

# Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

## Close Encounters - Part 4

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### Introduction

Throughout the New Testament Scriptures, we see accounts of Jesus healing all types of diseases; severe pain; demon possessed; seizures; the paralysed; and he healed them all (Mt 4:24). Jesus later sends out 72 disciples telling them to do what they have seen him do. When they returned, they had stories of the miraculous being done through them, in Jesus' name (Lk10:17). For many people who call themselves Christian (or Followers of Christ), believing that a miracle will actually happen when they pray, is a bridge too far for their faith level. Yet there are many scriptures that teach us to pray the prayer of faith. It is worth noting that, whilst there are many promises that we can claim for ourselves as 'born again - children of God', most of the miracles spoken of in the Gospels occurred during the spreading of the Gospel, that is whilst telling people about Jesus.

### Introductory discussion

Have 2-3 people in the group share a time when they witnessed a miraculous answer to prayer.

**Read:** Luke 13:10-17

### Discuss:

1. This event takes place in a synagogue on a Sabbath. Despite the evidence of an obvious miracle, the leaders of the synagogue are focussed on the Law of Moses, which to some extent had been fashioned into rules of bondage. Discuss the bondage of the woman (spirit of infirmity) compared with the bondage of the synagogue leader (religious spirit/attitude)?

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2. Jesus was in the room that day; the Lord of the Sabbath (Mt 12:8), demonstrating the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mk 2:27). What, therefore, is the significance of Jesus referring to the woman as 'daughter of Abraham'? Is it possible for us to have: unwritten rules; opinions; perceptions; and preconceived ideas, that prevent us receiving healing (spiritual and physical) and praying for others to receive healing also?
3. It has been said that unbelief is not the absence of faith, it is the presence of unbelief. Consider this in the context of the Parable of the Sower Mt 13:3-9. Everything that prevents the seed from taking root can be viewed as a form of unbelief. The effectiveness of the seed is never in question, it's what we do with it. So, what can we do to remove unbelief?
4. Unbelief can be as spiritually crippling as that experienced by the daughter of Abraham and the synagogue leader in Lk 13:10-17. The bent over woman could not do what she was born to do, and the spiritual leader could not do what he was called to do. We are 'born (again) and called to 'STAND' . . . Read Eph 6:11-13 (14-18 for further discussion). What does, 'Standing' in this passage mean to you?
5. Imagine for a moment you had no limit to your faith in God; you had overcome all unbelief and your relationship with Jesus was unshakable. What could you imagine yourself doing for the kingdom of God with your time left on Earth?

### **Respond**

Could you dare to believe that what you imagined was actually possible? So much of what we are called to do involves other people which is the heart of God.

Loving God and loving people is how we can fulfil that which is precious to God. Write down a concrete first step towards what you imagined in the exercise above, in daring to believe and make a commitment this week to do this step.