

Short Talk

(SHT136)

**Who does God want
to encourage
through you?**

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SHORT TALK: “Who does God want to encourage through you?”

Aim of Short talk: To challenge people to listen to God’s voice and then act upon it so that God can use them to encourage others.

Use of Short talk: This is a short All Age talk picking out one issue from the Lectionary Gospel reading of the Sunday main service. The talk stands alone and assumes that the Gospel Bible reading may not yet have been read to the congregation. It could be used for example, for the whole congregation before the children go out to their age specific groups, leaving the adults with a full sermon later.

Main themes: Encouragement, Listening

Biblical references: Luke 2:22-40

Lectionary: Year C – The Fifth Sunday before Lent

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I need 3 people to come and help me today; both adults and children. *(Receive your 3 volunteers and stand them in a line facing the congregation)*

As you look in front of you, I wonder what you see.

- Let’s find out.

(Ask each of your 3 volunteers in turn) What do you see.....can you name one thing?

- Thank you very much for sharing with us what you have seen. *(Send the volunteers back)*
- It is interesting isn’t it that we can all look at the same scene and see different things?

Now when we look at people, normally what we see is what is on the outside of them;

- the clothes that they are wearing,
- the colour of their hair and so on.

What is going on inside each person is much harder to spot.

- Only Father God can really see that.

He can see that there are some people here today who are having a tough time at school, college, work or at home.

- He can see that there are people here who are lonely or sad or who are struggling to believe.

Now Father God knows that during the tough times of life we all need to hear a word of encouragement to help us keep going.

- What is amazing is that He often chooses ordinary people like you and me to speak His words of encouragement to the people who need to hear it.

Over 2000 years ago a young couple needing encouragement went to the temple in Jerusalem.

- Their names were Mary and Joseph and 40 days earlier Mary had given birth to baby Jesus.

Now God had given Mary and Joseph the incredible job of bringing up the Messiah.

- And so, doing their best to keep God's law, Mary and Joseph went to the Temple to present Jesus, as the law required.

Father God knew what lay ahead for Mary and Joseph.

- He knew they were going to have some tough times including shortly being refugees in Egypt, and so He wanted to encourage them.

When Mary and Joseph arrived in the temple courts there would have been many people there.

- I wonder how many people saw them;
- a young couple carrying a baby.

But two older people, who listened to God's voice speaking through the Holy Spirit, saw Mary and Joseph through God's eyes and went to speak to them.

- Their names were Simeon and Anna.

Simeon spoke words of encouragement to Mary and Joseph.

- As he held baby Jesus he praised God saying: "*my eyes have seen your salvation*" (Luke 2:30)
- In other words Simeon was saying that God had shown Him that Jesus was the promised Saviour, as the angels had told the shepherds.

Anna also encouraged Mary and Joseph by speaking about Jesus as The One who would bring freedom to Israel.

I am sure that when Mary and Joseph left the temple they were really strengthened by these words, so that they could face the trials ahead as they parented Jesus.

Father God sees those of us today who need to hear a word of encouragement, and as I said earlier He often chooses you and me to be His mouthpiece and speak His words.

- The question is: "Are we listening to Father God so that we can see what He sees?"
- Are we listening to the little prompt that comes into our head to go and speak to somebody?

At the end of the service today why don't we take a moment to be silent and to ask Father God to show us somebody whom we could encourage?

- If a name comes to us, let's be willing to go and have a chat with that person after the service.
- You never know, your words may be just the encouragement that Father God wants to give them.