

SESSION 1

The Father's love

**GETTING STARTED**

For over 1,500 years the church used the word 'mission' to describe what God does rather than what we do. It comes from a Latin word, which means 'send'. We use it today to talk about sending people out, into our neighbourhoods or across the globe. But we are sent because first of all:

- God the Father sent his Son into the world to rescue his people;
- God the Father sends his Spirit to empower us to be his witnesses.

Mission doesn't start with us. It starts with God.

**READ John 17:20–26**

²⁰*My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,* ²¹*that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.* ²²*I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one –* ²³*I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

²⁴*Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.*

²⁵*Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.* ²⁶*I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.*

**FOCUS ON THE THEME**

1. Identify reasons for getting involved in world mission.

**WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?**

2. According to John 17:20–26, who is sent and what is he sent to do?

3. According to verse 24, what is the reason for mission?

4. Identify the ways in which Jesus shares his experience of the Father with us.

The chief end of missions is not the salvation of men but the glory of God.
(Samuel Zwemer, *Thinking Missions with Christ*, p. 67)

GOING DEEPER

5. Read Revelation 7:9–17. What do we learn about the scope of mission from this passage?

 6. What are people doing in this passage? How does this connect to the reason for mission in John 17?

 7. What reasons does this passage give us for worshipping Jesus?
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Lack of interest in mission is not fundamentally caused by an absence of compassion or commitment . . . Shocking statistics, gruesome stories or emotionally manipulative commands to obedience only go so far . . . Lack of interest in mission is best remedied by intensifying people's passion for Christ, so that the passions of his heart become the passions that propel our hearts.

(Tim A. Dearborn, *Beyond Duty*, pp. 16–17, 30)



LIVING IT OUT

8. In John 17:18 Jesus prays, 'As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.' How is our mission like the mission of Jesus?

 9. How might the Father's delight in the Son reshape our attitude to mission?

 10. In verse 23, Jesus prays for the unity of the church so that people will believe in him. How does the life of your church display the love of God in Christ?
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 **PRAYER TIME**

‘[I pray] that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me’ (verse 23). Use the prayer of Jesus to shape your prayers for your church and the churches in your region.

 **FURTHER STUDY**

Read chapter 1 of *Mission Matters*.
