



## ASSISTING CHURCHES DEAL WITH UNEMPLOYMENT

### POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS FOR YOU AND YOUR CONGREGATION

<https://izenzo.org.za>

#### BIBLE STUDY

- Help your congregation know that to work is an act of worship to God. Our concern for the unemployed starts at this point.
- There is a lot of material available.
- Attached below is a 6 day devotional study.
- You can also get a 16 day devotional perspective at: <http://justchurch.co.za/employment/>

- See also: <http://justchurch.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Theology-of-Work.pdf>

#### PRAYER

- Encourage prayer for the unemployed in your church services. The Anglican Prayer book has specific prayers for the unemployed at page 88 Section 18. Sections 17, 19 and 22 are also relevant.
- Ensure that those who are unemployed are presented with an opportunity to be prayed for in private or in their cell groups.
- Remember to also pray for those seeking or undertaking further education or training – for their perseverance and success.
- Set a time of thanksgiving for those with work – at Harvest Festival time and set times of prayer and possibly fasting for the unemployed and for the establishment of a just economy.
- Pray for the business people in your congregation for the success of their business and for them to position themselves within a just economy.
- Be sensitive to the unemployed who cross your path that you add them to your prayer list/diary. Be sensitive to the indignity that people feel when they are unemployed. Can you and your congregation keep in touch and through ministry help them to become disciples of Jesus while helping them into work.
- Set a prayer diary for your church around employment and write down the answers to prayer.

#### WAITING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

- As you wait on God be watchful for His answers and His direction.
- As you together dwell on Scripture and pray, set strategy to collectively act to minister to the unemployed. Actions directed

by the Holy Spirit are what God wants and he will reveal them to the collective wisdom of those praying and waiting.

### SITUATION ANALYSIS

- Consider running a survey of the unemployment status of the congregation, the needs and resources of the members.
- A copy is available from Izenzo in both English and isiXhosa.
- You need to study the results and Izenzo can assist you understand how you might respond.

### SET UP A GROUP WHO ARE CALLED TO MINISTRY TO THE UNEMPLOYED

- The survey should give you the information on who in the congregation is wanting to be involved in tackling unemployment on an ongoing and regular basis.
- The church leadership should consider who the right people are to call into the ministry and encourage them in the work.
- Izenzo has a brochure on probable skills required and brief Job Descriptions as a guide including:
- Administration
  - The administrator role is to keep the information collected secure and confidential. Regular updating is also important to check if the ministry is being effective.
  - Data collection for monitoring, evaluation and learning are also key functions to ensure effectiveness.
- Research
  - Depending on what the needs are, research will have to be done on what training and networking opportunities are available to assist the unemployed.
  - It is important that the researcher be ready to compile and share the information

- Communication/marketing
  - There is a constant need to engage in networking and advertising opportunities and workshops.
  - Izenzo will look to assist whoever takes on this role within the ministry team.
- Finance and fund raising
  - We have learnt through experience that the ministry may need resources and budgeting and accounting for these is a requirement.

### THE UNEMPLOYED

- Internationally 95% of people do not want to start a business and want the security of a job.
- However the majority of employment opportunities are never advertised and are let through word of mouth or 'networking'.
- Creating supportive networks for the unemployed without these networks is a major challenge and opportunity.
- The first step is to create a safe environment for unemployed to meet, connections to be made and ongoing mentoring established.
- A simple, regular 'Job Club' meeting can be the start. A breakfast or coffee time with facilitation of discussion, sharing and prayer is appropriate.
- Job Clubs have one of the highest success rates internationally in getting people into work. **See our Job Club Manual** for how to go about this. It also records different ways they are being implemented in Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth), East London and Cape Town.
- You may also consider workshops on:
  - Career counselling,

- How to write curriculum vitae and
- How to find work.
- This could evolve into a Worker Readiness programme.
- See the Zanokhanyo Worker Readiness program of Common Good (an initiative of Common Ground churches) at <http://www.commongood.org.za/employment/> for an example and possible collaboration.
- The employed may be encouraged to mentor the unemployed and training of mentors will be advantageous. Your researcher might identify those who can run training workshops.
- The journey to minister to the unemployed may lead to further interventions such as assisting the unemployed deal with:
  - Debt
  - Drug and alcohol dependency
  - Money management
  - Life skills
- It will be important to find those already involved in these areas of ministry and to partner with them in assisting
- Ministry is a commitment and walking a road alongside the unemployed is a journey of disciple making. The community of Faith is where we can best share this task.

#### **NEW BUSINESS START UPS, SMALL AND MICRO ENTERPRISES AND THE SELF EMPLOYED**

- Many in your congregation may have tried to start a business for survival reasons and many may still be trying to grow their businesses.
- They need the support of a business incubator and mentoring. Business incubators are the most cost effective way of supporting and training in specific start ups. You need

to research which are in your area. Izenzo may be able to assist with information depending on where you are located.

- Research needs to be done as to what small businesses exist in the congregation, how they can be supported and mentored.
- Small businesses will create the economy and jobs of the future

Other focus areas and expertise to be developed

- Youth Liaison – assisting youth engage with topics such as guidance, career planning, training and education search, job search etc
- Career counselling
- Mentoring groups of unemployed individuals
- Mentoring groups of small enterprises
- Linking unemployed into discipleship programmes

#### **PARTNERSHIPS**

- Partnerships between churches are important as Christ expects us to be in deep fellowship (John 17).
- Some churches are materially rich but spiritually poor and need to partner with congregations which are materially poor but spiritually rich (James 2).
- This will redress the balance of power within partnerships where the influence of our society tends to put those with experience in business and with material resources in a more powerful position.
- The first step is to build relationship across churches. A start could be made if the Ministry teams in each church begin to meet and collaborate on initiatives.

- The exact nature of this collaboration would be determined by the situation analysis and an understanding of each others needs.
- The Nahoon Community Outreach Program in East London is a good example of churches working together across denominations. You can read more about it towards the end of our Job Club manual on the Izenzo web site and the Newsletters of the past few years.

#### **ONGOING DIALOGUE**

- The journey to minister to the unemployed in Southern Africa is an ongoing one where we need to learn from each other.
- Humility to partner and share will be the way God can use each one of us.
- Izenzo looks forward to continuing the journey with you and your church.

#### **ONGOING CONTACT**

Please do keep in contact at <http://www.izenzo.org.za/>

Please register for our newsletter at <http://www.izenzo.org.za/contact.html>

Ziyabulela kuwe, Yehova, zonke **izenzo** zakho, Bakubonge abakho benceba;

All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee.

#### **SIX DAY DEVOTIONAL ON WORK AS WORSHIP – TACKLING UNEMPLOYMENT**

When faced with the crisis of unemployment, with over 10 million unemployed in southern Africa, we need to know what scripture teaches about work and how we manage money and resources. Once we have a biblical view we are better equipped to hear God speak to us when we bring this problem to Him in prayer.

God is leading the church to be the salt and light as we confront unemployment, one of the biggest injustices facing southern Africa. He wants us to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to take action. Sharing of resources, churches working together and partnership with the faith of the materially poor will inform how we act.

Below is a 6 day study you may wish to use.

## WORKING AS STEWARDS OF CREATION

### PREPARE

God revealed himself as working when He created the world. We should all enjoy work as we care for His creation as stewards. His desire for all of us is to be able worship Him through work and to provide for our needs.

READ Genesis 1:26-2:3

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,<sup>[a]</sup> and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

<sup>27</sup> So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

<sup>29</sup> Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. <sup>30</sup> And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

<sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

<sup>2</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

<sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. <sup>3</sup> Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

### EXPLORE

By the time God made mankind in His image He had already created light and dark, sea and sky, land and sea. He had put in place the lights of the day and night and the creatures of the water, sky and land. Each day he reflected and He “saw that it was good”. On the sixth day He made us in His image. Mankind is “very good” (v31). His image in us allows us to reflect creativity, purpose, and dignity.

He instructs mankind to embrace active stewardship of the world, tilling the land and caring for it. (Gen 1: 28-30; 2:15). Mankind fell into sin and work became harder but God’s original intention was that work was to be an act of stewardship and obedience.

Unemployment is not simply about getting everyone into a job, onto a learnership or an Expanded Public Works Programme. God’s intention is more than just a minimum wage. His intention is that we can reflect on our work and see that it is good. We need to go

beyond “a job”, important as that is, to Gods full intention for the whole person.

#### RESPOND

Bring to God your desire to do fulfilling work. It is a great help to know what work God is calling you to. It improves the way you behave as a worker, work seeker, employer or volunteer. It also gives you perseverance as you honour God.

## WORKING AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

### PREPARE

Jesus set us an example of service and instructed us to serve one another. The early church taught that “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Col3:23).

READ: John 13:1-17 Jesus Washes His Disciples’ Feet

<sup>13</sup> It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

<sup>2</sup> The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. <sup>3</sup> Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; <sup>4</sup> so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. <sup>5</sup> After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

<sup>6</sup> He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”

<sup>7</sup> Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”

<sup>8</sup> “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.”

Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”

<sup>9</sup> “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!”

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” <sup>11</sup> For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

<sup>12</sup> When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. <sup>13</sup> “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. <sup>16</sup> Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup> Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them

### EXPLORE

Jesus washing His disciple’s feet was immediately before His sacrificial death on the cross. He knew who he was, the Son of God (v3) “so” he stripped down and did the work of a slave which was to wash the guest’s feet. He relinquished His position as Teacher to serve the disciples and instructs that no calling or task is too low for a Christ follower. If Jesus performed and gave dignity to the humblest work, then we need to do the same.

Paul saw work as an integral part of discipleship. He also encouraged those in Ephesus to do “something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need” (Eph 4:28).

Many of the Worker Readiness programs run by churches assist the unemployed to access entry level work on the minimum wage. This work is boring, and the wage cannot support a family let alone leave anything over to support others in need. That is why many churches assist with additional training courses so low paid workers can go on to higher levels of skilled work and income.

#### RESPOND

Are a group of churches in your area able to assist the unemployed running a Worker Readiness Program or Job Club? Can you partner with those on the minimum wage so they can gain training and improve their income?



## PRAYER FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

### PREPARE

We should be eager to plan to reach out to the unemployed. However, we must first engage with God in prayer, to watch and listen to what He is already doing. He will guide us to work with Him.

READ Luke 18:1-8 The Parable of the Persistent Widow

18 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. <sup>2</sup> He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. <sup>3</sup> And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

<sup>4</sup> "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'"

<sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

### EXPLORE

Jesus continuously prayed to his Father and encourages us to pray "day and night". God wants to answer us quickly to bring justice but He needs us to have faith. Our faith can be strengthened as we review how God has answered the church in southern Africa in the past. God acted when prayers were made for the abolition of the Pass Laws and the abolition of the Apartheid system. We remember days and nights of prayer for imprisoned activists before democracy came. We must pray for further healing.

My wife and I attended a church with approximately 60% unemployment amongst the members. One Sunday we all prayed for the unemployed. The next day a local company approached us asking if we could supply 20 young people who had never worked before for a new training and employment program. This was a rapid answer to our small faith. Not all answers are that quick. The small church went on to run a Worker Readiness program which placed many hundreds in jobs over a long period.

We are constantly required to exercise our faith at iZenzo where we assist churches deal with unemployment. We are seeing God minister in many ways.

### RESPOND

Can you pray continuously with one unemployed person to find the work that God is calling them to? Have you, together with your church, waited in prayer to hear how God wants you to practice faith to bring about economic justice and growth in employment in your town, city or region?

## THE MEANS TO WORK

### PREPARE

God gave the Israelites many laws concerning the way they related to Him and each other. A significant number of the laws related to how they were to manage their economic resources of land and labour. As the world experiences an ever widening gap between the rich and poor we learn that never was God's intention.

READ Leviticus 25:8-24 The Year of Jubilee

<sup>8</sup> "Count off seven sabbath years—seven times seven years—so that the seven sabbath years amount to a period of forty-nine years. <sup>9</sup> Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. <sup>10</sup> Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan. <sup>11</sup> The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. <sup>12</sup> For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields.

<sup>13</sup> "In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to their own property.

<sup>14</sup> "If you sell land to any of your own people or buy land from them, do not take advantage of each other. <sup>15</sup> You are to buy from your own people on the basis of the number of years since the

Jubilee. And they are to sell to you on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops. <sup>16</sup> When the years are many, you are to increase the price, and when the years are few, you are to decrease the price, because what is really being sold to you is the number of crops. <sup>17</sup> Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the LORD your God.

<sup>18</sup> "Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land. <sup>19</sup> Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety. <sup>20</sup> You may ask, "What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or harvest our crops?" <sup>21</sup> I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years. <sup>22</sup> While you plant during the eighth year, you will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in.

<sup>23</sup> "The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers.

<sup>24</sup> Throughout the land that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land.

### EXPLORE

God wanted everybody to have the opportunity to work. The norm for the Israelites was working on the family farm. When they settled in Israel the land was divided out equally amongst the tribes and families. If a family had to sell its land due to drought or calamity the land would be restored to them every 50<sup>th</sup> year. The year of Jubilee.

This would have required the redistribution of wealth from the wealthy back to the poor. It would have restored the dignity of stewardship back to all families and with it the dignity of work. A family would not have experienced poverty for many generations.

The present unjust concentration of wealth in the hands of a few is demonstrated in southern African countries which make up 7 of the 12 countries in the world with the highest gaps between the rich and the poor (Gini index: 63 to 51,5). This makes it very difficult to deal with the unemployment rate of over 70% amongst the youth. They and their parents do not have the resources to create work or the networks to find work.

#### EXPLORE

How much of your resources and earnings should be going to assist those in need? Does your church know how to invest in training programs for the unemployed?

If you are unemployed how are you using the education opportunities and resources that are available to you?

## CHURCHES WORKING TOGETHER

### PREPARE

Jesus prayed that the world would see the unity of Christians and so come to believe in Him. He calls us to be one as He and Father God are one (John 17). Churches supporting each other and working together can be a powerful testimony.

READ 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 The Collection for the Lord's People

8 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. <sup>2</sup>In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. <sup>3</sup>For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, <sup>4</sup>they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. <sup>5</sup>And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. <sup>6</sup>So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. <sup>7</sup>But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you<sup>[a]</sup>—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

<sup>8</sup>I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. <sup>9</sup>For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

<sup>10</sup>And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. <sup>11</sup>Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. <sup>12</sup>For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

<sup>13</sup>Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. <sup>14</sup>At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, <sup>15</sup>as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."

### EXPLORE

Some churches in southern Africa have low unemployment of less than 10% while other churches have 80% and I have worked in some churches with 100% unemployment. The Macedonians churches of Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea were joyful, poor and generous and gave to the church in Jerusalem whose members were struggling. Paul now calls on the Corinthian church to follow their example and to be systematic and wise in their giving.

I am advising 4 churches from 3 denominations in Buffalo City, Eastern Cape, where they are working together to feed the unemployed, run Worker Readiness workshops and Job Clubs. Each church brings their spiritual gifts and resources as they build relationships with each other and those they are ministering to.

The local businesses are seeing the impact and supporting the initiative through finance and offering training and work to regular attendees of the workshops.

In many churches the response is that they are using most of their resources running their Sunday services with few resources left for an outreach ministry. This is sad, however when we pray and minister together we see the Holy Spirit empower.

#### RESPOND

What research can you and your church do to find out what other churches in your area are doing to demonstrate Jesus concern for the unemployed and marginalised? How could you humbly build trust and co-operation as you begin to work together?

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

### PREPARE

Often those with access to money, education, experience, power and networks can intentionally or unintentionally dominate the conversations about how ministry is carried out or issues such as unemployment are tackled. Scripture calls us to be different.

READ James 2:1-13 Favouritism Forbidden

2 My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favouritism. <sup>2</sup> Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. <sup>3</sup> If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," <sup>4</sup> have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

<sup>5</sup> Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonoured the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? <sup>7</sup> Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

<sup>8</sup> If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbour as yourself," <sup>9</sup> you are doing right. <sup>9</sup> But if you show favouritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

## EXPLORE

James says when the materially rich befriend the materially poor, rather than judge them, they must recognise the poor are rich in faith. Earlier this week we learnt that Jesus said He can only act quickly to restore justice when He finds faith. Thus if God is going to answer our prayers for the unemployed we need to be praying with the poor who are rich in faith and will build up our faith. As we partner, God can act quickly. He can liberate all of us in southern Africa, including over 10 million unemployed, to worship Him through work.

One of the blind spots of western culture is that it has all the answers arising out of its dominance of education, experience and technology. This can show itself when a person's worth is only what they can do in work. Christian employers cannot treat their employees as just a unit of labour but as equally made in God's image. Christian employees have to respect their fellow workers and those to whom they report. Thus the call is to "Love your neighbour as yourself"

## RESPOND

In our divided society we must plan and take intentional steps to cross the divide between rich and poor. How might you create the time to meet, share, study and share faith across the divisions? How do we build this as a regular practice of our church?

## SUMMING UP

Gods intention in creation is that we honour Him with our work. Jesus called us all to serve and we are to all work so that we can supply the needs of others. There is however a crisis of hunger, crime, and hopelessness amongst the many millions of unemployed and even suicide amongst the disillusioned youth. We are driven to prayer and watching/researching what God is doing. We can expect the Holy Spirit to work through us in power to bring about justice quickly if we have faith.

Practical partnerships between churches must respect the contribution of the rich faith of the poor. These initiatives will also need to embody significant redistribution from the materially rich to be able to create employment which was God's intention in the law of Jubilee and encouraged at an even more radical level within the New Testament church.

## FOUR QUESTIONS

- How might you daily see your work as a means to worship God and care for others?
  - How can you, your cell group and church persevere in prayer for the many millions of unemployed? How are you seeing the Holy Spirit at work and are you asking that more power is released through you to restore the dignity of work to all?
  - How will you and your cell group find out about, raise awareness, and engage with the various ministries to the unemployed in your city, province, or country?
- How will the teaching that the poor are rich in faith change the way that you and your church approach partnership with the unemployed in your own and other churches?