

## Leader's Guide

### Chapter 9 Disabled God Chapter 10 Disabled Church

### The Sixth Week of Lent

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#### Assignments for Week 6:

- Read Chapter 9 Disabled God from My Body is Not a Prayer Request
- Read Chapter 10 Disabled Church from My Body is Not a Prayer Request

#### Scripture Readings:

**Psalm 139**

**Luke 14: 12-14**

**2 Samuel 9:1-13 David and Mephibosheth**

**Video: – To Be Determined**

#### Discussion Questions for Chapter 9 Disabled God:

1. One page 148, Amy Kenny states that nondisabled people like to comfort themselves with the idea that disability does not exist in heaven. What ableist attitudes can be displayed with this type of thinking?
  - The lame will walk.
  - You can run in heaven.
  - No wheelchairs in heaven.
  - The blind will see.
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2. Amy Kenny gave a few examples of how she thought of God as disabled: a) God with a massive mobility device and b) God using a sip and puff device to drive a wheelchair. Do you think this is insulting to our God? Why or Why not?
  - Amy states that what is insulting is when we don't see disabled people as bearing the image of God.
  - Or that we can only see heaven without disabled people.
  - Amy is disabled and she owns it.
  - Sometimes people with an acquired disability resent becoming disabled (loss of mobility; lack of vision; lack of hearing etc.).
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3. On page 156, Amy Kenny says that we should invite disability to teach us something instead of assuming nondisabled bodies are perfect and complete. Disability is a way of understanding the world by disrupting categories of normalcy. It is a way of discovering the beautiful biodiversity that God has

woven throughout the tapestry of creation. If we thought of disability in this way, we would not be bothered that God is described as disabled throughout the Bible. List several of the examples that Amy Kenny shares that display God as disabled in the Bible.

- God is described as deaf in many of the Psalms, when he doesn't hear the people's cries.
  - In Romans, Paul describes the way that the Spirit communicates for us when we don't know how to pray as "moans and groans". These may be compared to the communication skills of someone who is nonverbal or with intellectual or mental disabilities.
  - In Psalm 139, God is described as blind. David wonders if the darkness is not dark to God. When read from a disability-theology perspective, this Psalm takes on new meaning. Light and darkness are indistinguishable.
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4. Read Psalm 139 and discuss its meaning from a disability-theology perspective.
- You knit me together in my mother's womb.
  - I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
  - Even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.
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5. On page 167 and 168, Amy Kenny states that Jesus' power is in disability. Jesus on the cross is disabled. What does she mean by this?
- He was physically impaired while nailed to the cross and sweating blood.
  - By being crucified he bore the weight of social stigma which highlights the social model of disability.
  - Christ's disabled body is the source of our redemption.
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6. What does taking up a cross mean to you?
- According to Amy Kenny, Jesus shows us how to take up our cross as an ongoing struggle.
  - Kenny says it means following Jesus' example of self-emptying, and radically forgiving love for the sake of someone else. This is the profound power of our disabled God.
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### **Discussion Questions for Chapter 10 Disabled Church:**

1. On page 174, Amy Kenny says "Everyone loves disabled people until we stop being inspirational and start asking for our access needs to be met." "If you

are worried that spending money on a ramp or an elevator isn't worth it, you probably aren't as welcoming to disabled people as you think."

Do you ever find yourself putting money over people?

- If I am honest, I have.
- Instead of looking at the percentage of people in our church who are disabled versus able bodied, think about how many more people with disabilities might attend if we were handicapped accessible.
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2. On page 175, she goes on to say that in "The Charity Model", people with disabilities become objects of pity rather than people with their own gifts. Pity is a form of ableism because it dehumanizes the disabled person as an object of suffering, all the while masquerading as a caring voice of support. Pity reinforces the power structure. It suggests that you oversee the guest list when it comes to the Lord's Table. This is not the model that Jesus describes when instructing us on how the kingdom of God functions. Read **Luke 14: 12-14.**

What does Jesus' model for the Lord's Table look like?

- Invite the poor, the cripple the lame and the blind.
- Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God.
- Disabled people are mentioned at the great banquet not as a form of pity, but to show who God invites to the table.
- They are wanted, they are enough.
- Accommodation must be made.

### **3. Read 2 Samuel 9:1-13 David and Mephibosheth**

What was Mephibosheth's disability?

- Lame in both feet.
- A poor outcast as a result of being disabled.

What did David do?

- Invites him to his table.
- Welcomes him to share a meal.
- David offers financial and social support.
- Offers a way to heal his isolation and ostracization.

4. What can we do as a church to create a community for those with disabilities?

- Make sure we have appropriate accommodations.
- Learn about disabilities so that we can be more welcoming.
- Offer resources.
- Connect to various ministries.
- Be inclusive.

**Additional Activities:**

Review the Top Ten Disability Theologies on page 172 and share your thoughts on them.

Review the Top Ten Disability Dreams on page 184 and share your thoughts on them.

**Terms:****Closing Prayer**

Read the Benediction for Nondisabled and Disabled People on pages 185 and 187.