

imagine...

# LIFE ON THE FRONTLINE

Leaders' Guide



**licc**

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## AN INTRODUCTION FOR GROUP LEADERS

Thank you for deciding to use *Life on the Frontline* with your group. The sessions are based on two firm beliefs: first, that God longs for us, his people, to grow as disciples of Jesus; and second, that as disciples, God longs to use us seven days a week wherever our everyday lives take us. Most of us spend most of our time surrounded by people who don't know the joy of following Jesus. Our Frontlines are the places where we meet and interact with them.

One of the wonderful things about being a disciple is that God takes our strengths, our personalities, our situations and uses them for his purpose. And because he loves people, he will have already used us on our Frontlines – even if we've not been fully aware of it. And of course he will continue to do so. It's important that people realise that there are many ways that God will work through us; but, for that to happen, we need one another's support and encouragement.

The sessions will prompt many discussions. We hope that these will help everyone taking part to:

- Recognise where their own Frontlines are
- Talk about the joys and challenges of their Frontlines and be increasingly aware of what God is doing there
- Begin to understand how God might use them on their Frontlines
- Hear new stories of God at work in us and through us
- Be encouraged to pray with real purpose for each other
- Recognise how relevant the Bible is for disciples serving God on their Frontlines.

# HOW THE SESSIONS WORK TOGETHER

**Each session has a common set of ingredients.**

## 1. Film

A short film introduces the core idea for the session, presents the Bible passage for group reflection and tells a true story of how this has been worked out in real life.

Session 1's film has a different format and purpose. It's shorter and it's fully animated. It introduces all the themes that will be explored in the rest of the sessions. It's an ideal format to encourage the church to engage with the series together.

The remaining five films are around 7-8 minutes long.

## 2. Discussion Notes

Each session's outline includes:

- A summary of the central thought
- Discussion questions including Bible reflection
- A suggested focus for prayer.

There are suggested timings for each session, but these are simply suggestions. Don't feel guilty if your group can't keep to them. As a rough guide we suggest that you could cover all the material in a session of around 75 minutes. If you had 90 minutes together, you would probably feel more relaxed.

Try hard to keep discussions down-to-earth, rather than theoretical or abstract. They need to connect to real life so that the sessions make a genuine difference to how we are living.

It's also really important to emphasise that God wants to empower and resource us for whole-life discipleship as we give time to Bible study, prayer and growing in our love of God and our understanding of his ways.

There are more questions than you may get through in a session. The most important are in bold type. You could then select questions from the remainder that fit your timing and the needs of your group.

Encourage group members to bring a Bible to the sessions. In addition, it's helpful if you keep a few extra copies available just in case.

*Note: The Participants' Guide does not include all the questions that are in the Leaders' Guide. To help them stay focused group members will only have the questions that they will be sharing with one another.*

In encouraging group members to talk about their Frontlines, it is easy for people to get preoccupied by the stresses and challenges of everyday life. We don't want to minimise these. But we do want to encourage people to look at them from a different angle: in spite of the difficulties and challenges, and sometimes because of them, God is able to work in us so that we become increasingly like Jesus; at the same time he is able to work through us for the sake of others, who live without any hope in God but who face the same stresses and challenges as us.

### 3. The Frontline Takeaway Sheet

Each session also comes with a Frontline Takeaway Sheet. This is included in the Participants' Guide, and is designed to encourage people to continue their thinking between sessions. It's important that each session allows for time to hear the stories of what has happened in the intervening period. Our prayer is that God will really be at work in and through the members of the group. It would be brilliant if you find yourselves utterly surprised by the stories you hear.

The Takeaway Sheet follows a pattern of Pray – Act – Reflect. The suggested tasks should be self-explanatory. There is also an introduction to the next session so that people can begin to prepare themselves.

## PREPARING TO LEAD

LICC has developed *Living on the Frontline* because we're committed to helping Christians be fruitful in following Jesus day by day. Less than 7% of the population in the UK goes to church. Yet God has sent his people into the world to be salt and light. Christians are exactly where they need to be to serve him and to grow as disciples themselves. Often, though, they just don't realise how much their everyday context matters to God. Or they're not confident that God will actually use them rather than someone else. Or perhaps they feel ill-equipped for the task.

Our whole lives are significant to God. Wherever we are day by day we're in a place to make a difference. We believe that the crucial issue of effective mission in the UK will only be addressed when we embrace a radical, but simple, re-focusing of our understanding of mission. The UK will be transformed when the church envisions and equips 'ordinary' men and women to make a difference wherever they are; when churches truly become whole-life discipling communities.

You may wish to explore these ideas in greater depth so here are some suggestions:

- Visit the LICC website to watch a short film of LICC's Executive Director Mark Greene explaining what whole-life discipleship is all about: <http://www.licc.org.uk/about-licc/vision/>.
- Go to the Resources section in the Imagine area of the website to watch clips from Imagine - the DVD. These will give you a feel for our urgency to see whole-life disciples developed and equipped. The film is another way that you might be able to help people grasp their significance in God's mission.

- The ideas are also covered in Mark Greene's booklet **The Great Divide**. Neil Hudson's **Imagine Church (IVP)** offers a lively description of how churches can change their culture so as to foster whole-life discipling. Tracy Cotterell and Neil Hudson's booklet **Leading a Whole-life Discipling Church (Grove)** also provides a brief introduction. They're all available from LICC - [www.licc.org.uk/shop](http://www.licc.org.uk/shop).

If you do encounter problems with the sessions that you can't solve, do get in touch with us at LICC.

*Please give us some feedback on this resource. It's really helpful to hear what works as well as what hasn't worked for your group.*

You can contact us at [mail@licc.org.uk](mailto:mail@licc.org.uk) or 020 7399 9555.

May the Lord bless you as you explore your life on the Frontline.

# SESSION 1: THE FRONTLINE CALL

**Key Question:** What is my Frontline and why does it matter?

**Aim of the Session:** To introduce the idea of the Frontline and to explore why we need to value one another's Frontlines.

**Core Text:** Matthew 28:16-20

**You Will Need:** A map of your local area

## Guiding Thought

We begin these sessions by exploring the fresh perspective, attitude and action that comes once we take seriously the fact that Jesus is Lord of every aspect of our lives.

Throughout the sessions you will hear the term Frontline used regularly, so here is a definition:

***Your Frontline is the place where you spend the majority of your time outside the church, where you are in contact with non-Christians.***

So your Frontline could be the workplace, school, home or neighbourhood – but, wherever it is, it's the place where you are aware of people that God loves and of situations where God could use you to make a difference.

Everyone is different, so no two Frontlines are identical. Some people may have difficulty in identifying their Frontline or in seeing how God might use them there – but:

- Everyone in your church community (young or old, in paid employment or not, sick or well) has a Frontline – and it matters!
- God is at work on the Frontline, shaping us and using us.

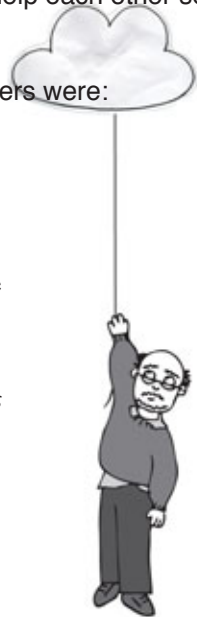




So together we need to explore how God invites us to make a difference for his Kingdom on our Frontlines – and together we need to help each other see the significance and value of where God has placed us.

Imagine what it might look like in your small group if members were:

- Able to identify their Frontline and knew why God has placed them there
- Sent out to the places they spend their time knowing that they go there in God's strength and with his purpose
- Excited about life on their Frontline and increasingly able to identify where and how God is at work there
- Able to share their struggles on the Frontline with others in similar contexts and discover new ways forward as followers of Christ
- Ready to share stories about how God is using them on their Frontline and celebrating God's work in that place...



## Session Outline

**(Remember that the questions in bold are the more important ones to ask if you find you are running short of time).**

### **1. Introduction**

*(5 minutes)*

Begin by making sure that everyone understands the theme of the coming sessions. Explain why you are following the themes of 'Life on the Frontline'. You might want to ensure that everyone understands what a Frontline is.

### **2. Film 1: The Frontline Call**

*(20 minutes including the 4 minute film)*

Invite group members to share with one another their responses to the film. Ask the following question:

- Does Anne's situation ring any bells for you? If so, in what ways?



If necessary, you might want to use one or two of these questions to encourage people in the discussion:



- Why do some people seem to believe that church activities are the most important things to get involved in?
- Why does our everyday life not always feel very exciting?
- What gets in the way of us believing that God can use us in these everyday situations?
- How would you encourage a friend who's struggling to believe that God could use them?

### 3. Getting to Grips with your Frontline

(20 minutes)

'Where we are' matters. Where we *already* are most of the time in any ordinary week is usually our 'Frontline' of engagement with the world. Wherever we are living/working/being/playing – this is the place where we put effort and energy into people and projects, into 'making a difference where we are'.

Explore the following five questions:

- Where is your Frontline?
- What's happening there (what are the issues you face)?
- Who's there?
- What resources might help you?
- How can your church fellowship help you?

Break into pairs for discussion – or stay together if the group is very small. The aim is to create a shared picture of the Frontlines represented by the members of the group.

If appropriate use a map (or maps) and mark the various Frontlines on it – anything to create a visual sense of 'where we are'.

Once you have identified your Frontlines, you could encourage people to

bring something to the next session that symbolises their everyday life – for example, keys, a till receipt, an identity badge, a textbook, a file, a tool, an item of clothing, a computer mouse...

#### 4. Bible Reflection – Matthew 28:16-20

(20 minutes)

Reflect together on Jesus' 'Great Commission' to his disciples in the light of the discussion about your Frontlines.

**NOTICE:** *Jesus gives the Commission in Galilee and not in Jerusalem. Look at Matthew 4: 12-17. Galilee was where the disciples came from; it's where much of the ministry of Jesus took place. It was away from Jerusalem, the centre of the Jewish faith. As far as the rest of Israel was concerned, Galilee didn't have a particularly prestigious reputation.*

- Why did Jesus appear to his disciples there? Does this have any application for us today?
- Jesus has 'all authority' (verse 18) and he promises to be with us (verse 20) How does this help you to believe that Jesus could use you to go and make disciples?
- The point of Jesus' commission was that his disciples would make disciples. How might that look for you?
- How can we as individuals respond positively to the call to 'disciple' others?
- How does this connect to your Frontline?

#### 5. And Finally...

(10 minutes)

Summarise your Frontline discussion. Invite everyone to identify a thought or intention that they will be taking with them into the days ahead. End with a prayer that reflects these thoughts.

Explain about the 'Frontline Takeaway' and encourage group members to use it before they meet for the next session.



# THE FRONTLINE TAKEAWAY

## Session 1: The Frontline Call

### PRAY

Pray for wisdom and boldness so that God will use you in his cause on your Frontline. This can be a dangerous prayer, because there's no knowing how God may answer it. But it could be one of the best prayers you will offer.

Father,  
Give me eyes to see these people through your eyes  
How can I love and serve them?

Jesus, Carpenter King,  
Give me eyes to see this work through your eyes  
How would you have it done?

Spirit of truth and grace,  
Give me faith to know that you will turn  
This whispered prayer,  
This labour offered,  
This day lived for you into fruit for your glory.

*Mark Greene*



## ACT

Is there something you can do to remind yourself that you have a Frontline?

- Do you spend a lot of time in front of a computer? You could change your screensaver image to one that reminds you of the people on your Frontline
- You could take a moment to pray as you enter your workplace, reminding yourself you are going in as a disciple of Jesus.
- Others have chosen a particular Christian song that they play at the beginning of each day to remind them that they are about to start another day as a Frontline disciple. This could become a 'theme tune' for life on the Frontline.
- Some choose to go to the same newsagent or coffee shop every morning to build a relationship with the people who work there so that they can somehow bless them each day - an encouraging word, a smile, a 'thank you', a compliment.

What would work for you?

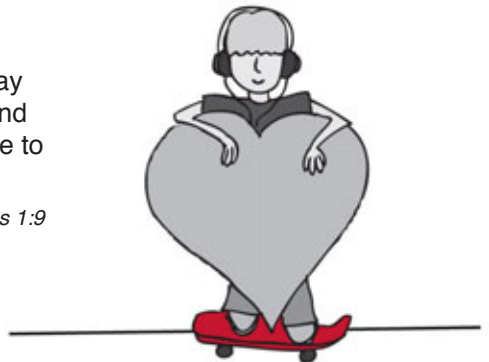
What could you do?

Choose an object that reminds you of your Frontline and bring it to the next session – for example, keys, a till receipt, an identity badge, a textbook, a file, a tool, an item of clothing, a computer mouse...

## REFLECT

'And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best...'

*Philippians 1:9*



## SESSION 2: THE FRONTLINE COMMISSION

**Key Question:** What happens when life on our Frontline feels difficult?

**Aim of the Session:** To explore God's call to Frontline service, particularly when the Frontline seems difficult or hostile.

**Core text:** Jeremiah 29:4-14

### Guiding Thought

Hopefully the first session encouraged you to see your life as one that God wants to use for his purposes – wherever you are.

When life is going relatively smoothly, knowing that you are making a difference can feel great. But what about when the going gets rough, when you don't feel in control, when simple survival is your most pressing concern?

These are the times when it's not so much about whether God can use me this week; it feels as if it's more about whether I can get to the end of it in one piece. What about times like these? How can we survive on our Frontline and maybe even thrive there as well?

### Session Outline

#### 1. Introduction

(15 minutes)

Begin by inviting group members to share anything new or different that they have done as a result of Session 1's discussions or the Takeaway Sheet. Make time to look at any 'Frontline reminder objects' that you and the members may have brought to the session. You may wish to open this session by using the objects as a prompt for prayer.



## 2. **Film 2: The Frontline Commission** (20 minutes including the 8 minute film)

Invite responses to the following questions:

- Is anyone in a similar situation to Ed? What is happening?
- How are you trying to be good news in your everyday situations?
- What decisions are you taking so that you will be able to be a blessing to your Frontline and its people?
- What does it mean to pray for the peace and prosperity of your Frontline? Are there any particular blessings of God for which you could pray?
- What could you pray that God would change?

## 3. **Bible Reflection – Jeremiah 29:1-12**

(30 minutes)

As is made clear in the film this chapter is based on a letter that Jeremiah sends to the Israelites living in exile. His advice to them was unexpected and, to some, unwanted.

**REFLECT:** Can you get a sense of the predicament that the people of God faced when they were taken into exile? Looking at 2 Chronicles 36:15-21 may help here. Can you hear the shame, fear and disappointment?

The letter is written by Jeremiah who has been left behind in Jerusalem. Can you imagine how shocking and treasonable the command to 'seek the peace and prosperity of Babylon' would sound in that context (verse 7)?

- In their situation, how would you respond if you had received that letter?

The lie of the false prophets (verse 8) was that God would rescue them quickly. Yet God says that they will remain in exile for 70 years (verse 10) but that this would have a purpose. He would prosper them and not harm them (verse 11).



- In times of difficulty it is natural to hope that God will rescue us quickly. Sometimes he does. Sometimes he doesn't. How can we help each to be hopeful when situations take a long time to change?

**FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION:** The book of Daniel reflects on life in exile. Look at Daniel 1. How do these young Jewish men live in an alien culture? How do they seek the prosperity of the nation without compromising their integrity?

#### 4. And Finally...

(10 minutes)

To close the session, consider the positive possibility that God longs for us to do so much more than simply survive on our Frontlines – he wants us to thrive! Discuss the following questions in pairs:

- Thinking about the discussions in this session, what challenges are presented by your Frontline?
- How are you coping with these challenges?
- What would help you thrive on your Frontline?

End the session by praying for one another.

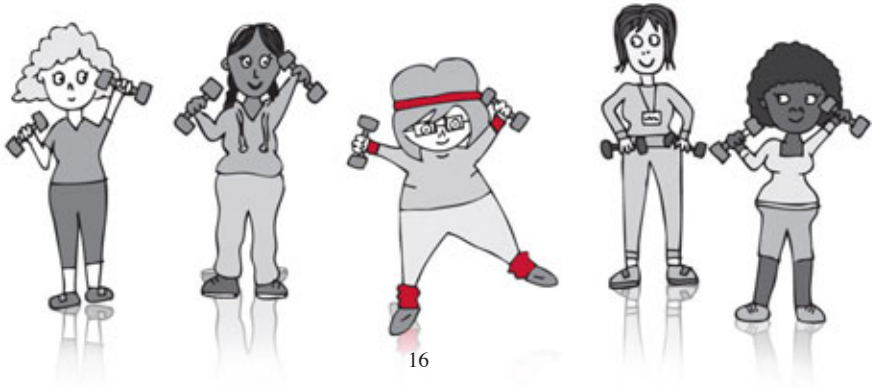
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## THE FRONTLINE TAKEAWAY

Session 2: The Frontline Commission

### PRAY

Your Frontline might be fulfilling or it might be sapping your emotional energy. You might be glad you are there, or you might want to run away. Regardless of your feelings, can you pray:





- Blessings on the people you spend time with there? What would you ask God for?
- That you would have opportunities to show the love of God on your Frontline to people who are not believers in Jesus?

## ACT

If you find that your Frontline is a place of challenge or stress at the moment, what could you do that would change your attitude towards it? Ed went to work early to meet his colleagues.

- What could you do?
- Think of something practical and possible - and tell someone else about your plan to ensure that you follow through!

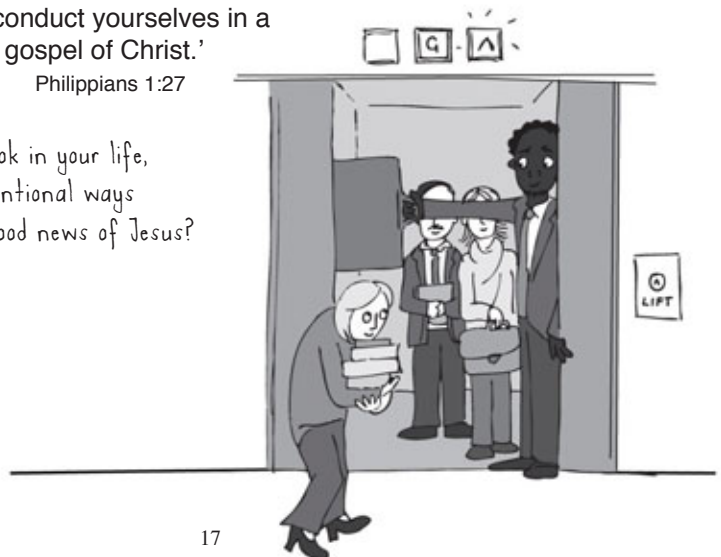
## REFLECT

Writing to the Philippians, Paul reflects on his situation as a prisoner. He is clearly uncomfortable, but is determined that the mission that God has given him will continue to be his priority. As part of his encouragement to the church in Philippi he urges them:

‘Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.’

Philippians 1:27

- How might it look in your life, if you acted in intentional ways that reflected the good news of Jesus?



## SESSION 3: THE FRONTLINE COMMUNITY

**Key Question:** How do all our various church activities equip us for our lives when we are apart?

**Aim of the Session:** To explore the role of the gathered church community in equipping, supporting and sustaining whole-life disciples on the Frontline.

**Core text:**

Colossians 3:12-17

### Guiding Thought

Whole-life disciples grow in whole-life disciplemaking communities.

You may have seen the three Lord of the Rings films. They follow the adventures of 'the fellowship of the ring', an eclectic group of two humans, four hobbits, a dwarf, an elf and a wizard. They have little in common apart from a shared cause. During the course of their adventures, they find themselves separated from one another, forced to continue in disparate groupings. But the end of the story shows their gratitude for the support, wisdom and courage they drew from one another. In fact their quest would have failed without this interdependence.

So in similar ways, we need to explore how we can best support one another on the various Frontlines we are involved in; people learning to be attentive to God's voice when together and when apart; people who remind one another that we are called to be in those places; people who remind each other of the reality of God's grace and mission; people who not only listen to us talk about the things we find difficult but keep us accountable to discover new ways forward.

So the question is:

How does your life together as a church support, encourage and equip one another for the various Frontlines you are facing every day? In this session we explore this question in more detail and look at some practical ways of supporting one another as a group.



# Session Outline

## 1. Introduction

(20 minutes)

Begin by encouraging group members to talk about how things have been since your last meeting. If any difficult Frontline situations were identified, did prayer make a difference to attitudes or responses?

Then to start thinking about today's topic ask:

- How has the church helped you to live faithfully as a disciple of Jesus? What aspects have been particularly helpful?
- What can we do as a group to encourage one another to talk openly about our Frontline challenges and experiences (positive and negative)?

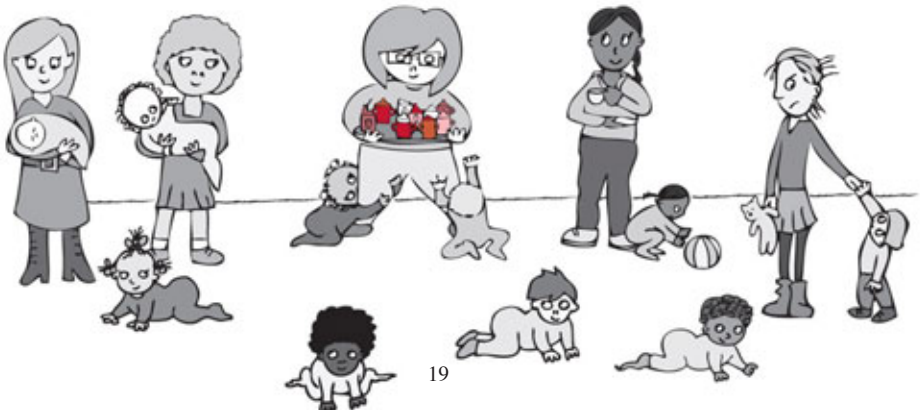
## 2. Film 3: The Frontline Community

(20 minutes including the 8 minute film)

Having watched the film, ask:

- What qualities do you admire in Alice, Pat and Shirley?

As older people they remained convinced they could make a difference. They felt really secure in their identity as 'God's chosen people'. This liberated them to be bold. Alice, Pat and Shirley discovered they could work together on the Frontline of the care home where one of them lived. Sometimes we share our Frontline with other Christians. Sometimes we're on our own.



- How might you be bold on your Frontline?
- How you could help each other to be involved in God's purposes in the wider world?

### 3. Bible Reflection – *Colossians 3:12-17*

(25 minutes)

Writing encouragingly to the church in Colossae, Paul affirms that they are God's chosen people (verse 12).

- What are we chosen for?
- How does this understanding of our identity help us to be bold in our Christian lives?
- How do we clothe ourselves with 'compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience' (verse 12)? How does that affect how we support one another on our Frontlines? What are the enemies of these qualities?
- In your opinion, why does forgiveness and bearing with one another (verse 13) matter so much to Paul?
- Practising gratitude is a repeated theme here (verses 15, 16 and 17). Why is it so significant that we should be grateful people?
- How could we help one another become grateful people?



### 4. And Finally...

(10 minutes)

Before the end of the session, make sure that each person is aware of how they want to be used by God. As well, ensure that each person is aware of the challenges that are being faced by at least one other member of the group – and encourage them to pray daily for that person and at some point to send him or her an encouraging message (email, text, card, phone call). Naturally, as leader, you will want to set a good example!

End by praying for one another.

# THE FRONTLINE TAKEAWAY

## Session 3: The Frontline Community

### PRAY

Before the next session, pray daily for the person in the group whose situation you became aware of. Concentrate on a different aspect each day: work, health, friendships, family, finances, courage, boldness, growth – and so on.

### ACT

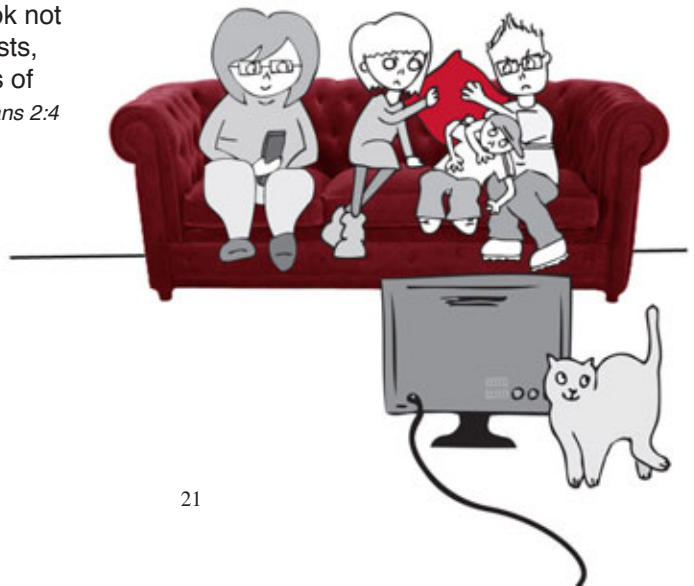
Hopefully someone else will be praying for you. So, even if this is not your usual practice, take time each day to jot down what has been happening around you and what you think God might be doing in the midst of it all. You don't need to take this to the next session, but before you go have a quick look and decide what you would like to share with the others.

And do something to encourage the person you're praying for: send a card, make a phone call, whizz off a text or an email.

### REFLECT

'Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.'

*Philippians 2:4*



## SESSION 4: THE FRONTLINE CONCERN

**Key Question:** How do you know what to do on your Frontline?

**Aim of the Session:** To explore how we can become attentive to God's voice in the places where we are day by day.

**Core text:** Acts 3:1-10

### Guiding Thought

Throughout these sessions, we have stressed the fact that God wants to use us to make a difference where we are. The intention is to help group members know that wherever they are, God can use them to make a difference for him. But all this leads to an obvious question: What does God want me to do?

It's a good question, but it can also paralyse us. We can be so uncertain that we end up doing nothing. And sometimes listening to other people's stories doesn't help either. 'Success' stories can be intimidating, leading to the response: 'It's OK for you. But try walking a mile in my shoes and you wouldn't feel so confident.' And so we go back to paralysis.

But maybe working out what God wants us to do is easier than that. Maybe it's trusting that he will lead us where he wants us to go and will make clear what he wants us to do. In fact, maybe he will make things so obvious that we can't miss them. That would be great. Maybe we just need to hear the cries of the world around us to know how best to offer the good news to people. Maybe we need to develop our alertness to the promptings of God, who we believe is at work in his world, bringing new creation out of the spaces where previously there were only signs of despair.

There were a lot of maybe's in that paragraph. And here are a couple more:

- Maybe we just need to respond to what is in front of us, assuming that God can use us there.



- And maybe that is what it means to live a life of faith, becoming aware of the Holy Spirit's leading.

## Session Outline

### 1. Introduction

*(10 minutes)*

Invite group members to comment on how things have been going since the last session. All being well, there will be positive stories from the praying and messaging that has been going on.

If some people did neither of these, it might be interesting to find out why. Did they forget? Did they get distracted? Did they think it wouldn't make any real difference?

Perhaps you might pause for a prayer of thanksgiving before watching the film.

### 2. Film 4: The Frontline Concern

*(20 minutes including the 8 minute film)*

Having watched the film, ask:

- In a world of so many competing demands, what might prevent you seeing the needs that are around you?
- What are the biggest causes of distraction you face? What can you do about them?

### 3. Bible Reflection – Acts 3

*(25 minutes)*

The story of the lame man is the first account of a miraculous healing in the Book of Acts.

- Why does Luke choose to record this encounter in so much detail? Why do you think it had such repercussions?



- Peter and John distinguish between the crippled beggar's 'felt' need (money) and his real need (healing). How do you distinguish between the two?

**REFLECT:** Commenting on this miracle, the preacher and theologian John Stott put it this way, 'the power was Jesus', but the hand was Peter's.' Peter shows a readiness to respond in a new way to what must have been a very ordinary moment: a beggar asking for money. The difference comes from his confidence in Jesus' power and purpose.

- What do you think gave Peter this confidence? (You may want to think about other episodes from Peter's life.) What would give you a similar confidence?
- What would help you to be able to take more notice of what God is doing on the Frontline?
- What questions could you ask each other regularly that would help you become more confident about this?

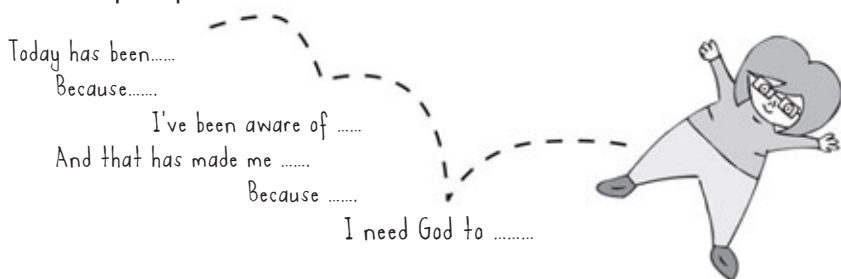
#### 4. And Finally...

(20 minutes)

The exercise below is a chance for people to think about the day they have come from. It is designed to help them reflect on what has been happening around them, to see the opportunities to be used by God – whether they took them or not.

Ask group members to form pairs. Then using the prompts below, one person will talk to his or her partner for five minutes, during which the partner won't ask questions or make any other interruptions. After that, the listener should take a couple of minutes to say what struck them about what was being said. Then it's time to swap roles.

Here are the prompts:



Close by praying for one another that you would be more open to the needs around you and increasingly aware of what to do when God prompts you to action.



# THE FRONTLINE TAKEAWAY

## Session 4: The Frontline Concern

### PRAY

I leave this place of fellowship,  
to begin my worship.  
I leave the presence of God,  
to begin to find him.  
I enter my week,  
to discover you before me.  
I enter my Frontline,  
to discover you ahead of me.  
I return to this place next time,  
rejoicing in having found you.

### ACT

Take notice of all the interruptions that happen to you in your normal life this week. Accept them as potential appointments that God is setting up for you. At the end of each day, think about what happened and what you were able to give to the people concerned. Notice what surprised you.

### REFLECT

‘Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life...’

*Philippians 2:14-16*

## SESSION 5: THE FRONTLINE CRY

**Key Question:** How does our Frontline shape our prayers?

**Aim of the Session:** To explore the Lord's Prayer and how it can connect our purposes with God's purposes on the Frontline.

**Core text:** Matthew 6:9-13

### Guiding Thought

Neil Hudson recalls a holiday incident that began with frustration.

'We were on the Gower peninsula in south Wales. We'd been told there were dolphins and seals out at sea, and that if we were patient we might see them. So along with everyone else I'm peering out at the grey sea, determined not to miss something special. But the wind is blowing, there are spots of rain on my glasses, the waves are lively and I get impatient. Then they cry goes up, "I've seen one!" Everyone runs to the spot and gazes out intensely. I see nothing. I feel inadequate and irritated. I think they are wrong. It was just a breaking wave. But I stay watching. Someone else calls out. I look more intensely, willing myself to see a dolphin. Then finally I catch sight of the dorsal fin. And I shout out, part delighted and part relieved. Delight because it's a dolphin. Relief because I'm one of those who have seen something rare. I've seen the brilliant sight. And the journey has not been wasted.'

When Jesus offers his disciples guidance about prayer, perhaps he was also suggesting that their horizons needed to be greater, and their spiritual perception keener, so that they might see the answers to the prayers. Perhaps he wanted his disciples to share in the delight and relief that prayer makes possible.



The God whom we worship is above all things, but is not distant. And he is in relationship with us as we pray together as his family.

But he is also holy. The world may act as if God's reputation is in tatters, but he is not thrown by this. We long for the day when the whole earth cries, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty; the whole earth is filled with his glory.' But until then, we bow the knee and watch for the signs of this glory – in our everyday world.

On the Frontline we are called to do something highly subversive. In the midst of people who think they are in charge of their own destinies, we pray that God's purposes will be done – that the whole world will be filled with his glory. In this session we'll look closer at the Lord's Prayer, exploring the ways in which it resources us to live differently on the Frontline.

## Session Outline

### **1. Introduction**

*(5 minutes)*

Invite comments from group members on how prayer is affecting their awareness of opportunities for God to use them. Are there any stories that people could share of what has happened?

### **2. Film 5: The Frontline Cry**

*(20 minutes including the 8 minute film)*

After watching the film, invite group members to consider which aspect of their Frontline places form the main focus of their prayers.



- If our prayers reveal what we think is most important, what do ours suggest about life on the Frontline?
- Thinking about the Lord's Prayer, what would your Frontline look like if God was acknowledged and the way of Jesus was its top priority? How would life there be different? Try to be specific in your descriptions. What would change in practice? Can you believe that this could happen?
- One day all people will see God's reign. In the meantime, what can we do to ensure that our everyday behaviour on our Frontlines points to the fact that we believe God reigns over the whole world? For example, would you worry less? How would you plan things? What would be your priorities? How would you react to uncertainty or unexpected circumstances?

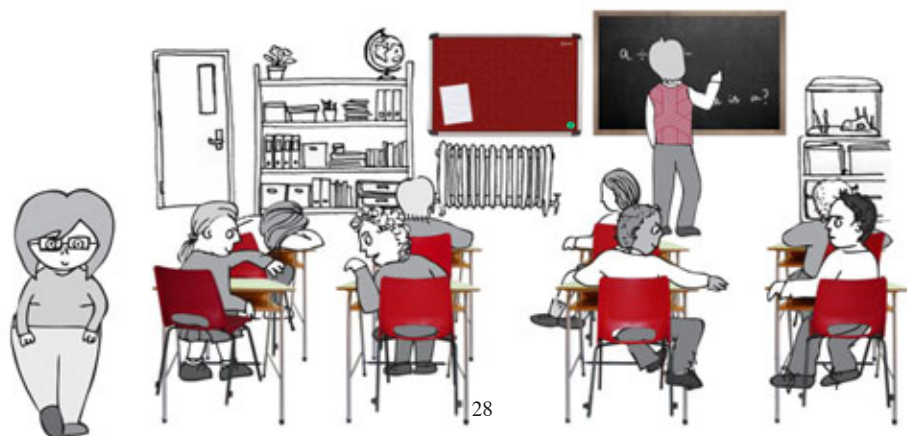
### 3. Bible Reflection – Matthew 6:9-13, Isaiah 29:13-24

(40 minutes)

At first sight it seems that the Lord's Prayer falls into two parts: Matthew 6: 9-10 focuses on God's glory and activity in the world. Verses 11-13 relate to the realities of our lives: daily needs, relationships, temptations, dangers and threats.

- In our prayers do we tend to concentrate on just one of these sections? If so, why? Let's explore one part of the prayer: 'Hallowed be your name.'
- **What do you think it means for the Lord's name to be hallowed or revered as holy?**

**REFLECT:** Long before the time of Jesus the prophet Isaiah expressed the hope that a whole generation of people would return to the Lord, acknowledging his perfect beauty, truth, mercy, justice and love – his holiness (Isaiah 29:13-24).



The reference is to a time when God will step in and people will turn to him. Isaiah's expectation was this: when people become aware of all that God has done, they will then recognise God's holiness.

- If you could 'rewrite' Isaiah 29: 17-24 in words that reflected your Frontlines, what might it look like?

You may want to invite people to try this, or it may be easier for them to simply talk about it. The following prompts may help:

- Which places would you hope to see becoming fruitful? (verse 17)?
- Who do you know who might be the equivalent of the deaf, the blind and the humble poor people who Isaiah believes will be able to hear and see the truth of God's actions? (verse 18)?
- Who are those who cheat people and have no care about the law (verse 21)?
- Who do you want to stand in awe of God and his work (verse 23)?
- Who are the people who have gone astray or who are trapped in constant complaining (verse 24)?

#### 4. And Finally...

(10 minutes)

Take a moment to be silent as a group. Invite each member to think about the one thing they would pray as a result of this session. Pray these prayers together and close with praying the Lord's Prayer.

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## THE FRONTLINE TAKEAWAY

Session 5: The Frontline Cry

### PRAY

Lord, my heart is not large enough,  
My memory is not good enough,  
My will is not strong enough:  
Take my heart and enlarge it,  
Take my memory and give it quicker recall,  
Take my will and make it strong  
And make me conscious of you  
Ever present, Ever accompanying. Amen.

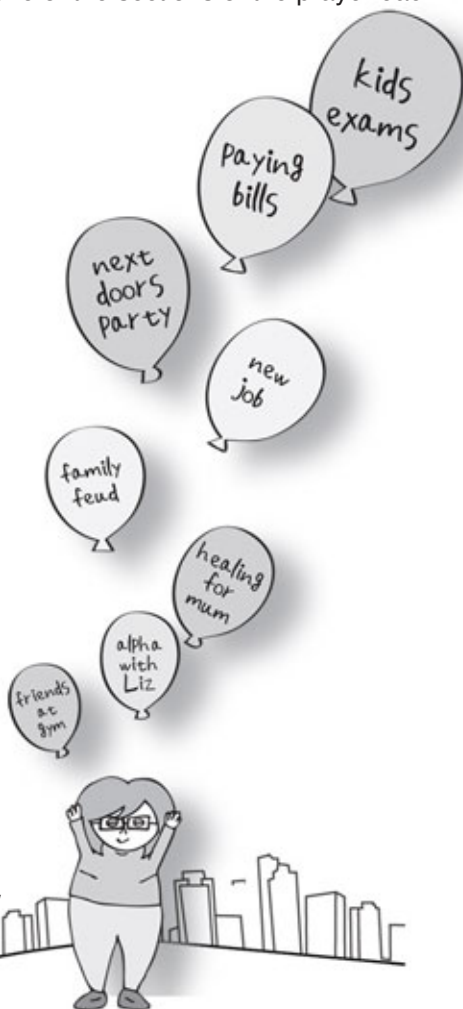


## ACT

It won't be a surprise that this week's action is prayer! Each day this week, pray through the Lord's Prayer. Ask yourself how the lines become more relevant as you pray them with your Frontline in mind.

So you might begin with thinking about one of the sections of the prayer each day:

- **Our Father** Our identity is directly connected to God's action for us. We are not defined by what we do, or what we have done. If we are part of God's family, it means we are to reflect the family likeness and work in the family business. What does that look like on a day-to-day basis?
- **Your Kingdom come** You can only pray this if you want to see things change. What needs to change?
- **Give us our daily bread** What is today's need?
- **Forgive us** Who have we hurt? Who has hurt us? Of what do we have to let go?
- **Lead us not into temptation** What temptations do you face on your Frontline?



Does praying in this way give you a new perspective on your own life?

## REFLECT

'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'

*Philippians 4:6-7*

## SESSION 6: THE FRONTLINE COMMITMENT

**Key Question:** How can we sustain our commitment to one another on the Frontline?

**Aim of the Session:** To explore the implications of letting the Frontline shape our life together as a group or community.

**Core text:** Acts 4:23-31

**You Will Need:** It's the end of the course. Why not celebrate your time together with some extra-special refreshments? Cake with your coffee, perhaps?

### Guiding Thought

What does a good church-based small group look like?

- Is it about just turning up?
- Enjoying being together?
- Sharing deeply?
- Being open and honest?

In this final session, we explore what happens as we begin to bring the Frontline, with all its challenges and opportunities, into the life of our group, by sharing 'in here' what happens 'out there'. Yet, letting the outside in is a tricky business. It challenges our normal patterns and routines and we run the risk of discomfort. But if we are to focus seriously on the Frontline in our group, this is the risk we must take. And in so doing it causes us as a group to ask ourselves a few hard questions:

- How can we avoid becoming so comfortable as a group that we don't really help one another with our real issues?  
What do we need to do to ensure a culture that helps us to grow, rather than a cosy 'culture of niceness'?



Some groups develop a 'culture of disclosure' (where we are happy to share the issues we face) without moving on to a 'culture of accountability', where with one another's support we resist old patterns of behaviour, 'own' important issues and are committed to doing something about them.

- How can we ensure that our group blends both of these cultures?  
We explore these questions in this session as we begin to look at how we can support one another on our various Frontlines after this course has finished.

## Session Outline

### **1. Introduction**

*(15 minutes)*

Start by allowing the members to share their experience of praying the Lord's Prayer on a daily basis. How have they been aware of God on the Frontline? Then discuss together what you think a good small-group community looks like.

Notice whether most of your responses are about the quality of relationships that are enjoyed. This is important, but are the relationships seen to be the means by which we are changed? Or are they for their own sake? What is the balance of mission and discipleship?

### **2. Film 6: The Frontline Commitment**

*(15 minutes including the 8 minute film)*

Talk together about your responses to the film and the story of foster parents Paul and Pearl.

- Have you had experiences of the 'inside' life of a church changing because of the 'outside' activities of its people?





### 3. Bible Reflection: Acts 4

(20 minutes)

The film looked at the impact on the Jerusalem church of the beggar's healing. Acts includes several accounts of the direct impact made by the surrounding world on the 'gathered' community of the church.

- How might what is happening on your Frontlines make an impact on your group community?
- Take a look at Acts 9:19-31; 11:1-18 and 14:8-24. What are the common themes?

**NOTICE:** In each case the church feels uneasy or uncomfortable, but comes to realise that change is necessary for the mission of the church to continue.

- How has exploring these Frontline questions as a group made a difference?
- Over the sessions have there been recurring issues amongst you as a group that you could continue to explore together?

### 4. And Finally...

(25 minutes)

As you celebrate your time together and recall what God has done, explore the following ideas:

- What has been the highlight of these sessions for you?
- In what ways have you become more aware of God on your Frontline and the ways he can use you?
- What do you need to do next as a group to ensure that you live as whole-life disciples - God's missionary people?

Pray together for your life together as a group, that you will continue your journey as a whole- life discipling group.

## WHERE NEXT?

Over to you! If you're able to share some of the stories that you tell one another through the sessions we'd love to hear them. It would be such an encouragement to the wider church. You can email us at [mail@licc.org.uk](mailto:mail@licc.org.uk) or post a comment on our website at [www.licc.org.uk/imagine](http://www.licc.org.uk/imagine).

The LICC website also includes links to a range of resources that you might consider as a next step for your group or church.

In particular, you may want to investigate:

### Whole Life, Whole Bible (Book)

This takes us through the story of the Bible in 50 readings and reflections showing how our lives are bound up with, and shaped by, God's plan to restore a broken universe. It can be used by individuals. There are also questions after each reading so it could be used by a triplet or a small group who want to read the Bible together in this way.

### PrayerWorks (email journey)

You may wish to grow in prayer for your Frontlines. PrayerWorks is one way of doing this. It's a 40-day journey of prayer using different prayer pathways. Originally designed to energise and equip Christians to pray creatively for transformation in their world of work, it's easily used for any Frontline, not only the workplace. Visit [www.licc.org.uk/prayerworks](http://www.licc.org.uk/prayerworks) for more about this and to sign up for this journey. Your whole group might like to do the journey together.

### Christian Life & Work (DVD resource)

If you'd particularly like to help one another be disciples in the workplace take a look at this small group resource. In your group there may be people who are not in paid employment. But work encompasses more than paid employment – it's fruitful labour in a whole variety of contexts. And you might wish to spend six weeks supporting those in different organisations and workplaces.

### Imagine Church (website and further resources)

Living as whole-life disciples on the Frontline in the world is a challenge to the whole church. The Imagine area of the LICC website ([www.licc.org.uk/imagine](http://www.licc.org.uk/imagine)) has resources for leaders who want to help the whole church grow as a whole-life discipling community. Check out Neil Hudson's book, *Imagine Church*, or Tracy Cotterell & Neil Hudson's booklet, *Leading a Whole-life discipling Church*. Both provide insights and guidance for leaders who share this vision of whole-life discipleship. You might also take a look at Imagine how we can reach the UK – a DVD resource.

## CONNECT WITH LICC

If you'd like to stay in touch with us, receive our free weekly emails and notifications of what's new then sign up online - [www.licc.org.uk/about-licc/support/receive/](http://www.licc.org.uk/about-licc/support/receive/); call us on 020 7399 9555 or return the contact card in the DVD pack

Please do let us know how you get on!

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## ABOUT THE LONDON INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANITY

LICC was formed in 1982 by John Stott on the core conviction that every part of our lives comes under the Lordship of Christ. All of life is a context for worship, mission, ministry and active Christian engagement – whole-life Christianity.

We're not a large organisation, but we have a big vision. We long to see the UK church impact our nation through Christians living and sharing the good news of Jesus in their daily contexts in today's world. Our goal, therefore, is to help make whole-life Christianity an unavoidable, central and dynamic part of church life so that Christians are equipped to make a difference wherever they are, whatever they do.

So we focus on:

- Envisioning and equipping Christians for their Frontlines in today's world and specifically in work contexts.
- Working with churches to tackle the sacred-secular divide, stimulating and resourcing them to become whole-life discipling communities.

We offer training courses, conference speakers, church consultation. We write books and articles, run research projects and develop thinking and practical resources for Christians and church leaders about work, church, culture, mission and the Bible.

## ABOUT LICC'S IMAGINE PROJECT

LICC's Imagine team works with churches to help them become places where whole-life disciples thrive. This happens as they discover how 'gathered' activities (worship, prayer, small groups, mission) help people live fruitfully for Christ in life beyond the church.

It's a simple idea. But it requires a profound change for most churches. Mission that the church does together has often received most attention and seems most valued. Consequently many have low expectations about what God might be doing in and through them in everyday life in the week.

What if we imagined otherwise? What if we gathered to worship on Sunday as God's missionary people and scattered on Monday as his missionaries in the world? What if we gathered again with stories of what God had done? What if churches were learning communities, shaped by the Bible, listening to the world, learning how to follow Jesus there?

For three years LICC ran a pilot project with partner churches developing a process that supports the development of whole-life discipling communities. Imagine now offers leadership training, consultation, speakers and resources to help churches who share our vision.

