

## A Church for Everyone

There are no outsiders to the love of God. His church is for everyone. No matter who we are or what we have done, there is a place for us in God's church.

Visiting a village in Northern Zambia, some of our team members came across the amazing unifying power of the gospel. In that place the local churches had been very exclusive. They kept themselves to themselves and did not want anything to do with the so called 'sinners' in the area. As a result, people had never heard the message of the gospel. Our team members spoke to people about Jesus, explaining that Jesus loved them, that he died for them and that there was a place for them in his church. The response was amazing. These people, normally excluded, went to the church leaders and demanded that they could be involved in the church saying, "Jesus loves us and he wants us to come to church!"

In John 1:12 John writes, "Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John is saying that God is for everyone and everyone has the right to become part of his family. All the things that divide us, all the barriers we place between ourselves do not matter. They have no place in God's church. We are all one in Jesus.

Sometimes we judge people, thinking they are unfit to be used by God. When we do this we misunderstand God's grace. We forget that we too were once sinners and that in fact we all desperately need God's life. This is why everyone should be welcome in our Life Groups and our churches, even those we may think of as 'sinners'. There is not one person on this planet that God cannot use in amazing ways and for his glory.

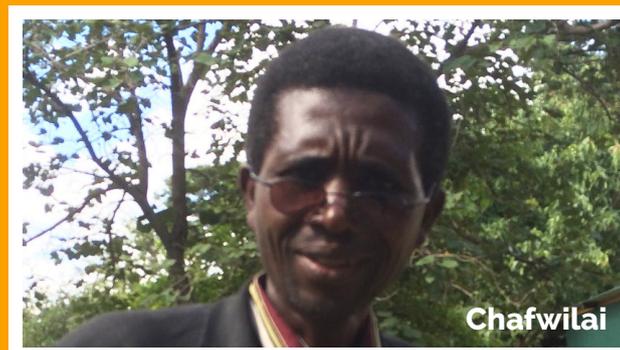
We can also look down on other believers because their faith looks different to ours. They may go to a different church, pray in a different way or believe slightly different things to us. In Revelation 7:9, there is a picture of God's people as "a great multitude" from "every nation, tribe, people and language". There is a great diversity to God's people and we should not expect every believer to be exactly the same as us. Jesus called us, his church, to unity. We need to make sure that as believers we stand together and make a place for everyone in his Church.

### Put it into Action!

Think about the area you live in, who are the people that are marginalised and excluded from church? Who are the people who have never heard about the love of Jesus? Which people would not feel welcome in Church? Write down the names of some of these people and pray for them. Over the next week, invite them along to your life group. Go out of your way to help them feel welcome and loved.

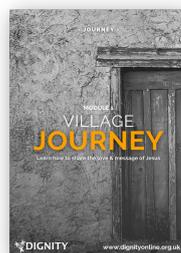
### Pray that:

- 1) God will show these people who he is.
- 2) God will give you an opportunity to show them his love.



"There was a man, a witchdoctor, and he had been chased out of the village. Even church members were afraid of him. I thought that if there is a man that we are going to visit first while we are here; it is this man we are talking about. I spoke to him about God. He started crying and said, 'One thing that has saddened me, people here are afraid of me. There are older people who come here to preach, older than you, but there is nobody who has been here and spoken to me up to the point of me crying. The words you have spoken to me have moved me'. This man turned to God."

### - Chafwilai, Zambia



This lesson is taken from Village Journey - Module 1 of the Journey course.

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