

Emergency response (stage 1 of disaster cycle)



Why use this Bible study?

This Bible study can help us understand the first stage of the disasters cycle, and the need for Christians to have awareness of vulnerability and need, and to respond with compassion and skill when disaster strikes.



Awareness and compassion lead to action

Read Acts 11:19-30. There was a severe famine throughout the Mediterranean region, particularly affecting Judea. A famine was predicted by prophetic message, and the church in Antioch decided to send assistance to the church in Judea. They decided to use the existing church structure as the mechanism for collecting money, transferring it and distributing it to those in need.



Key points

- God speaks through individuals to give wisdom and foresight; this can help to create awareness of the risks of disaster. In this instance, God spoke through the prophet Agabus.
- Awareness and compassion lead to action. When the Christians in Antioch heard of the disaster that was coming, they all contributed their skills, time and resources. They used the existing network of Christians and churches, and sent their gifts through Paul and Barnabas.



Questions for discussion

- In Antioch, a prophet warned about the coming disaster. How do we find out if a flood or drought is coming soon? What disasters happen in our area?
- What did the church decide to do in response to this news?

- The church in Antioch sent help 'for the believers' in Judea (verse 29). Is it right to give assistance only to Christians? In the present day, the Red Cross Code is widely followed in aid programmes. It says that help should be given to all people in need, without discrimination. Can you see any difficulties in following this code? How can the difficulties be overcome?
- Are there any indications at the moment that a disaster could happen soon – such as drought, flooding, earthquakes or civil conflict?
- Has your church responded to disasters in the past? How could you improve on what you did last time?
- Can you think of any ways your church could help people affected by disaster in other parts of your country?



Notes

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http://learn.tearfund.org/en/themes/disasters/disasters_and_the_local_church/