

A reflection from Dr Ifeolu Akintunde, 16th October 2022



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**Sight Loss Sunday**

Equipping churches to enable blind and partially sighted people  
to contribute to church life..



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**Today is Sight Loss Sunday, and I was just wondering, what would it be like if everybody was equally involved in church, regardless of sight loss, or in fact any other disability.**

To answer that question, I have to look to what Jesus did and what Jesus said. And as I do that, I'm hoping that all of you, especially in church, will remember and act like Jesus would. So, two passages in the Gospel of John came to mind. The first was when Jesus approached a paralyzed man in a pool. Now, there were many people who were in that pool and had not received their healing, but he walked up to this individual and he said, "Why are you not healed?" The man said, "Well, the problem is there is an angel who stirs the water, and when that happens I need someone to get me there. And if no one gets me there, another person gets healed."

So what did Jesus do? Jesus healed him. And every time I think of that passage, I think of the communication between Jesus and this young person. He said to him, "I want to know what you need." That is the first question that I think we should ask anyone who comes to church,

"What do you need to be a full and active member of church?" But in John 9, I come to a passage very specifically about a blind person, and here the conversation is between Jesus and his disciples before he actually meets the blind person. They ask, "Is it because of the sin of the father or the mother that this person is blind?" Jesus said, "No, it is so that the works of God may manifest in his life."

And every time I think of myself, I ask myself the question, "Are God's works manifested in my life?" And I say to myself, "The more God's works are made manifest in my life, the less disabled I am." It is interesting actually that Jesus did heal this blind person, but in doing so, he made a very important point to me, that it wasn't my blindness that defined my disability. The same question is true when I go to church. It is not my blindness that defines my disability. In fact, the church is described as the body of Christ, a body that has many parts, and each part plays its part. Each part of the body is active. If it is not active, if it's not doing its individual thing with its individual abilities, then the body is actually disabled. So if you have a blind person who cannot fully participate in church life, then the entire church is missing out, in fact, on the gifts and the things that that person with sight loss can bring to church.

So, I'd encourage everyone to look at people with sight loss as people who can make a wonderful contribution to the life of the church. To ask the question, "What can I do to make that happen?"



And to remove from themselves the presumption that this person is blind because of something that may be in their past. The more important thing isn't what was in the past, but the future that God has planned for us, because after all, we're all in his image, and he says, "I know the plans I have for you, plans for your good, plans to prosper." Thank you very much.

