

# Praying for your *oikos*

## session handout

### Your journey to faith

- *How did you get on with the passages?*
- *Did you change your oikos in revising it?*

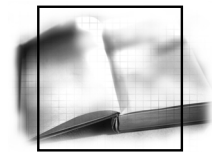


Think about how you became a Christian:

- *What were the main stages on your journey to faith?*
- *Who helped you and prayed for you?*
- *Were any books or speakers helpful and significant?*

### The journey

For most people, becoming a Christian is a gradual process – like a journey. There are a number of different stages on the journey. Sharing our faith is not simply a matter of seeing people come to a point of commitment – it's helping them to move on to the next stage.



Look at the story of the two sons in Luke 15:11-32.

It is possible to find seven 'stages' on the journey of the younger brother and one stage for the elder. See how many you can find. Write them down on the table overleaf and write a parallel situation in people's lives today.

### Prayer and the journey

The main way we can help others move forward in their journey is to pray for them. Read aloud these passages about prayer and 'moving on'. For each one, see what you can learn about prayer for the people you know:



#### **Luke 6.12-16 – The choosing of the twelve**

Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter; and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

#### **Colossians 4.12-14 – Epaphras – 'who is one of you'**

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills. For I testify for him that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you.

**Stages on the journey**

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

## Galatians 4.17-20 – Paul and the Galatians

They make much of you, but for no good purpose; they want to exclude you, so that you may make much of them. It is good to be made much of for a good purpose at all times, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, I wish I were present with you now and could change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

### Beginning to pray

Most of us find it hard to pray regularly for a great number of people. This exercise helps you discern who to pray for in your *oikos*:



- *In a time of quiet, look prayerfully through the names in your oikos.*
- *Prayerfully select three to six people from that list to be the focus of regular prayer, service and witness.*
- *Write their names on a simple card and keep it in your Bible or diary.*

### Choosing the names

Deciding who to pray for regularly is between you and God. The following suggestions may be helpful.

- *All should be people with whom you spend a reasonable time in face-to-face contact each week.*
- *Try to include at least one person you do not like or get on with (Jesus tells us to love our enemies and pray for our persecutors).*
- *Try to include at least one person who is a long way from the kingdom (Jesus focused his time and attention on those who were 'sinners', those whom religious people had given up on).*
- *Try to include at least one person in whom you can see God working at the present time.*

All these categories may overlap.

Get together with two others in your group and exchange one or two names each (you choose which). Write these names down on the prayer list.

### Putting it into practice

There should be up to ten names on your prayer list: six from your *oikos* and four from your prayer partners.



Try to pray each day for the ten names on your own prayer list.

Ask God to show you how to pray for each one. Remember that prayer is always about listening as well as speaking to God.

### Bible reading

Some principles of prayer:

Matthew 5.43-48	Matthew 21.18-22
Matthew 6.1-15	John 16.19-24
Matthew 7.7-12	Acts 4.23-31
Matthew 18.19-20	