day before your next meeting.

SESSION TWO

INTRODUCTION

After one week of looking into the topic of Homelessness, we hope this week will lead to practical ideas and ways The Church can respond both corporately and individually.

RESOURCES NEEDED FOR THIS SESSION

- Bibles
- Copies of articles (or get people to read along on their phones)
 - [The One Thing You Can Always Do](#)
 - [Homelessness and the Local Church](#)



OPEN IN PRAYER

Pray for this time – that God would bring to mind ways we can be aware of His heart for justice in this city. Pray for wisdom and revelation within the group discussion.



DISCUSSION

CHAT ABOUT THE HOMEWORK FROM PART 1- THE GOOD GIVING GUIDE

- Did anyone have thoughts or comments about the Good Giving Guide?
- Anything new you'd never thought about?
- Have you had a personal experience in giving that has either gone poorly or conversely, gone well?



ACTIVITY ONE

Ask each person in your group to read a paragraph of this article, [God, the Bible and Homelessness](#), out loud- like a reading relay

In this article, we see that dignity and human connection is something we can all give to the homeless. "It's something you take for granted every day. Connecting with people during a conversation, meeting their eyes, and feeling seen."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- When you see someone begging on the street, what is your first/natural response? Why?
- Is it hard to connect with someone you meet on the street?
- Alternately, do you encounter the homeless in an environment conducive to conversation or is it only when you're at a robot? Think about the surrounding and context of how you encounter the homeless. What does this say about your routine or pace when seeing those in need? (leader can lead the conversation toward slowing down, seeing those in need and not rushing away, but engaging and showing dignity to God's children)



ACTIVITY TWO

Ask each person in your group to read a paragraph of this article, [Homelessness and the Local Church](#), out loud- like a reading relay

DISCUSSION

This just one testimony of a leader in the inner-city.

- What are ways the local church in Cape Town can actively serve and show dignity to the Homeless?
- Anything you feel God is speaking to you about personally?
- Anything you'd like our church to do corporately to learn more, engage or serve?

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY ...

If you still want to know more about how you can get involved or learn more about the topic of Homelessness, check out U-turn's website. There's great info about rehabilitation programs, volunteer opportunities and ways to help sustainably. U-Turn www.homeless.org.za