

## LONDON MISSION (SOUTH EAST)

### **'Six days a week ...' in the Deptford Mission**



The wonderfully simple story provided by the London Mission South East Circuit is the diary of a typical week in the Deptford Mission. It offers an example of so much of what is best in Methodist life in London today and provides a starting point for reflection on the life of your own church.

*'We welcome visitors to see us at work six days a week, we're relaxing on Saturdays!*

*Let's journey through the week.*

**Monday:** *the Well shop opens with bargains galore for everyone. Doors open for customers every weekday and alternate Saturdays. You can be sure of a warm welcome. Monday Club is here in the evening to enjoy a cup of tea, shopping, games, art and craft.*

**Tuesday:** *is the first of three days when we offer Day Centre friendship and meals to a group of elderly people. Members are transported by our own minibus to enjoy a day with friends.*

**Wednesday:** *our Alpha evening.*

**Thursday:** *Bible Study*

**Friday:** *starts with 'Carers and Toddlers' in conjunction with Sure Start. Youth Club fills the evening.*

**Sunday** *morning offers lively worship for all ages.*

*All these activities involve the use of a wide range of volunteers from the community. Our lay worker visits in our local Primary School and in Greenwich University.*

*We are in the process of redecorating second floor vacant rooms with the help of Community Service clients and have already let space to Bereavement Counselling and AIDS charities. In the pipeline are plans for a drugs charity and a head injuries charity to come on board. Our first floor space is let to two art groups who work with children both in schools and on the premises. We aim to reach into the community around us and being situated on a prominent crossroads we often have callers in need of food, friendship or help.*

*Prospective redevelopment in Deptford looks like offering us further opportunities to be a welcoming neighbourhood church. Do come and visit us one day!*

QUESTIONS:

- What is your reaction to this weekly timetable? What does it show about the character of the church community?
- Draw up a list of the activities around your own church building. How does the church community relate to each of them? What sort of support might they value? How might you do more to draw users into the life of your church community?
- With Alpha and Bible study as well as the others activities there is a clear balance between community and spiritual use. In your opinion how important is it to get that balance? How well does your church do in that respect? Who would you suggest has the responsibility in the church for ensuring a good balance?
- In your own local communities which institutions do you think might value visits, and what sorts of visit are likely to be most helpful? What organizations that your church is in touch with might value more support from the church, and what sort of support might be most helpful?
- How do you think the worship in your church can be made even more lively for all ages?
- How welcoming do you think your church is to those who call 'in need of food, friendship or help'?

**Bible Study:** 'Life in all its fullness...' is the passage that represents the ethos of the Deptford Mission. John 10:1 – 10

This is part of a 'meditation' that Jesus shares with people on the idea of the good shepherd.

- What examples do you have of people, including yourself, who have experienced a greater sense of 'life in all its fullness'? How would you describe to a friend what life in all its fullness means to you? How does your faith contribute to that sense?
- The many mentions of thieves evoke a strong sense of the negatives at work in life. In your opinion what are the negatives that today most destroy and devalue life? It is easy to make a general list, but it may be more helpful to think individually about the life-destroying negatives in your own life or your closest family or friends. Make a list of one or two of them on a piece of paper. If you feel comfortable doing so you might like to share them with the group. However you might like to keep them to yourself to offer silently in prayer at the end of the meeting.

- In this passage, Jesus speaks about the stranger. Often in the Gospels a stranger is a positive challenge to be welcomed. Here the stranger seems to be a threat. What is your experience of strangers?
- How would you explain to someone what it means to hear Jesus' voice and how we can tell who is calling?