

Session 2: Perseverance

Being faithful in
the long-term



BROUGHT TO YOU BY **CUF**⁺

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Key takeaways:

- The church is called to persevere in our communities; continuing to serve God faithfully.
- We are called to invest in and be part of our communities; to share God's love afresh in this place in this generation.



Feedback from previous session [5 minutes]

If you did the optional next step from the previous session, take a few minutes to share anything you learned or experienced.



Opening question [5 minutes]

What is one of the longest running institutions/organisations in your local area?
How has it managed to persevere for so long?



Read aloud [2 minutes]

God had saved his people from slavery in Egypt and brought them to a land of freedom and blessing. Sadly, over multiple generations God's people became ungrateful, rejected his goodness, started to worship other gods, and began to oppress the poor and innocent.

As a consequence, God allowed his people to be defeated by the Babylonian Empire and taken to exile in Babylon for seventy years. While the Israelites were living in exile, God sent them a surprising message through his prophet Jeremiah.

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 'Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.'

(Jeremiah 29:4-7)

It takes professional builders weeks to build houses. It takes farmers months to grow food so we can eat it. To marry and have children is a lifelong investment. Good things take time.

When the Israelites were taken into exile in Babylon, they felt down and out. Some might have wanted to give up on life altogether. Maybe others thought they could wait it out until God rescued them. Still others might have thought about starting a violent revolution. Perhaps the last thing they would have thought of was settling down and investing in the place God had brought them.

But this is what God called them to. He said they were there for a reason, that God had good plans for them, and that they should seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which he had carried them.

God called his people in exile to commit time and energy to their communities – not to be ‘quick fixers’ but to be quietly faithful. So he calls us now to persevere where he has placed us – to invest over multiple generations, even when it’s hard.



Discuss
[15 minutes]

- **How do you think the Israelites might have felt when God told them to seek the prosperity of Babylon?**
- **Why do you think God says to the Israelites that if Babylon (their enemy) prospers, they will prosper too?**
- **God calls his people to persevere in a hard place. Where do you find it hard to persevere in your community?**
- **What are you praying for consistently in your community?**



Watch film
[5 minutes]



Group activity
[35 minutes]

Think of two significant local groups or organisations in your area. These could be a school, pub, garden club, community centre, or library, for example. If you’ve done the ‘presence’ session, you may already have a list to choose from. For each of these groups/ organisations, work through the table on the next page together.

[Note: you might want to break into smaller groups, each taking one organisation, and then reflect back to the bigger group. Whether you are doing this online or in-person, pick somebody to take notes.]

[Table on the next page]



Group activity
[35 minutes]

<p>Name of group/organisation (e.g. Parish Primary School)</p>		
<p>Whom does it serve and how?</p>		
<p>How long has it been around for?</p>		
<p>How has your church been involved with it over the years?</p>		
<p>In what way is it thriving and in what way is it struggling?</p>		
<p>How could your church celebrate, learn from, or support it?</p>		



Pray
[10 minutes]

Thank God for his faithfulness to his people over multiple generations, and that he perseveres when we often look for quick fixes. Pray that God would sustain you over many generations in your community.



Feedback

We would love to hear your feedback on the Growing Good Toolkit and how we can make it better. After you have used the material, please share your thoughts with us in this short survey.

[Provide feedback](#)



After the session [Optional]

Think of a person who has been part of your congregation or community for a very long time. Have a chat with them about the community, how things have changed and what has lasted. Ask them to share their wisdom on how to persevere. At the next session, share something with the group about what you learned.

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