

## People on the margins (option 2)

**Vision:** to care for the most marginalised and to make sure that we are welcoming them, not pushing them away

### **Mark 10: 46-52 - Blind Bartimaeus**

**Imaginative prayer:** Before beginning, pray for the Holy Spirit to come and for God to guide our imaginations, As two people read the passage in different versions, ask the group to listen deeply and picture themselves there in the crowd, following Jesus. What do we see, hear, smell, touch, taste? Why do we try to prevent Bartimaeus reaching Jesus? What changes our minds? How did we feel?

#### **Questions to discuss:**

1. What made Bartimaeus' life so hard?
2. How did Jesus treat him? How can we learn from this?
3. What was the attitude of the crowd at the beginning of the story? When they heard Bartimaeus? And at the end of the story?
4. Who does Bartimaeus represent in our community?
5. What attitudes exist in our church and community towards those who are marginalised and vulnerable, including those who are living with disabilities?
6. What steps can we take to make sure that we are loving those that are marginalised and vulnerable and ensuring they have opportunities to contribute to community life??

**Act of Love:** pray together and choose one action we can take as individuals or as a group in response to what we have shared.

#### **Going deeper:**

Find the following verses and reflect on what the groups highlighted look like in your context:

- Deuteronomy 10:18 – fatherless, widow, alien
- Deuteronomy 22:25-26 – victims of rape
- Psalm 82:3-4 – weak, fatherless, poor, oppressed, needy
- Proverbs 31:8-9 – voiceless, destitute, poor, need
- Malachi 2:16 – victims of domestic violence
- Matthew 25:31-46 – those without access to their basic needs (hungry, thirsty, without clothes); the sick; stranger; and prisoners
- James 1:27 – orphans, widows

**Notes for facilitator** (over page):

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- *Bartimaeus was blind and so people ignored him and would not help him to be part of society and contribute.*
- *Jesus saw him, treated him with respect, asked him questions and brought him physical healing.*
- *The crowd were initially angry, ignoring Bartimaeus and then preventing him from reaching Jesus; but they changed to pushing Bartimaeus towards Jesus; and then to being astonished at what Jesus had done and what had happened to Bartimaeus.*

Jesus models how we should care for the most marginalised and make sure that we are welcoming them, not pushing them away. Bartimaeus drew Jesus' attention because he was in real need - he was blind and begging, ostracised in his society and unable to contribute to his own upkeep or to his community. But Jesus was also drawn by Bartimaeus' own efforts - he was desperate and would not give up calling on Jesus for help.

There are many people in our communities who are vulnerable and on the margins. Bartimaeus was physically, emotionally and spiritually healed. He became someone who could begin to make his own living and play a part in his community.

As individuals and churches, we often treat people with disabilities or other vulnerabilities in the way that the crowd did initially - ignoring them or actively pushing them away. Jesus calls us to treat them as valuable members of the community who have a role to play in God's kingdom and in society.