



LEADING YOUR COMMUNITY

TOWARDS
FEASTING WITH
THE POOR



SATURATE
RESOURCES

While we instinctively know we're called as Christians to serve and care for the poor, the opportunities and challenges often stop us in our tracks. We don't know what to do, whom to do it with, and even if we knew that, we're crippled by our own fear and hang-ups. As leaders, we often think we need to have a long-term plan for city renewal before we can even take a step. Here's the good news: you don't need a master's degree in social work to be a friend to the poor. And, you don't have to be the mayor to lead your community toward relationship with the most unlikely of friends.

This resource is designed to help a leader or group of leaders process and plan towards sharing a meal with the marginalized in your area. You will write out the opportunities, options, and ideas. Getting them on paper is very freeing! Then, you'll think through the barriers your particular group and situation faces. Lastly, you'll make a plan toward sharing a meal.

This guide will hopefully create a plan of what the Holy Spirit has already put in our hearts.



OPPORTUNITY

The marginalized are those who don't get to experience the full-life of the city. They are overlooked, unheard, isolated, or pushed to the fringes of your city's culture. Neglected Children and orphans exist in every city. Few visit the elderly, shut-ins, Alzheimer patients, and retirement homes in your city because our culture views them as past their usefulness and relevance. Every day, your city welcomes refugees and immigrants, who hope to build a life and experience freedom. Your city is made up of single parents, people struggling with mental illness, teenage runaways, and those struggling with substance abuse. These are the people your city uses and ignores—the poor and powerless. But Jesus and his kingdom don't ignore them, but pursues them.

Q: Who are the vulnerable in your neighborhood, city, or town?

Where do they live? Where do they spend their time? How does the city treat them? Does your community have any connections to any of the groups?



POSSIBILITIES

Jesus pursued people both because they were created in his image and because he loved them. These people were welcomed into Jesus' community as his beloved ones and his disciples. In fact, he not only welcomed them but also pursued them on their turf.

Jesus calls his people to not only meet needs (clothe, visit, and feed) but also welcome people into relationship. Jesus healed people and even raised the dead, but some of the most powerful expressions of his love for occurred when he invited people to his dinner table.

Q: Brainstorm. How can your community share meals with the marginalized? Try to think of as many ideas as possible.



BARRIERS

Sometimes, one of the biggest challenges with pursuing relationships with the poor is the distance between the poor and ourselves. Tim Chester describes this reality well in his book *Unreached*:

"Friendship evangelism is great, but it does not enable the gospel to travel beyond our social networks, unless there are intentional attempts to build friendships with people who are not like us."

John Mark Hobbins of London City Mission also writes:

"Many people live in networks which take precedence over their address, and many churches have grown because of this. But the reality for many people living in social housing or in cheaper housing is that their address is very likely to define their daily life."

Q: What are the barriers to relationship with the poor for your community and in your context?

Q: What organizations can we partner with to walk through some of those barriers?



MAKE A PLAN

If you were to engage in a life of mission to the marginalized, you would have to plan it, prepare for it, and strategically change your life to create avenues of engagement. All of that just to break through social, economic, and geographic barriers and get to a place where you could share life with the oppressed.

Mission to the poor requires a concerted and collective effort towards unlikely friendships and distant neighbors. This is the greatest strength to having a common mission: you have to work at it and do it together. This mission requires a self-giving love for your city.

Q: Which people group and opportunity (above) gets you the most excited to pursue?

Q: Describe the "distance" and "barriers" that currently exist and how can you overcome them?

Q: What is one step or experiment you could do as a group to seek to share a meal with the marginalized in your community?

Q: How can everyone participate in that step? What will you ask people in your community to do? When will you do it?

Q: How will you reflect and learn from this step?

