

## **Introduction to the Study on Jesus' Interactions**

*Our vision statement is 'to know Jesus and to make him known everyday'. This study is very much designed to help us in knowing more about Jesus' life, his personality and his mission from studying some of his interactions in the gospels. In order to know him more experientially, it would be helpful to do a Divine Reading (Lectio Divina) exercise at the close of each session. If you would like more help with this element, please do contact Diane who will be happy to help. It is hoped that knowing Jesus better will enable us to make him known better also.*

Reading about the life of Jesus in the gospels, it is noticeable that He spent much of His time training up the twelve. Jesus knew the importance of pouring His life into a smaller group, which would then be able to impact thousands of people (as evidenced in the book of Acts).

But, though Jesus spent time giving so much to the twelve, He also regularly interacted with the crowds and individuals. Why? Because Jesus was the great shepherd (John 10). He cared for people because that is what shepherds do.

We see Jesus' shepherd heart in the specific ways He interacted with people. There are three main senses that Christ used regularly in His interaction: touch, sight and hearing.

1. Jesus Was Willing to Touch People
2. Jesus Was Willing to Look at People
3. Jesus Was Willing to Listen to People

### **Jesus was willing to touch people**

Matthew 8:1-4

In vs3, we read that Jesus stretched out His hand and *touched* the leper. As most of us will know, the leper was a hopeless case in such a society. The Jews of the day had probably used the commands of Leviticus 13-14 to completely ostracise anyone with a skin disease. Therefore, Jesus was stepping over such a formulated boundary to touch this 'unclean' man.

When was the last time this man had been touched? Months, years, decades? This man truly needed to be touched by someone. And it is from this touch of Jesus that the healing power flowed into the man's body.

In these days of safeguarding we might need to be wise about physical touch but we must be accessible to people, as Jesus was. We cannot be standoffish, closed off or too busy to interact with people. And we must be willing to let people have access to us, even close access. This is part of the true shepherd heart of Jesus to reach humanity.

## **Jesus was willing to look at people**

Mark 10:17-27

This rich man had fooled himself to believe that he had done all that was needed to inherit eternal life. But he was lacking one thing.

Now, Jesus could have been frustrated with the man and given him a strong rebuke. But we read these incredible words in vs21: *'And Jesus, looking at him, loved him...'*

Eye contact shows interest, involvement and vulnerability, even communicating love. Now, the rich man could have avoided such eye contact, but, from these words, we again see Jesus' willingness to closely interact with humanity. And only after looking at Him did Jesus say, *'You lack one thing.'*

One might even say that Jesus came to our world in order to look us in the eye and show that he loved us...

## **Jesus was willing to listen to people**

Luke 24:13-39

Here we find the account of Jesus on the road to Emmaus with two of his followers. They are quite disillusioned following Christ's death on the cross, unaware of the fact that He had come out of the grave.

Now, what is interesting is that this is Jesus' 'big day'. He had just risen from the dead! Most would think He would have chosen to make a spectacular grand entrance back onto the scene. But what does He do? Jesus simply walks a seven-mile dirt road with two of His followers.

In their confusion and disillusionment, Jesus drew near to His two followers, walking the dusty path with them, *listening* to their conversation (vs15). Jesus, then, throws a few questions out to provoke some more conversation (vs17 and 19). And He, again, takes time to *listen* to their story, or their complaint. Later on, Christ would end up staying with them and it was through the act of breaking bread that their eyes were opened (vs28-31).

Jesus could have spent time performing more miracles and wonders, though He never actually did such to amaze people. He could have made appearances to the religious leaders and Pilate to prove His resurrection. But He decided it was best to draw near to two of His disciples who had taken a grave blow to their faith. He was more interested in restoring two disillusioned followers than awing the crowd with a spectacular performance. This is the Messiah-King, this is the great servant of all. He was interested in drawing near to people and listening to them.

As we embark on this Bible study about the interactions Jesus had with people around him, may we learn more about the person Jesus was on Earth, and who he is alongside us today.

## Jesus' interactions – study 1: The Crippled Beggar

Imagine you have been invited to meet residents of a homeless shelter in central London. You enter the room and are introduced to those present.

How do you choose the first person you're going to talk to?

How might you start the conversation?

How would you feel as you make conversation?

### **Read John 5:1-15**

**5** After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew<sup>[a]</sup> Beth-zatha,<sup>[b]</sup> which has five porticoes. <sup>3</sup> In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralysed.<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>5</sup> One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?' <sup>7</sup> The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.' <sup>8</sup> Jesus said to him, 'Stand up, take your mat and walk.' <sup>9</sup> At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Now that day was a sabbath. <sup>10</sup> So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, 'It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.' <sup>11</sup> But he answered them, 'The man who made me well said to me, "Take up your mat and walk."' <sup>12</sup> They asked him, 'Who is the man who said to you, "Take it up and walk"?' <sup>13</sup> Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in<sup>[d]</sup> the crowd that was there. <sup>14</sup> Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, 'See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you.' <sup>15</sup> The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

What might have brought Jesus to this place at this time?

Who initiated the interaction on this occasion?

How might you have reacted to this person?

Why do you think Jesus healed only one person out of the many lying there?

What do you notice about how Jesus reacted?

What do you think might have been his motivation?

What appeared to be the results for the crippled man?

Why do you think Jesus followed up with the man?

What, if anything, particularly strikes you about Jesus' personality from this interaction?

How might this knowledge affect your interactions with others?

### Divine Reading Exercise

Pause and pray – be still and open to Jesus speaking directly to you

1. Reading – the first bite to taste the flavour  
Read the passage through slowly inviting people to imagine themselves in the action, either as a main character or a bystander. What are you seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling?
2. Reflecting – chewing on the passing  
Read it through again inviting people to notice if any particular word or phrase stands out for them. What feelings and questions are being raised for you.
3. Relating – silently dialogue with God  
Give time for expressing your thoughts, feelings and questions to God silently and listening for his response. You might want to take some notes about your discussion.
4. Resting – just being in God's presence  
Let the words fall away and allow the experience to move from your mind to your heart. Just be in the moment with God. Let it be a time of Sabbath rest.

## **Jesus' Interactions – study 2: The Rich Young Ruler**

You're at a Charity Auction Evening at the secondary school where your children are pupils. Seated next to you is a well-known parent who is known for his/her generous donations to the school and his/her scepticism about religion. S/he makes a remark about 'religious do-gooders'.

How would you respond (if at all)?

### **Read Matthew 19:16 - 30**

<sup>16</sup> Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

<sup>17</sup> "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments."

<sup>18</sup> "Which ones?" he inquired.

Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, <sup>19</sup> honour your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbour as yourself.'"

<sup>20</sup> "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"

<sup>21</sup> Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

<sup>22</sup> When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

<sup>23</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>24</sup> Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

<sup>25</sup> When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?"

<sup>26</sup> Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

<sup>27</sup> Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?"

<sup>28</sup> Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup> And everyone who has left houses or

brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.<sup>30</sup> But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

What has been the lead up to this interaction?

Why do you think the 'young man' approaches Jesus with this specific question?

How does Jesus react to the question?

How would you react to a similar question?

Why do you think Jesus didn't come straight out with his end statement to the rich young man earlier v21?

What appears to be the result for the rich young man?

How does Jesus react to the exit of the young man?

What do you notice about Peter's statement in v27?

What do you think Jesus means in reply?

What strikes you about Jesus from this interchange with the man and the disciples?

How do you react to Jesus' words to the young man and the disciples?

What do you think Jesus would say to/about us?

### **Further reading:**

Is there significance in what Jesus says in the next chapter (20:1-16)?

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3. Relating – silently dialogue with God

Give time for expressing your thoughts, feelings and questions to God silently and listening for his response. You might want to take some notes about your discussion.

4. Resting – just being in God's presence

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### Jesus' interactions – study 3: Zacchaeus

Imagine you are in a meeting for victims of a financial scam. Into the room comes the scammer and he stops to talk to you.

What is your reaction? What do you think the reaction of those around you will be? Do you care?

#### **Read Luke 19:1-10**

19 He entered Jericho and was passing through it. <sup>2</sup> A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. <sup>3</sup> He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' <sup>6</sup> So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. <sup>7</sup> All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' <sup>8</sup> Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' <sup>9</sup> Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

What might have been Zacchaeus' motivation to see Jesus?

Who initiated the interaction on this occasion?

What risks might Jesus have been taking in responding to Zacchaeus as he did?

Why do you think Jesus said he 'must' eat at Zacchaeus' house?

Why might Zacchaeus have been happy to welcome Jesus?

What do you notice about how Jesus reacted to Zacchaeus' statement of repentance and restoration?

What surprises you about this scenario?

How is this interaction different to that with the rich young ruler in Matthew 19?

What, if anything, particularly strikes you about Jesus' personality from this interaction?

How might this knowledge affect your interactions with others?



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## Jesus' interactions – study 4: The Samaritan woman

You're sitting at the bar, having a drink in your local pub. A person sits down next to you & from the look of them you surmise that you have very little in common with them but they look vulnerable and in need of a kind word.

How would you start a conversation with this person?

### **Read John 4: 7-42**

<sup>7</sup> When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

<sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

<sup>11</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

<sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

<sup>16</sup> He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

<sup>17</sup> "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup> The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

<sup>19</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

<sup>21</sup> "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father

in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

<sup>25</sup> The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

<sup>26</sup> Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

<sup>28</sup> Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, <sup>29</sup> “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” <sup>30</sup> They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”

<sup>32</sup> But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

<sup>33</sup> Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”

<sup>34</sup> “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. <sup>35</sup> Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. <sup>36</sup> Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. <sup>37</sup> Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.”

<sup>39</sup> Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. <sup>41</sup> And because of his words many more became believers.

<sup>42</sup> They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.”

What has been the lead up to this interaction? Why is Jesus alone with this woman?

What do you notice about the Samaritan woman’s response to Jesus first question?

Jesus’ responses are figurative and enigmatic at times (v10, 15, 16, 32), why do you think he speaks like this?

What do you notice about Jesus' statement in v21-24, particularly v22?

Why do think the disciples say nothing when they find Jesus talking to the woman?

Why do you think Luke includes the conversation about food and witnessing in this passage and not just move straight on to what happens to the people in the Samaritan village?

What appears to be the result for the Samaritan woman?

What have you learnt about Jesus from this interchange with the Samaritan woman and with the disciples?

Could you now start a conversation with that person in the pub?

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## Jesus' interactions - study 5: The Woman Taken in Adultery

You are friends with a couple, one of whom is unfaithful to the other. When the wronged party asks you to break off contact with the adulterous partner, how do you respond?

### **Read John 8:2-11**

**8** <sup>2</sup>Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. <sup>3</sup>The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, <sup>4</sup>they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. <sup>5</sup>Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' <sup>6</sup>They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. <sup>7</sup>When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' <sup>8</sup>And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup>When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup>Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' <sup>11</sup>She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'

[Leviticus 20:10 If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbour, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death.]

How is this situation a trap for Jesus? What would the Pharisees accuse Jesus of if he told them to let her go? Or if he told them to stone her? How does he spring the trap?

What do you think Jesus may have been writing on the ground?

What do you notice about Jesus' timing and physical stance as he talks to each person?

How quick are we to judge people?

How do we see obedience and compassion played out in this story? How does Jesus' compassion towards you call you into greater obedience to him?

What do you think Jesus thought about the law dictating stoning?

What would he think of torturing prisoners or of capital punishment?

How does the way Jesus treated this woman help you face your own sins?

How does Jesus' response to the woman exemplify 'grace and truth'? (John 1:17)

How do you understand God's forgiveness?

Your group might wish to do a meditation on this passage. In which case read it again slowly and ask each member to imagine they are a bystander in this story and meditate on the following:

- Describe your surroundings, what you see, hear
- What are people around you doing?
- What are you saying/doing?
- Describe how the Pharisees and scribes look and what they are saying to each other?
- How does the woman seem to you
- What do you think Jesus will do?
- What runs through your mind when Jesus says what he does in verse 7?
- What does Jesus do as the crowd disperses?
- How do Jesus and the woman interact with one another?
- Did you talk to/help the woman or melt away with the crowd?
- What action does the story invite you to take?

## Jesus' interactions – study 6: Herod

Can you remember a time you were falsely accused of something? Or a time when someone spoke to you unfairly. How did you respond and why?

*If feeling particularly brave, or moved to do so, feel free to share in the group though probably keeping any names of people out of it would be best!*

### **Read Luke 23:6-16**

6 On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. 7 When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

8 When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. 9 He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. 10 The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. 11 Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. 12 That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

13 Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, 14 and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. 15 Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. 16 Therefore, I will punish him and then release him."

What strikes you most about Jesus in this interaction?

What are the differences between responding as a 'doormat' or what Jesus does here?

In what situations might we benefit from his example here?

What is the impact of Jesus's behaviour on Pilate, Herod, his own situation?

How do you react to Herod in the passage and his actions?

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this passage?

*Jesus was silent because he was acting under his Father's instruction. His path was one that looks completely foolish to many people. Sometimes we too may be called by God to respond or not respond in a way that seems strange to others.*

There are plenty of other interactions where Jesus uses questions and insults in the presence of accusation, so this is not the only response in such a situation. However, it shows us that sometimes we may save our energies and perhaps not “throw pearls before swine”.

**Read Matthew 7:6, Proverbs 23:9, 26:4-5.**

As Christians we are to keep our eyes fixed on God not just man.

**Read John 18:36**

Jesus encourages us that we will be given the right words to speak in each situation.

**Read Mark 13:11**

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## Jesus' interactions: study 7: Woes against the Pharisees and Lawyers

At your child's (or grandchild's) school, a teacher insists on the children cleaning the classroom, doing the teacher's filing, and performing entertainment for the teacher during the lunch break. What is your response?

### **Read Luke 11:37-54**

<sup>37</sup> While he was speaking, a Pharisee invited him to dine with him; so he went in and took his place at the table. <sup>38</sup> The Pharisee was amazed to see that he did not first wash before dinner. <sup>39</sup> Then the Lord said to him, 'Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. <sup>40</sup> You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? <sup>41</sup> So give for alms those things that are within; and see, everything will be clean for you.

<sup>42</sup> 'But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and herbs of all kinds, and neglect justice and the love of God; it is these you ought to have practised, without neglecting the others. <sup>43</sup> Woe to you Pharisees! For you love to have the seat of honour in the synagogues and to be greeted with respect in the market-places. <sup>44</sup> Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without realizing it.'

<sup>45</sup> One of the lawyers answered him, 'Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us too.' <sup>46</sup> And he said, 'Woe also to you lawyers! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not lift a finger to ease them. <sup>47</sup> Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your ancestors killed. <sup>48</sup> So you are witnesses and approve of the deeds of your ancestors; for they killed them, and you build their tombs. <sup>49</sup> Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, "I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute", <sup>50</sup> so that this generation may be charged with the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world, <sup>51</sup> from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be charged against this generation. <sup>52</sup> Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.'

(note on verse 44. One was unclean if one walked on graves of the dead. Not to do so avoided being defiled)

What do you notice about the context of this interaction?

How is the conversation initiated? Do you think Jesus pre-planned the encounter?

How do you feel when you think of Jesus using such strong and insulting language?

What do think was his motivation?

In what ways, if any, does this change your opinion of Jesus' personality?

Are we frightened to speak out for fear of offending people?

Who in today's society, might Jesus want to reprimand like that?

What would your response be if he spoke to you like that?

In what ways do people attempt to look good on the outside but neglect the underlying heart issue?

How do you react to constructive criticism?

Who might you ask to give you constructive criticism about discrepancies between scripture, your proclaimed faith and your behaviour?

### Divine Reading Exercise

Pause and pray – be still and open to Jesus speaking directly to you

1. Reading – the first bite to taste the flavour  
Read the passage through slowly inviting people to imagine themselves in the action, either as a main character or a bystander. What are you seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling?
2. Reflecting – chewing on the passing  
Read it through again inviting people to notice if any particular word or phrase stands out for them. What feelings and questions are being raised for you.
3. Relating – silently dialogue with God  
Give time for expressing your thoughts, feelings and questions to God silently and listening for his response. You might want to take some notes about your discussion.
4. Resting – just being in God's presence  
Let the words fall away and allow the experience to move from your mind to your heart. Just be in the moment with God. Let it be a time of Sabbath rest.

## Jesus' interactions – study 8: Road to Emmaus

Imagine you come across someone looking sad or distressed as you are walking along. If you were to approach them what would you do?

Have you ever been approached well or badly by someone when distressed?

### **Read Mark 16:12-13 and Luke 24:13-34**

Mark 16:12-13

*<sup>12</sup> Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. <sup>13</sup> These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.*

Luke 24:13-34

<sup>13</sup> Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles<sup>[a]</sup> from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. <sup>15</sup> As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; <sup>16</sup> but they were kept from recognizing him.

<sup>17</sup> He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

They stood still, their faces downcast. <sup>18</sup> One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

<sup>19</sup> “What things?” he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. <sup>20</sup> The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; <sup>21</sup> but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. <sup>22</sup> In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning <sup>23</sup> but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had

seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

<sup>25</sup> He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

<sup>28</sup> As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

<sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

<sup>33</sup> They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together <sup>34</sup> and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.”

What does the place that Jesus meets his friends tell us about God?

What places might people be in today, which are similar to this?

How does Jesus speak to the disciples: his tone, his words? What do you feel about them (v17, 19, 25)?

What times in your life when looking back, do you feel Jesus has been by your side even though at the time it was hard to see him?

What might make it difficult for people to see Jesus with them?

What helps us to see Jesus with us?

In this interaction there is a much longer process going on in recognition and teaching than in some of the other appearances of the risen Christ. Are there things in this bit of history that you find particularly helpful?

*You may want to spend time praying for people to see Jesus, for Christian friends struggling as well as those not yet Christian friends. Maybe listen to God for one another in the group, asking God for a work or picture to encourage each person in turn.*