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## ARTICLE

### Session 2: Understanding God's Purpose

#### PREPARATION

Read Scripture and background information. Reflect on the questions in the participant's book. Review links suggested in the lesson outline below.

#### Train of Thought

The paradigm has shifted in our culture and in our church. Although the changes seem overwhelming, they offer incredible opportunities for growth and effective ministry. The environment in which we do ministry has changed, yet God's purpose for the church — the mission — remains unchanged.

#### Desired Outcomes

As a result of this session, participants should be able to:

- Understand the importance of a clearly defined and widely understood mission.
- Understand the power of vision to transform individuals and organizations.
- Remember that Jesus offers the church a compelling mission and that each congregation needs to be involved in discovering the vision that will enable it to fulfill Jesus' call.

#### Lesson Supplies

- Print/painting/advertisement with lots of detail
- Worship center, candle, matches
- [Posters defining key concepts](#)
- For Bible study, list on newsprint the four basic relationships
  - with God
  - with ourselves
  - with other people
  - with the world

#### EXPLORATION AT GROUP SESSION

*Total time: 50 minutes*

Light the candle to remind everyone of God's presence and desire to guide the congregation toward effective ministry. As appropriate, follow up with the prayer requests from the last session. Bring attention to the goals of this session by reading Scripture from this week's preparation. In Luke 10:2, Jesus calls to disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Ask participants to share insights or questions from their preparation.

#### Bible Study Focus Verses: Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

Have participants turn to the Bible passage (Luke 10:1-12, 17-20). Ask them to skim the passage silently and to list the personal relationships presented in it. After a couple of minutes, ask participants to share their lists of relationships. On a dry-erase board or on newsprint, make a list of the relationships that the group identifies.

Then say, "There are four key relationships that all of us experience: our relationship with God, our relationship with ourselves, our relationship with other

people, and our relationship with the world." (Post the newsprint you prepared in advance.) "The character and quality of these relationships shape our lives and our church. After reading this Bible passage, how do you think the people in the Bible text experienced these relationships?" Ask participants to talk with the person next to them. Allow 5 minutes, then ask participants what they noticed. Follow up with these questions: Who initiates or changes these relationships? What can we learn from the Bible passage about one or more of these relationships? What does this passage show about the relationships of the disciples?

### **Transition to Our Time**

Make a transition from the discussion of the relationships of the disciples to the lives of disciples today. Turn to "A Reflective Moment Along the Way" on page 22 in the participant book. Ask pairs of people to share thoughts in response to the questions in the study book.

### **DISCOVERY – APPLYING IDEAS TO THE CONGREGATION**

*Total time: 45 minutes*

Show the picture, painting, or advertisement you brought to this group session. Ask group members to look at the picture for ten seconds, then instruct them to jot down everything they remember seeing in the picture. Have members of the group compare their lists.

This exercise illustrates how people see different things when viewing exactly the same thing. Shared vision is not seeing everything the same way, but broadening the scope of our view to embrace and affirm the full diversity of the group.

Choose questions from the participant book on page 24 and page 26 to focus your discussion on your congregation.

Here are links to other resources which you can review according to the needs of your group or congregation.

- See [examples of clear mission statements from FaithQuest congregations](#).
- Clarify personal mission with the exercises in [The Path: Creating Your Mission Statement for Work and for Life](#) by Laurie Beth Jones (Hyperion).
- [Waking to God's Dream](#) (Abingdon Press, 1999) is Dick Wills's story of personal and congregational renewal.
- *The Power of Vision*, a video featuring Joel Barker, may be available at your conference resource center. It is also available from [StarThrower](#), 1-800-242-3220.

### **Feedback & Evaluation** (5 minutes)

Ask participants, "What ideas from this session are helpful for our congregation? What is helpful for you?"

### **Sending Forth** (10 minutes)

Allow time for sharing prayer requests. Invite everyone to pray the prayer on page 19 of the participant book.



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# **MISSION IS:**

- **What we do.**
- **Our reason for existing.**
- **What we make.**
- **The social need we fill.**

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**SESSION 2**

# **VISION IS:**

- **A clear and definite picture of the future seen through the eyes of today.**
- **A dream in our heart.**
- **A necessary ingredient for any kind of growth.**
- **A bridge from current reality to the future.**

# **AIM IS:**

- **Mission and vision combined.**
- **The action steps toward mission and vision.**

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**SESSION 2**