

# The World is My Parish: Session 2

## Opening prayer

Beckoning Christ

You call us out of our comfortable ghettos of 'us' and 'them'  
To risk discipleship without walls.

You call us into a worldwide fellowship  
Where God is worshipped  
Above all other.

You call us into a worldwide fellowship  
Where prayer is offered  
Day and night.

You call us into a worldwide fellowship  
Where we can share what we are  
With others who love you.

You call us into a worldwide fellowship  
Where each person has something to give  
To the whole.

You call us into a worldwide fellowship  
Where compassion and respect  
Shape missionary endeavour.

Keep on beckoning us  
Out of our safe havens  
Into your richer fellowship  
Of challenge and reconciliation, faith and hope.

*(Kate Compston)*

## Starting out

- Is the Bible 'an incendiary device' as far as we are concerned?
- What parts of the Bible do you think best fit this description?
- Do you feel there are parts of the Bible this description does not apply to?
- In this respect, would you distinguish between the Old and New Testaments?

## Mission themes in the Bible

Acts 1:3	Evidence for mission
Acts 1:6-8	Commissioning for mission
Acts 2:37-39	Baptism for mission
Acts 1:43-47	A church for mission
Acts 16:9	Invitation for mission

## **Come to the Party!**

**1. To Sextus, Spetimus and Octavius, servants of Cornelius (Acts 10:17-23):** I gather you have had to travel from Caesarea to Joppa, because your master wants to meet me. You must be hungry. Do come in, have a meal with me and stay the night. Shalom, Peter.

**2. To Peter (Acts 10:44-48):** Many thanks for sharing the wonderful news with me about Jesus. Before you have to return to Joppa it would be marvellous if you would stay with me a few days, even though I am a Gentile. Gratefully yours, Cornelius.

**3. To Paul (Acts 16:13-15):** You wonderful man! I do so love listening to you. Come on, make the leap, come and stay with me while you are in Philippi even though I'm a Gentile. It will be one small step for Paul, one giant leap for Christianity. Ever yours, Lydia.

**4. To the Jewish inhabitants of Rome (Acts 28. 23-31):** Please come and have a meal with me at my house and listen to what I have to say to you. It's important. Grace be to you, Paul.

**5. To Peter (Acts 9:43-10:16):** Can you stand the smell? If so I would be chuffed if you could stay at my house. I know a tanner isn't considered quite OK in the best Jewish circles, but then as you told me yourself, your friend Jesus used to accept some odd invitations as well. Hopefully yours, Simon the Tanner.

**6. To Arete and Hermione, widows (Acts 6:1-6):** I am sorry that you took umbrage the other day when there wasn't enough to go round. You are quite right – the Hebrew speaking widows were taking more than their fair share of the food. But I hope we've sorted that out now. My friends and I have just been officially appointed as 'deacons' with a special responsibility for you Greek speaking ladies. Do come to the next common meal. Stephen (on behalf of 'The Seven')

**7. To Paul and his companions (Acts 28:1-10):** How cold and wet you all look! Do come in and let us warm you up. We have a lot of experience of welcoming holiday-makers and travellers, even though they don't normally arrive as dramatically as you. Swimmingly yours, the inhabitants of Malta. PS Take care not to step on any of the snakes.

**8. To Ananias (Acts 9:10-19):** Can you come quickly? There's someone staying with me that I very much want you to meet. You may be able to help him. Do keep quiet about it, his name begins with S... Please come this afternoon and stay for supper. Judas.

**9. To Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25-34):** My wife and I would be most honoured if you could spend a few hours at our house. I'm sure you could do with a wash and clean-up after your time in jail. It was all a misunderstanding. Your friendly neighbourhood jailer at Philippi.

**10. To Apollos (Acts 18:24-28; 1 Corinthians 16:12):** We have heard about you from our mutual friends Prisca and Aquila. We are longing to meet you. Can we put you up when you come to Corinth? Sorry to be so brief, but we are not as eloquent as you. Best wishes, some Corinthians.

**11. To Paul (Acts 21:7-14):** Any chance of seeing you again, Paul my old friend, on your trip to Jerusalem? Do pop in and stay with us if you can. You haven't met my daughters, have you? I will try to keep them quiet while you are staying with us – they are rather keen on prophesying, and I hear that you think the ladies should keep silent. Affectionately yours, Philip.

**12. To Paul (Acts 21:15-16):** I'm sure you could do with somewhere quiet to stay while you are in Jerusalem this time. I would be most honoured if I could put you and Timothy up at my house – it's conveniently near the temple. Mnason of Cyprus.

### **Closing prayer A**

For all who study the Scriptures

*That the fruits of their study may be evidenced in mission*

For all who feel the Spirit's prompting

*That their lives may be empowered for mission*

For all who extend the hand of love

*That those who take it may feel the touch of Jesus*

For all who open their homes

*That those who enter may sense the welcome of Christ,  
Amen*

### **Closing prayer B**

Ever-wise God,

as you have granted us

to drink with delight

from the Word

that leads us to know you,

in your goodness grant us also

to come at length to you,

source of all wisdom,

and stand for ever before your face.

*(After the Venerable Bede)*



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