



AUGUST: WOMEN'S MONTH

Set during Women's Month, this theme invites us to take an honest look at how women have been left out of important spaces especially where big decisions are made in the church, in society, and in theology. The idea of a 'round table' helps us imagine something better: a space where everyone has a voice, where people are seen and valued, and where power is shared, not controlled by a few. Unlike the usual boardroom or dinner table where the person at the head holds the most influence, a round table reminds us of shared leadership, mutual respect, and working together as equals.

As we search for this kind of table, we're also shining a light on the unfair systems that still exist around us. We're asking real, hard questions: 'Who is missing from our tables?', 'Who hasn't been heard?', 'What kind of community are we building?' This is about more than just seats and spaces. It's also about the future. What kind of church, what kind of leadership, what kind of theology are we passing on to the next generation? Are we making room for our daughters, sisters, mothers, and elders to fully lead, speak, dream, and serve? Are we building spaces where they don't have to fight to belong—but know they are already welcome and needed? That's why **In search of a round table** is not just a theme but a journey. It invites us to reflect on where we've been and to reimagine where we're going. Most of all, calling us to build a community that reflects God's love and that radically welcomes all.



Week 1: Whose table is it anyway?

Week 2: Where are the empty chairs?

Week 3: When the round table is not round

Week 4: A Theology of mutuality at the table

Week 5: Preparing the table for the next generation

Week 3: When the round table is not round.



Confronting elitism and tokenism in inclusive spaces.

Often, these round tables are illusions. This reflection unmasks the subtle ways we design spaces that only appear just, while replicating systems of control beneath the surface. True roundness is not geometric, but it is relational, ethical and spiritual.

Home Groups and classes guide:

1. Open in Worship and Prayer: this is to invite God into the meeting. For example, you can light a candle, sing together, or use a YouTube Hymn or song.
2. Open your Bibles and read the Bible verses for this week (take turns?) see below.
3. Reflect on the Bible verses and the reflection written by a Minister or Lay Preacher.
4. Connect with each other and take the reflection deeper by answering the Questions.
5. Works out: What have we learned that we can apply in our lives in this session? Keep each other accountable for promises made or important steps taken. Pray for and over each other (after taking prayer requests).

Scripture readings:

Mark 12: 38 - 44 (The widow's offering vs. the pride of the elite)

Numbers 27:1-11 (The daughters of Zelophehad confront the system for justice)

Psalms 82 (God rebukes unjust rulers and defends the marginalized)

Hymn/Song: Oceans: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OP-00EwLdiU>

Reflections on the Bible readings written by: Rev Hilton Volkwyn

Our series has thus far ascertained that the table belongs to the Lord and that all are welcome. Hopefully we have also realised that the empty chairs can and should be occupied by the marginalised from the communities we're a part of.

Now a news headline which caught my attention this week, startled me.....*"No building but Government pensions paid out R270m for lavish refurb."* I leave that for us to ponder on.....

This week our reflection is on how some systems are set up to benefit the elite and privileged only. This often happens at the expense of the marginalised. Have you ever been invited to an occasion like a party or celebration of sorts, but you just feel uncomfortable? The uncomfortableness is from knowing that you were invited under duress. The smiles and welcomes when you arrive, are all just fake; then you are just made to feel out of place and unwelcome.

In other words, there are times when some people can be real, or they only pretend to be authentic when you are in their presence. However, behind your back the proverbial dagger is drawn.

From this week's readings we discover that Zelophehad's daughters are known for their courage and initiative in challenging the prevailing laws regarding inheritance. But another way of looking at this passage suggests that they challenged what were unjust laws. Doing what they did was also very risky because it challenged established patriarchal norms and inheritance laws in ancient Israel. Some laws benefitted only the elite and upper classes. So, we discover that these daughters were in fact asking (maybe confronting) for a privilege traditionally reserved for men. They could easily have found themselves in trouble to the point of being ostracised. The laws gave the right for their uncles (men) to receive their father's inheritance, leaving them with nothing..... It could even have meant that they would come up against the community they were part of. But in the face of all of that they remained resolute.

From our gospel reading we get a glimpse of the insincerity of some folk in contrast to genuine commitment of others..... Jesus calls His disciples to show them the commitment of a widow who had only two coins which was worth a fraction of a day's wage... It was all she possessed and still gave it to the church offering.

She gave it probably not even considering where her next meal was coming from. As Jesus said, “*but she, out of her poverty, put in everything, all she had to live on.*”

The story says that there were others too, who gave. They gave out of their wealth and probably even forced the widow out the way so that they could be seen giving theirs first. And because they gave more, they probably even thought themselves as more important. However, we need to note that this widow is impoverished, helpless, and neglected. We need to be reminded that the Law of Moses is clear regarding the care of widows: they were to be provided for. They should not be left destitute and helpless (Exodus 22:22, Deuteronomy 10:18).

And if you read the passage in Mark’s gospel you may ask..... so why aren’t those standing nearby outraged at the injustice if that was the law? Why aren’t they trembling at their prophets’ condemnation? And perhaps most puzzling of all is why Jesus isn’t outraged—especially when you consider the remarks He just made before noticing the widow’s offering. Ronnie Floyd suggests, “*Jesus never called the church to reflect the world’s culture, but to change the culture of the world. Therefore, you cannot change the world being like it.*”

Jesus’ praise of this widow was not meant to dismiss the injustice or excuse the failure of those around her. Rather, He praises her giving to lift her steadfastness, her resolve, as something holy and worthy of imitation. And there in is the lesson for you and me..... “*Do what is right in the sight of God.*”

She kept giving what she had, even though others weren’t giving to her. She kept fulfilling her duty to the temple, even though the temple wasn’t fulfilling its duty to her. *She kept doing what was right, even when so much wrong had been done to her.* If we continue allowing the status quo, if we don’t challenge the wrongs, we are then complicit. We must not think our status will be the guarantee to eternity. So let us be reminded of what the Psalmist suggests; God rebukes unjust rulers and defends the marginalized.

Questions to take the Scripture and reflection deeper:

1. When you listen to the widow’s story what angers you?
2. Am I, as a Christ-follower, a perpetrator or risk taker? Why?
3. Share where some areas in life are still reserved for the privileged few that you know and are aware of.
4. How do we change the wrongs?

Memory verse for the week:

Entrench this verse in your mind, ponder it, meditate on it.

Monday: Isaiah 1:17

“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.”

Tuesday: Numbers 27:5

“So Moses brought their case before the Lord”

Wednesday: Mark 12:40

“They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”

Thursday: Psalm 82:2

“How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked?”

Friday: Micah 6:8

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly you’re your God”

Family time – Written by: Magogodi Nkuna

Week 3 Make the circle bigger

We naturally gravitate toward people who share our tastes, dress sense, or enjoy the same music and movies. These are the people we're comfortable inviting into our inner circles. When we only surround ourselves with those who look like us, we risk creating an echo chamber. Our circle becomes narrow, and we might unintentionally leave out those whose differences could enrich our lives.

But what if we tried something different? *"For God does not show favoritism" - Romans 2:11 (NLT)*

Supporting verse: James 2:1-4

What if we opened our circle and welcomed those who aren't like us? The new girl at school who dresses differently, or the quiet, "nerdish" boy who struggles with sports. By including them, we wouldn't just be expanding our friendships; we'd be imitating God Himself. We'd be showing no partiality, and in doing so, we'd reflect the kind of love He offers, that is unconditional, inclusive, and transformative. Embracing diversity means acknowledging that value doesn't come from similarity but rather from character, curiosity and connection.

Reflections (Ages: 12-18)

1. Who have you unconsciously kept at arm's length because they don't "fit in"?
2. How can you reflect God's heart by embracing diversity in my relationships?

Reflections (Ages: 4-11)

1. Can you think of someone at school who looks or acts differently; how could you show kindness to them this week?
2. Why do you think God wants us to be friends with people who aren't just like us?

Family Activity – Circle of Kindness

1. Draw a circle on a big piece of paper and title it "Our Circle of Kindness"
2. Everyone writes a name of someone that is different from them
3. Come up with one idea of how to include the person in your circle
4. Try the idea and share the outcome with the family.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly father, thank you for making each of us unique. Help us to embrace each other's uniqueness with compassion, welcome those who feel left out and to build a circle of kindness that keeps growing. In Jesus's name – Amen.