

The GlobalChurch Project

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## Jo Saxton

### Local Church Small Group Resource

This resource is designed to help your small group discussion. It's shaped to inspire you to consider new ways for understanding the mission of the church. Questions are organized in themes. Consider choosing the themes appropriate to your small group context. You don't need to cover all the questions. Allow for a time of response.

Small Group Preparation:

- Video: Jo Saxton, 45 minutes.
- Scripture: Mark 1:16-31, John 13:34-35
- Participants are encouraged to bring their own journals or writing materials.

Themes explored in the video:

- **Practical gospel** and **practical ministry**.
- **Missional discipleship**.
- Joining with **God in his mission**.
- **Radicalized faith**.
- **Celebration** and **empowerment**.

## Beginning the conversation

Consider the questions suggested below to start the conversation for your small group. They'll consolidate the content of the video, after you've viewed it.

1. What were the major themes in Jo's responses?
2. How does Jo describe the gospel and the impact of the gospel in the context of life and ministry?
3. Discuss the difficulties of the content. What was difficult to understand? Was there anything you would like to clarify with the group?
4. Theological method: How is Jo's theology informed and shaped by her practical ministry? What approaches does she take in understanding God in the context of her day-to-day experiences and discipling?

## Going deeper

Explore the major themes raised in the video. Critically engage with Jo's theology. Consider the questions that respond to the issues raised in your preliminary discussion.

1. **Practical gospel and practical ministry:** How does Jo's personal narrative reflect on the idea of mission in the hands of "ordinary people"? How did Jo feel called into ministry, and how does she describe this calling to have "come into its own"?
2. **Practical gospel and practical ministry:** Describe Jo's work in 3DM in engaging in a practical gospel ministry. How does she describe the gospel to meet the practical and tangible needs of people?
3. **Practical gospel and practical ministry:** How does Jo encourage honesty in the sharing of ministry experiences? What are valuable ways she suggested learning from one another? Discuss this attitude: "Welcome to the family. This is what we did and what we learnt. Please don't make the same mistakes as us. This is what it meant to be missional in our contexts. It will look different for yours".
4. **Practical gospel and practical ministry:** "We often listen to his words but don't look at the ways he did things." What are the ways Christ lead his disciples? Describe what Jo means when she says that Christ gave his disciples access, practice and prayer.
5. **Practical gospel and practical ministry:** How was the appeal about 3DM's 'programs' and how did Jo criticize this? How was she also sympathetic to this? What are Jo's major concerns about 'programs' in the context of practical ministry? How do 'programs' differ from the discipleship example of Christ in Mark 1:16-31?
6. **Missional discipleship:** According to Jo, what is relationship between mission and discipleship? What does it mean to engage the missional church with discipleship-centered spirituality?
7. **Missional discipleship:** How does Jesus' life model missional discipleship? How does Mark 1:16-31 and John 13:34-35 exemplify attitudes of Christ in discipleship, and how does this encourage a missional form of discipleship?
8. **Missional discipleship:** "This is what we see Jesus doing. When we see Jesus making disciples, mission is an integral part." How does Jo encourage believers to do as Jesus did, and engage with others in a missional framework?
9. **Missional discipleship:** Describe Jo's missional framework for the church. How does Jo see her ministry equipping missional, discipleship centered leaders?
10. Joining with **God in his mission:** Describe the merits of Jo's ministry of teaching, mentoring and discipling of people in mission. What are the strengths of her ministry, and how is she engaging with the mission of God?
11. Joining with **God in his mission:** What is the importance of reminding ministries of their DNA? What was Jo's role in reminding 3DM: "to join in with what God is doing, to engage in missional discipleship and to spend ourselves on the next generation"? How does Jo recognize this in the context of God's mission?
12. Joining with **God in his mission:** Discuss Jo's use of existing ministry tools (like 'huddles') to engage in mission and discipleship. How does she view her ministry as coming alongside churches and individuals, journeying with them in asking what it looks like for *them* to be engaged?
13. Joining with **God in his mission - family:** How does Jo understand the concept of 'family' in missional communities? How is the concept of 'family' developed in the Scriptures? Discuss the way in which John 13:34-35 characterizes Christian community.
14. **Radicalized faith:** How does Jo encourage "ordinary people to embrace the risky gospel"? She encourages us to share the good news, "to stop second guessing and to try some things". What are her suggestions for this? What does she mean by moving beyond a "domesticated gospel"?
15. **Celebration and empowerment:** How does Jo's ministry equip women for leadership and influence wherever God has placed them? How is this exemplified in her personal story?

16. **Celebration and empowerment:** What does Jo describe as the risks of women doubting their place in the grand narrative of God's world? Discuss the ways the church has marginalized women, and the ways in which women have marginalized themselves?

17. **Celebration and empowerment:** What is the disparity between egalitarianism in ideal and practice? How is this a frustrating disparity, as leaders profess to commit themselves to investing into women leaders but do not acknowledge the obstacles? Discuss the associated challenges for women in ministry and discipleship.

18. **Celebration and empowerment:** Discuss Jo's criticism: "We don't know where the gifted women are and we are not looking for them, we are expecting them to come to us. If we believe that women are to be expressing their gifts in every part of the church, is my way of discipling the church effective? Is it producing fruit? Who are my women leaders?" How does Jo encourage the church on this issue?

19. **Celebration and empowerment:** What are the various ways that Jo encourages women to empower themselves by rediscovering their gifts, talents and contributions in the life of the church? How does Scripture and the example of Christ's discipling in Mark 1:16-31 encourage this empowerment?

## Informing theology

Ensure the discussion is specifically drawing on your local setting. Make sure the discussion is relevant to the lives of faith for your small group. Encourage relevant and thoughtful examples from each participant.

1. **Practical gospel and practical ministry:** Discuss the central aspects of Jo's ministry and how these might characterize your own discipleship ministry: investing, empowering, equipping, releasing. How are these important aspects of your small group and local church ministries of discipleship?

2. **Practical gospel and practical ministry:** How is Jo's ministry story-driven, and how might story-driven ministry be appropriate in your small group and local church contexts? How can you share the gospel in story for others to engage with?

3. **Practical gospel and practical ministry:** How can we better learn from Christ in leading and building communities like his? Where do our churches differ from Christ's practical ministry?

4. **Missional discipleship:** What pertinent questions to do you ask yourself from the example of Christ's discipleship in Mark 1:16-31? What is your personal and small group response to Jo's question: "What does discipleship look like for us?"

5. **Missional discipleship:** Discuss the following. How does Jo encourage 1. building a discipling culture, 2. multiplying missional leaders, 3. launching missional communities and 4. leading kingdom movements? What are the helpful aspects of these in building God's kingdom? What aspects are lacking in your own contexts?

6. **Missional discipleship:** How can you and your small group communities be more accessible as role models in the context of churches?

7. **Missional discipleship:** Discuss the challenges of this assumption: "Information is enough for understanding better doctrines". How does this attitude pervade 21st century culture and your own small group contexts?

8. **Missional discipleship:** How does Jo encourage the church to engage in the conversation of missional discipleship: "It is not about conversation, I am not interested in what you are saying, but in how you are living."

9. **Joining with God in his mission:** Why does Jo implore that we "become apart of what God is already doing in the world around us"? What does it mean for your small groups and churches to join in with what God is already doing?

10. **Joining with God in his mission:** How does Jo's attitude encourage you: "we are not convincing anybody, we are asking the questions they are already asking. What does it mean for you to make disciples?" What does God's missional discipleship look like in your small group contexts, with reference to John 13:34-35?

10. Joining with **God in his mission**: How are churches the contexts for growth, multiplication, maturity and mission in the New Testament? How does this affect your own and your small group's ministry?
11. Joining with **God in his mission - family**: How does the majority world understanding of the extended family offer an interpretive possibility for the welcome and inclusion of the gospel? Jo says, "It was their relationships which spoke volumes". How does this reinterpret the concept of family for you and your small groups?
12. Joining with **God in his mission - family**: Discuss Jo's exhortation to the church: "Who is your household? How are you doing and exploring life together? How is this a context for others to learn. What does it mean for you to be in an extended family of God's?" How is this significant for you?
13. **Radicalized faith**: Why does Jo urge us away from a domesticated gospel towards a more dangerous, risky and adventurous gospel? "We have made it about behavior modification rather than the renewal of all things. We are dull!" Why does she challenge us to embrace a dangerous gospel? How do you and your small groups respond to this?
13. **Radicalized faith**: What is the value of Jo's approach in encouraging people to respond to what inspires them personally, having consulted scriptural and historical examples? How might you practice this approach in your own ministry?
14. **Celebration and empowerment**: In encouraging the union of purpose and play, Jo urges believers to embrace celebration. Why does Jo encourage us to "celebrate the fact that we have dared", and that "we should take Jesus seriously, ourselves not so much"? How is this significant for you and your small group?
15. **Celebration and empowerment**: How does Jo encourage women in the examples that she uses? How does Jo describe the "sheer range of gifting and potential" of women that propels the church forward? What value does the empowerment of women have on the church in your own local church contexts?
16. **Celebration and empowerment**: What are some of the unhelpful attitudes from and about women in the church? What are some of the frustrations and the burdens for women in your small group and ministry contexts? How does Jo's encouragement encourage you and your group? How are you challenged?
17. **Celebration and empowerment**: How does Jo's discussion of laying down our privilege for one another encourage you and your service in church? What might sacrifice for the sake of empowering others look like in your small group contexts?
18. **Celebration and empowerment**: Respond to this question: "If you were unapologetic about your gifts, what would they be?". Share this with one another, and pray for one another, that God would continue working in your gifts.

## Informing community

Facilitate the space for your group to respond to the discussion. You might consider this section as a personal time of written journal responses to the following questions.

1. What is God encouraging me, our small group and our community, to do?
2. In responses to the issues raised in the video, what are areas I want to ask for God's forgiveness in and God's heart for advocacy in?
3. How do I need God to minister to me and my community, for us to better engage with the contextual issues of our community?
4. How can I gain a better understanding of missional discipleship? What do we ask that God would do in our hearts?

## Prayer

Spend time in prayer over what you've learnt.

Invite the ministry of the Holy Spirit to clarify, heal, and inspire change for your participants and communities.

## Links

**Website:** [www.theglobalchurchproject.com](http://www.theglobalchurchproject.com)

**Book:** Graham Hill, *GlobalChurch: Reshaping Our Conversations, Renewing Our Mission, Revitalizing Our Churches* (IVP Academic, 2015)