

## Week 3: Judea: “our” neighbourhood

*Acts 1:8 (NIV) “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

### **Introduction:**

Many people will be familiar with the kids’ TV show Sesame Street, and people of a certain age should remember the neighbourhood song. (You might even like to show a short clip of it, there are plenty available on YouTube). The aim of the song was to introduce children to the different people they might meet, so they could understand something of who they are and what they do. But it reminds us of a broader point: that it is difficult and scary to engage with people if you don’t know something of who they are. A good question for Christians and churches who want to care for and share with our local community is, how well do we know and understand the people in our neighbourhood?

In our cultural context, many people do not know who the people in the neighbourhood are! Jesus calls us to love our neighbours, and one of the first steps to knowing *how* to do this is to ask *who* these people are.

### **Insider Story**

Ask someone in your congregation to share their story. Look for someone who:

- Is interacting in their own community in an intentional way.
- Can share how they express their faith within this space.

### **Story 1:** Acts 3:1-16 – Peter & John at the temple

*Acts 3:12, 15-16 (NIV) “Fellow Israelites ... We are witnesses of this. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.”*

- **Key point:** the disciples went out into the city around them, meeting people’s needs and sharing the Gospel
- **Application:**
  - In our local community there are people who have both physical and spiritual needs. Do we believe that Jesus is the one who can meet them, and are we willing to go out and let them experience and hear that?

### **Story 2:** Luke 10:1-17 – the seventy-two

*Luke 10:8-9 (NIV) “... eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.”*

- **Key point:** the disciples were sent to meet, stay with, share meals with (get to know) people in the local towns, and then to meet their physical and spiritual needs by pointing them to Jesus
- **Application:**
  - How well do we know the people living in our community? What are their needs?
  - Do we know how they like to connect with one another?
  - What would it look like for us to go and “eat with” them and share the Good News as that brings opportunity?



### Conclusions:

- For those who are following Jesus, encouragement to engage with people in their street, school, local shops etc.
- No one should be excluded (see resources from May Mission Month from 2014)
- For the church as a whole, have we “culturally exegeted”<sup>1</sup> our local community? What makes your church uniquely equipped to be a light to your neighbourhood?

### Take home

- Who are the people in your neighbourhood? Take a walk around and see who is out on the streets, where are the gathering places, who’s not here?
- What groups (sporting, reading, cultural etc.) are already meeting that you could become a part of to help you get to know the people in your community better?

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, [www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/octoberweb-only/142-22.0.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/octoberweb-only/142-22.0.html) or [www.forgecanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/How-to-exegete.2014.doc](http://www.forgecanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/How-to-exegete.2014.doc)

