

GOSPEL MEDITATION ON HEALING

Read out the following:

A traditional method of Christian prayer is to imagine yourself in a gospel story, meeting Jesus and seeing him in action. The key to this is:

Let your imagination run free - don't be held back by what you feel you 'ought' to think.

Now read Mark 10: 46-52.

Then read the following meditation slowly, leaving silences where the dots are. The **text in bold** is the Gospel and the *text in italics* is the narrator's additional words. Gentle music in the background may help.

You are now going to imagine you are the blind beggar, Bartimaeus, whom Jesus healed outside Jericho. In order to do this, you must first take some time to get relaxed, so get into a comfortable position, close your eyes and very deliberately relax your muscles. . . If you find anywhere tense, relax it. . . Listen for a while to the sound of your own breathing. . . Don't change it, just concentrate on it. . . Can you hear or feel slight differences between each breath. . . ?

Now take time to imagine that you are Bartimaeus. . . a blind beggar, waiting by the side of the road. . . How does it feel sitting there. . . ? Is it comfortable or not. . . ? Now you hear the crowd getting nearer. . .

They reached Jericho; and as he left Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd. Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting at the side of the road. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout and to say:

“Son of David, have pity on me.”

Why are you shouting like this. . . ? What do you know about Jesus. . . ? How do you feel as you shout. . . ? Nervous? Scared? Excited? What. . . ?

And many of them scolded him and told him to keep quiet but he only shouted the louder: “Son of David have pity on me.”

How does it feel when people are scolding you. . . ? Why are they so cross. . . ? Why do you keep on shouting. . . ?

Jesus stopped and said: “Call him here.”

This is the first time you have heard Jesus' voice. . . What is his tone. . . ? How do you feel when you hear him taking your side. . . ?

So they called the blind man. “Courage,” they said “get up; he is calling you.” So, throwing off his cloak he jumped up and went to Jesus...

What are your feelings inside as you go up to Jesus...? What has happened to the crowd now...? Have they gone quiet...? What is the atmosphere like now... ?

Then Jesus spoke, “What do you want me to do for you... “Master,” the blind man said to him, “let me see again.”

How do you feel as you ask Jesus for your sight. . ?

Jesus said to him: “Go; your faith has saved you.” And immediately his sight returned and he followed him along the road.

When your sight returns what can you see... ? What does it feel like...? What do you do? Jump around... ?Go quiet...? Hug Jesus...? What...? What are your feelings about Jesus as you follow him along the road...?

Now slowly and in your own time, return to this room. . . don't rush, and when you're back don't move, just open your eyes. . . I'll let you know when everyone's back...

DEBRIEFING

When everyone's back, ask them what they felt. Did they find the exercise easy or difficult? Go through the meditation, asking them how they answered the various questions asked in the course of it. Encourage them to talk as Bartimaeus. What is the relationship between Jesus' kind of healing by faith and the medical skills of today?

Finally, point out that cataracts, one of the commonest causes of blindness, can be cured by a simple 20-minute operation. Between 17-20 million people in developing countries suffer from cataract blindness.

If the group found the exercise helpful, try doing the same thing another time with another gospel healing story - for example, the cure of the paralytic (Mark 2:1-12) or the woman with the haemorrhage (Mark 5:25-34).