

# All Involved

## *Creating a culture of participation*

The aim of this sermon series is to explore how we can become an increasingly integrated community - where everyone feels involved and able to contribute to the life of the church.

### Ice-breaker questions

Is your personality-type cautious about 'getting involved' or do you throw yourself in to things headfirst?

What things outside of church are you involved with? A choir? A sport? What do you enjoy about being involved?

What's your experience of involvement at church? Good, bad or ugly?

### Talk Outline

In the first talk (04/02/18) Jack outlined some of the theology behind our understanding of church:

*It's in the context of church community that we encounter God - in and through each other;*

*It's in the context of church community that we become more like the God we worship – we're shaped by the practices of our community.*

*It's in the context of church community that we celebrate God and find sanctuary in his presence.*

*We come together as 'church' to orientate our hearts & minds towards God in preparation for the week ahead.*

That's some of the theology behind our understanding of church – but then there are the nuts and bolts of actually making it happen!

Making church happen requires the Spirit of God, personnel, organisation, meetings, finances, rotas etc. **It's the little details that make the bigger picture possible.**

So how do we go from simply showing up at church to participating in the life of this community?

And for those of us who consider ourselves to be well and truly 'integrated' how do we help others to find their place and thrive?

### **How can we create a healthy culture of participation?**

Read and Reflect:

There are no shortage of Bible passages about the community of Christ (pick a couple to read with your group).

Romans 12: 1 - 8

Hebrews 10: 24 – 25

Romans 12: 4 – 5

! Corinthians 1: 10

! Corinthians 12

Ephesians 4: 16

What strikes you from these passages? What questions do they raise?

Jack suggested that there are three principles that may help us to cultivate a community of participation:

### **Celebrate servants/service**

- Jesus models service like no one else! A culture of participation begins with a vision for serving one another.

### **Resist creating a 'fixed' culture**

- Church community is dynamic not static.
- We must resist saying things like "This is the way we do things here" - it shuts down possibilities and stunts growth.

### **Create clear pathways**

- To what extent do we give the impression that going to church is a 'spectator sport'? Do we signpost how to get involved clearly enough?

## **Discussion**

What are the barriers (hidden barriers?) to getting involved with church?

To what extent do we give the impression that going to church is a 'spectator sport'?

Can you think of people who have modelled being servant-hearted? What have you learned from these people?

## Read and Pray

Ask someone to read the poem below.

Lead in to a time of silence where the group is encouraged to think about those people who have faithfully served their churches over the years.

Invite people to pray for discernment in their own lives – gently lead them through a series of questions in an attitude of prayer:

What is my attitude to church?

Do I 'hold back' and remain on the fringes – or do I feel burned out by excessive involvement? How can I get the balance right?

How can I encourage others to integrate and thrive in church? How can I pass on my knowledge and skills to the next generation of servers?

### *The Last Beatitude*

*And blessed are the ones we overlook;  
The faithful servers on the coffee rota,  
The ones who hold no candle, bell or book  
But keep the books and tally up the quota,  
The gentle souls who come to 'do the flowers',  
The quiet ones who organise the fete,  
Church sitters who give up their weekday hours,  
Doorkeepers who may open heaven's gate.  
God knows the depths that often go unspoken  
Amongst the shy, the quiet, and the kind,  
Or the slow healing of a heart long broken  
Placing each flower so for a year's mind.  
Invisible on earth, without a voice,  
In heaven their angels glory and rejoice.*

*By Malcom Guite*