

## Colossians 1:3-8 Ministering grace and love

### Thanksgiving and Prayer

What does it look like to be fruitful in our lives and on our frontlines and to show grace and love to others? Unconditional love is a good starting point, although it is very countercultural. For example, when we were giving out free hot chocolate in the park on Halloween people were very surprised by it and the coffee for commuters is another example.

There are many ways we can show love. We can take the initiative and be proactive. For instance, offer someone a lift who is nervous to drive in the dark, bring someone's bin in on bin day, sweep leaves from our neighbour's drive, offer someone a meal or a coffee, let someone stay at our home who needs a place, mow someone's lawn. However, it doesn't even have to be anything as big as these things. You can think small to start with and just smile at people and say how are you to them as you go about your day and the key is to really listen. It's called active listening and Jesus was brilliant at it. Three simple words that are so powerful. How are you. Try it. It really works.

You can be proactive and intentional and pray for God to show you an opportunity to help someone on your frontline, wherever that is. Noticing and appreciating people as you go about your day is key too.

Showing grace and love involves doing something for others that costs us either in time or money or effort. Extending grace is not convenient. It wasn't convenient for Nehemiah to drop everything and go and rebuild Jerusalem and to leave the comfort of the palace. Jesus didn't have to heal Simon Peter's mother-in-law or to raise Lazarus from the dead or to make breakfast for the fisherman and of course, showing grace and love also means being prepared to forgive people and this isn't easy.

So, how can we show God's grace and love in action on our frontlines this week and show qualities of Jesus every day? The four key areas are to take the initiative, take small steps, recognise that it won't be convenient and to pray for God to help us by identifying who we can help and to give us the patience and resources to help for example time.

So, I encourage you to think about how you can bless someone this week without wanting anything in return and to work towards doing this as a daily way of being. We need to pray for help with this for God to point out people to us and things we can do and also to ask for help in showing his love and grace.

### Discussion questions

- 1) What does it look like to be fruitful on your frontline?
- 2) What are the fruits of the spirit, and can you give examples of how these can help us in our frontlines?
- 3) What barriers might get in our way and how might we overcome these?
- 4) Can you pray in your life group and individually for God to identify someone for you to bless this week and report back next time on what happened.