

Enough

Preparation:

- *Print copies of Appendix B for two readers to use in the introduction*
- *Have ready a large sheet of paper, a marker pen, and a copy of the Bible*

What is the purpose of the economy?

10 minutes

At the end of Session 1, participants were invited to write down a short definition of what they think the purpose of the economy should be. If people have brought these, invite them to share them now.

Ask participants to highlight what they appreciate in others' definitions, and identify any common themes.

Keep hold of the definitions as we will revisit them in the last session.

Introduction

4 minutes

Explain that the theme of today's session is 'enough'. We will be looking at issues around poverty, wealth and hunger, and the role that the economy plays in them.

Have two readers alternate in reading out the statements in Appendix B.

We live in a world of plenty where many people do not have enough to live. Today we will be exploring why this matters, what God might have to say about it, and what we can do about it. We'll begin with looking at some Biblical perspectives.

Biblical perspectives

20 minutes

Read Exodus 16:13-16.

This recounts God's provision of manna as food for the Israelites when they were in the wilderness.

Discuss the following questions:

- What strikes you in this story?
- What does it say about what God wants for his people?
- Why do you think it is that the excess manna goes bad?
- Does this event bring to mind any other stories from the Bible?

Read Acts 4:32-25.

This describes how the early followers of Jesus shared a common life.

- What are the similarities with the story from Exodus?
- What are the differences?

Here we again see provisions being shared on the basis of need, meaning all had enough. But whereas the Israelites were dependent on God's provision each night, the apostles created structures and systems for sharing the wealth that people had, and ensuring all had enough.

Structures for sharing

15 minutes

On a large piece of paper, together make a list of ways in which we could structure or change things in today's society to ensure everyone has enough to live.

Some examples could include: increase minimum wage; use taxation to reduce inequality; increase benefit levels; grow the economy to create more jobs; provide everyone with a universal basic income; more charitable giving.

- Which of these do you think would be most effective in addressing poverty in the UK?
- What about when we think about tackling poverty globally?
- There are many things we can do to structure the UK and global economies to ensure we have enough. Why do you think these things do not happen at the moment?

Money is not enough

10 minutes

Read this reflection:

With money, we can buy
A bed, but no dreams;
Books, but not intelligence;
Food, but not appetite;
Adornments, but not beauty;
A house, but not a home;
Medicines, but not health;
Children, but not joy;
Entertainment, but not fun;
A crucifix, but not a Saviour;
a church, but not heaven.

(Seen on the wall of a restaurant in Guatemala. Source: Christian Aid)

Invite people to respond to this question:

- What is the opposite of poverty?

Round up by noting that in this session we have mainly focused on one meaning of 'enough' – ensuring people have sufficient to meet their needs. But another meaning of enough is to describe moderation and limits on excess. We'll look more closely at that topic in the next session.

Closing prayer

1 minute

Generous God

Thank you for your abundant good gifts.

Help us to see the world with your eyes
and imagine a future where none go hungry,
all who labour receive fair reward
and everyone has enough to live.

Give us the courage to question our assumptions
about how things have to be
and work towards a just economy
that enables the flourishing of all life.

Amen

Appendix B: Plenty and want

Reader 1

The Bible says: “The fields of the poor may produce abundant food...

Over the last 70 years, global agricultural productivity has quadrupled.¹

In one hour, the earth receives sufficient solar energy to power the world for one year.

During the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis years, 63 percent of all new global wealth went to the richest 1 percent, while 37 percent went to the rest of the world put together.⁴

One third of food produced is either lost or wasted.⁶

Reader 2

...but injustice sweeps it away” (Proverbs 13:23)

878 million people experienced chronic hunger last year – that’s 1 in 10 of the global population, and an increase of 18 per cent over pre-pandemic levels.²

More than a third of the world’s population does not have clean and safe energy for household cooking.³

In the UK, the average family on Universal Credit needed to find an additional £200 a month to cover their living costs this winter compared to last year.⁵

In the autumn of 2022, the Trussell Trust reported a 40% increase in people using its foodbanks. 1 in 5 were from households where someone was working.⁷

¹ Hannah Ritchie, Pablo Rosado and Max Roser (2023) “Agricultural Production”. Source: <https://ourworldindata.org/agricultural-production>

² World Health Organization. Source: <https://www.who.int/news/item/06-07-2022-un-report--global-hunger-numbers-rose-to-as-many-as-828-million-in-2021>

³ ODI. Source: <https://odi.org/en/about/our-work/climate-and-sustainability/faq-coal-and-energy-poverty/>

⁴ Oxfam. Source: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/richest-1-bag-nearly-twice-much-wealth-rest-world-put-together-over-past-two-years>

⁵ Professor Donald Hirsch, ‘Enough to get through the winter’, analysis published by the Joint Public Issues Team, 21 September 2022. Source: <https://jpit.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/September-2022-DH-Report.pdf>

⁶ World Bank. Source: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/overview>

⁷ Trussell Trust. Source: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/mid-year-stats/>