

# ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

HOW DID JESUS MINISTER TO INDIVIDUALS?

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM JESUS FOR OUR OWN  
MINISTRY TO OTHERS?



## PART 2

DIOCESE OF BUNBURY

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## Introduction

These studies are designed to follow on from the series entitled “Encounters with Jesus in the Gospel of John” which explores how Jesus ministered to individual people in life changing ways. The aim of those notes is to learn

- how we can receive ministry from Jesus
- how Jesus may want to use us to minister to others.

However, it is very easy for us to focus on the theory and not the practice. This 4-week series focuses on how we can practice giving and receiving ministry. It will require commitment to doing some ‘homework’ as this is where most of the real practice happens – i.e. in our everyday lives. It therefore requires intentionality on our part to make time for the practice – not just over the next four weeks but in our daily lives going forward. The goal is to turn new practices into new habits.

These studies can be done by individuals or groups, although it’s recommended to work through them with at least one other person for mutual encouragement and support. As we learned in the first set of studies, it is important to receive as well as to give ministry.

Pages 3-5 contain charts summarising some of the learning from Encounters with Jesus Part 1. These charts are not comprehensive as each encounter was unique. However, they pick up on common threads which can be helpful to us in our understanding of Jesus’ ministry.

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## How did Jesus Minister to Individuals in the Gospel of John?

### Summary Chart 1

What gifts did each person receive from Jesus?

Bible Reference	Individual	Time	Hospitality	Practical Service	Word of Knowledge (present or past tense)	Prophetic Word about themselves (future tense)	Miracle (non-healing)	Physical Healing	Removal of Shame	Teaching about himself/the Kingdom
John 1:29-50	Andrew and friend	X	X							
	Peter	X				X				
	Nathanael	X			X	X				X
John 2: 1-11	The Wedding Hosts			X			X		X	
John 3 :1-21	Nicodemus	X								X
John 4 :1-42	The Samaritan Woman	X			X				X	X
John 5:1-15	The Man at the Pool	X						X		X
John 9: 1-41	The Blind Man	X			X			X	X	X
John 11:1-45	Lazarus						X			
	Martha	X					X			X
	Mary	X					X			
John 13:1-17	Peter	X	X	X						X
John 20 :24-30	Thomas	X			X					X
John 21:1-25	Peter	X	X		X	X	X		X	X

## How did Jesus Minister to Individuals in the Gospel of John?

### Summary Chart 2

#### How did Jesus Minister?

Bible Reference	Individual	Jesus took the Initiative	The person approached Jesus	A third party initiated	Used what was readily available	Gave the person something to do	In particular, used the Spiritual Gifts of
John 1:29-50	Andrew and friend		X		His home	"Come and you will see"	Wisdom
	Peter			X			Prophecy
	Nathanael		X				Word of Knowledge, Prophecy
John 2: 1-11	The Wedding Hosts/servants			X	Stone jars Water	"Fill the jars with water"	Faith, Word of Knowledge, Miracles
John 3 :1-21	Nicodemus		X		The wind, light	"You must be born again"	Wisdom, Prophecy
John 4 :1-42	The Samaritan Woman	X			The Well	"Please give me a drink"	Words of Knowledge, Faith, Wisdom
John 5:1-15	The Man at the Pool	X (v6) X (v14)			A Mat	"Pick up your mat and walk"	Word of Knowledge, Healing
John 9: 1-41	The Blind Man	X (v35)		X (v1)	Mud and saliva	"Go and wash"	Word of Knowledge, Prophecy,
John 11:1-45	Lazarus			X		"Lazarus come out!"	Word of Knowledge, Prophecy, Miracles, Faith
	Martha		X (v2) X (v20)			Asks "Do you believe this?"	Wisdom, Prophecy, Miracles
	Mary	X (v28)	X (v2)			Asks Mary to come to him	Wisdom. Miracles

## How did Jesus Minister to Individuals in the Gospel of John?

### Summary Chart 2 Continued

#### How did Jesus Minister?

Bible Reference	Individual	Jesus took the Initiative	The person approached Jesus	A third party initiated	Used what was readily available	Gave the person something to do	In particular, used the Spiritual Gifts of
John 13:1-17	Peter	X			Water, towel and bowl	Accept the foot washing; follow Jesus' example	Wisdom, Prophecy
John 20 :24-30	Thomas	X			His wounds	"Put your hand in my side. Stop doubting and believe"	Word of Knowledge, Wisdom
John 21:1-25	Peter	X			Fish, a fire, bread	"Throw your net on the right side . . ." Bring some of the fish you have caught Asked "Do you love me?"	Word of Knowledge, Prophecy, Miracles, Wisdom

## Week 1 – What do you want from Jesus?

In the Gospel of John Chapter 1 v 38 Jesus asks John and his companion, “What do you want?” They answered, “Teacher, where are you staying?” Jesus invited them to come with him and see. He also spent the day with them.

As we have learned, Jesus ministered to different people in different ways. Each person’s story is unique, yet some similar themes emerge.

### CONSIDER/DISCUSS

**If you are in a group setting, you may like to take a few minutes to ponder the question below silently before discussing together**

1. Study the summary charts on p3-5. Does anything from each chart stand out to you particularly? If so, why?

In many of Jesus’ encounters with individuals he asked the person to do something in order to receive from him. In the story told above, John and his companions had to follow Jesus to see where he was staying. At this point in the story Jesus was a complete stranger and John and his friend had to exercise a degree of trust in following Jesus. Jesus often used ordinary, every day things, which were close at hand, to achieve his work. In almost every instance, Jesus used his encounters with people to teach them more about himself, themselves and/or his Kingdom.

2. **Get into pairs and discuss your answers to the following questions. Again, you may wish to ponder them silently for a few minutes first.**
  - a. If Jesus stood in front of you right now and asked you “What do you want from me today?” what would you ask for and why?
  - b. How far do you trust Jesus to give you what you ask for?
  - c. Jesus may ask *you* to do something in order to receive what you want from him. Are you ready to take a step of faith in order to receive what you want?
  - d. Jesus often taught the individual something important about himself, themselves or his kingdom during their encounters. Are you open to learn something new from a personal encounter with Jesus?
  - e. The answer to your request may be closer than you think. Are you willing to ask the Lord if there is someone or something close to hand that he wants to use in meeting your request?

## PUT IT INTO PRACTICE: YOUR OWN ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS

- Find a comfortable space to pray as individuals. Play some quiet music in the background, unless this is distracting for anyone. Set aside a specific amount of time for personal prayer. 10-15 minutes should be sufficient if you are in a group, If you are alone you can set your own time frame.
- First, settle yourself to pray. Relax your muscles and pay attention to your breathing.
- Thank Jesus that he is here with you and he is listening to you.
- Ask Jesus for what you want to receive from him.
- Take time to listen to the voice of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. You may 'hear' pictures, Bible verses, words or sensations in your body, such as goose bumps. Or you may 'hear' nothing at all at this point. Maintain an attitude of openness to the Holy Spirit's work in you.
- If you do 'hear' something, talk to Jesus about it. You may wish to ask for more clarity or express your response.
- You may wish to write down anything you want to remember from this encounter with Jesus(use the space on the bottom of the page).

### Get back together in your pairs.

- Share what you experienced in your encounter with Jesus.
- Pray a blessing on one another. You may wish to practice listening to Jesus for each other. If you have been given something to do in faith to receive the answer to your request, pray for the courage and tenacity to follow through. End your prayers with thanks to Jesus for his love.

## HOMEWORK

**Every day this week, continue to talk to Jesus about what you have asked for.**

- If you have already received it, pray with thanks daily.
- If you haven't received it, continue to ask Jesus for it. Also ask Jesus if there is something he wants you to do to co-operate with his work in your life.
- You may also like to pray for the person you were paired with every day this week too. Ask the Lord if there is some way he would like you to minister to that person this week.
- If you keep a spiritual journal, keep a record of your prayer, what you may have to do or have done to co-operate with Jesus, any answers you receive or anything your are learning.

*Notes*

## Week 2 – Divine Encounters

‘Divine Encounter’ or ‘Divine Appointment’, is a term used for encounters which the Lord has engineered for his purposes. It is an event that happens here on earth but is planned in heaven.

1. Look again at the summary charts of on p3 and 4. Which of the encounters would you describe as ‘Divine Encounters’? In other words, it’s not a coincidence that Jesus met and ministered to these people. How can you tell?
2. Can you think of a time when you had an encounter with Jesus that had a significant impact on you? (Maybe even last week!) Share your stories. If you are in a large group, break into pairs or threes.
3. Can you think of a time when you were part of a divine encounter with another person? In other words, the Lord engineered for you to meet someone particular for a particular reason?<sup>1</sup>
4. Were the encounters you have described a result of prayer and listening or were they unexpected surprises? How does prayer and listening contribute to divine encounters?
5. Do you think divine encounters are something that every Christian should be experiencing regularly? Why or why not?
6. Would you like to participate in more divine encounters and if so, how could that happen?

### PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

- Take some time to pray silently. (About 5 minutes should be sufficient time)
- Ask the Lord to put on your heart anyone he wants you to connect with for his purposes this week.
- Ask him if there is anything he wants you to do for or to say to that person.
- Write down anything you hear or sense in the space below.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes we can be completely unaware of our part in a divine encounter. The person we have blessed knows that God has used you as an answer to prayer, but unless they tell us, we don’t always know it



## In pairs

Share anything you wish from your prayer time (respecting privacy and confidentiality). Sometimes talking it over with another trusted person can help us to discern whether or not we have heard God. Anything we feel prompted to do or say should reflect Jesus' ministry to individuals – offering grace, patience, love, forgiveness, healing etc and respecting the person's dignity.

## HOMEWORK

- Reach out to the person that the Lord put on your heart this week. Do or say whatever you feel the Lord has asked of you.
- You may or may not see a direct response from the person. However, do not lose heart if it's not immediately apparent. We don't always see the bigger picture and need to trust that the Lord is working his purposes out.<sup>2</sup>
- Be open to the possibility that the Lord might use divine encounters to bless you this week and in answer to your own prayers.
- If you keep a spiritual journal, make a note of what you did/said and what happened. Later on you may have more understanding of what God is doing and it might help to look back at this event.



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<sup>2</sup>“ I {Paul} planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow”.(1 Corinthians 3v6)

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” (Galatians 6v9)

“So is my word that goes out from my{God's} mouth: It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55v11)

## Week 3 – Listening to the Shepherd’s Voice

If you have taken part in Weeks 1 and 2 of this study, you will have already been practicing listening to Jesus, ‘The Good Shepherd’. This study is designed to help us grow in this practice of listening.

### Read John Chapter 10 v 1-18

This passage of scripture is very deep and rich in meaning. It resonates with Psalm 23 and many other Old Testament references to the Lord acting as a good shepherd to his people. However, for the purposes of this study we will focus on the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep.

#### 1. Look at the chart below and discuss the questions below in small groups.

What the Shepherd Does	What the Sheep Do
He calls his own sheep by name (v3)	Listen to his voice (v2)
Leads the sheep out (v3)	Follow the shepherd (v4)
Goes ahead of the sheep (v4)	Know the shepherd’s voice (v4)
Saves the sheep (v9)	Are saved (v9)
Gives the sheep life in all its fulness (v10)	Find pasture (v9)
Knows his sheep (v14)	Know the shepherd (v14)
Goes out to bring in other sheep who are not yet in the fold (v16)	Belong to the flock (16)
Lays down his life for the sheep of his own accord (v15 and v 18)	
Knows the Father and is known by the Father (v18)	
Has authority from the Father (v18)	
Obeys the Father (v18)	

- What stands out for you particularly?
- What do you find reassuring about this Shepherd/Sheep relationship?
- Why do you think Jesus emphasises that the sheep know his voice, listen to him and follow him?
- How easy do you find it to recognise the Shepherd’s voice, listen to it and follow it?
- What challenges are there for you in this?

#### 2. Learning from Jesus

Jesus practiced listening too. In John 5 v 19-20 Jesus says, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, for whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does”.

There are several references in the gospels about Jesus taking time out to pray to the Father. Read the selected scripture passages below and try to complete the chart. You may like to share the passages out and report back to the whole group.

**What do these passages teach us about . . .**

	<b>When Jesus prayed</b>	<b>How he prayed</b>	<b>Where he prayed</b>	<b>How his actions were informed by listening prayer</b>
Mark 1 v 32-39				
Luke 6 v 12-16				
Luke 9 v 1-4				
Matthew 26 v 36-46				

f) What can you learn from Jesus' example in these passages?

**3. PUT IT INTO PRACTICE**

- Take some time to pray silently as individuals. (About 5 minutes should be sufficient time)
- Begin by praying the words of Psalm 139 v 1-3 (see below)
- Ask the Lord to show you how you can make time in your life for more listening prayer. Ask about specific places and times.
- Write down anything you hear Jesus saying to you.
- Ask the Lord for his grace to follow through

*1You have looked deep into my heart, LORD,  
and you know all about me.*

*2You know when I am resting or when I am working,  
and from heaven you discover my thoughts.*

*3You notice everything I do and everywhere I go.*

(Psalm 139 Contemporary English Version)

**Homework**

- Take time this week for listening prayer, based on what you heard in the prayer time above. Act on what you hear and journal your experiences.

## Week 4 – New Practices, New Habits

### John 13 v 16-17

*After Jesus washed the disciples' feet at the last supper, he said, "I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them".*

### James 1 v 22-23

*"Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."*

The purposes of these studies, Part 1 and Part 2, has been to learn how to give and receive ministry like Jesus.

We have seen that Jesus served by giving people his time, removing their shame and teaching them about themselves, himself and his Kingdom. He healed them and touched them in life changing ways. He calls us to do the same.

Jesus listened intently to the Father and was obedient to what the Father asked him to do. This led to 'divine appointments' which changed people's lives. Jesus wants those divine appointments with you and he wants to use you in divine appointments with others.

So far we have just dipped our toes in the water. Some of us have begun some new practices. The question is ***how can these new practices become new habits?***

1. Discuss in pairs or small groups: what new practices you tried or developed since starting the 'Encounters with Jesus' series?
2. What has been the impact of these new or deeper practices?
3. Is there anything you want to continue or go deeper with?
4. How can you do that?

### How can the life and structure of the Church Family help?

5. Which group, service teams or relationships are you connected to in your church or organisation? How can you continue to practice what you are learning in these contexts?
6. Are there any other ministries you would like to take part in? How could you develop what you are learning through that particular ministry?

### What about outside the Church?

7. Which individual people can you minister to more specifically through listening prayer? eg, family, colleagues, friends . . .
8. How can you make a habit of ministering to these people like Jesus did?

## PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

As a group take time to worship the Lord together, thanking Him for his love and ministry to you and for the ministry that you share together. Commit your lives afresh to the Lord and ask for his grace to keep receiving the ministry he wants to give you and grace to be a servant he can use in his ministry to others.

## HOMEWORK

- Look again at your answers to questions 1-8 above.
- Ask the Lord to show you your next steps.
- Commit to follow through.

*Notes*