

## Branches Out – Connecting with our friends and our community.

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The desire to get reconnected to God and to each other in our fractured world is a deep one. Getting back to God is like an echo of home – if only we could get back! The great Good News of the Gospel is that there is a way back, and that God has made a way. 'Reconnected' can be a helpful word when we struggle to talk about what 'salvation' or 'redemption' might mean. 'Reconnectedness' is a *characteristic* of God's Kingdom.



### Discuss:

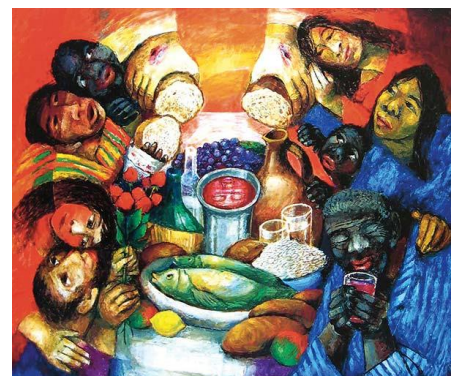
In our lives, and our society, where do we see broken connections, separation into groups, or a hunger to get reconnected? (With God, with others, with the planet?)

**Read:** Luke 19.1 – 10

We do not see the whole of Zacchaeus' story, but we do see the power of God to bring about change and justice, helping a person to become reconciled with his neighbour – and a society to move towards healing. We need this kind of transformation today, more than ever.

- Talk about Zacchaeus and his place in Jericho society. What sort of things did people say about him? How did they feel about him?
- What do you think made Zacchaeus decide to run on ahead and climb a tree when he heard that Jesus was passing through? Why didn't he just stay safely at home?

Jesus' strategy was not to engage Zacchaeus in argument, but to enter into table fellowship with him. He treated him as a fellow human being (verse 9) when everyone else made it very clear that he did not belong.



- Think about the power of reaching out in hospitality and helping people feel that they belong.
- Why is hospitality and welcome so powerful? Where do you see hospitality expressed at the moment? Where do you see it denied?

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In this story, Zacchaeus was shown that God had not given up on him. His response was to race home for a face to face encounter with Jesus. The nature of that encounter, what was said, we shall never know.

- Imagine that you have the unexpected arrival of Jesus of Nazareth as a guest in your own house. What do you think he will want to talk about with you? What will you say to Jesus?

The end of this story describes Zacchaeus' extravagant attempts to put right the injustices he has caused and to be reintegrated into his society. It's not the end of his story: it is a sign that something fundamental has changed.

To do

How can you be more present/connected to those around you this week? Take a moment of silence and write down what might come into mind.

Prayer

Holy Spirit come, fill our hearts and minds with the desires and plans of Jesus our Lord and Saviour.