

Bible study: the real problem with homelessness

Topic: A Christian response to homelessness in Australia

Key verses: Luke 5:12-15, Psalm 82:3, 1 John 3:16-18

Question 1

- Warm up question: What do you think of when you hear the term 'homeless'?

Introduction

- Our nation has a major problem with homelessness. The latest Census reported there are 122,000 homeless people in Australia, of which 17,600 are children¹. Perhaps they're in a shelter, couch-surfing or sleeping rough on the street.
- Although they are the most visible, did you know that only 6% of Australia's homeless actually live on the street?²
- It's a big issue. And yet, while we might feel compassion for people who are homeless, many of us simply don't know how we can provide genuine assistance.

Question 2

- What has been your exposure to homelessness, either personally or through contact with another person? Why do you think some people feel helpless or even scared of people experiencing homelessness?

Question 3

- **READ: Luke 5:12-15** *While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, 'Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.'*

¹³ *Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' And immediately the leprosy left him.*

¹⁴ *Then Jesus ordered him, 'Don't tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.'*

¹⁵ *Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their illnesses.*

¹ ABS, (2021): Estimating homelessness: Census

² ABS, (2021): Estimating homelessness: Census

- Consider Jesus' response to the leper, an outcast in their society. Do you think there is a similar stigma attached to homelessness today?

Question 4

- **READ: Psalm 82:3** *Defend the weak and the fatherless, uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.*
- Who are the weak and fatherless, the poor and oppressed in Australia today?
- How does defending and upholding their cause look today?

Question 5

- **READ: 1 John 3:16-18** *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*
- What is the pity that John is talking about? Is it just feeling sorry for them or is it something more?
- How should we respond to the poor and needy in our society?

Discuss: Three ways you can help homeless people

1. **PRAY:** Pray for the homeless and for those working actively to help them. Pray for organisations such as Mission Australia that assisted 20,122 people in 2024-25 who were homeless or at risk of homelessness.³ Sign up to receive Mission Australia's prayer diary at missionaustralia.com.au/prayer
2. **VOLUNTEER:** There are many ways to help, from simply offering a smile and warm conversation to giving of your time and talents to bless others. You could volunteer at an op shop, get involved as a mentor to young people, help out in a soup kitchen or your church could serve alongside a Christian service organisation like Mission Australia. For ideas, go to missionaustralia.com.au/churches
3. **GIVE:** Give of your finances to support the work of God in this area. As Jesus said in **Matthew 25:35** *For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.*

³ Mission Australia Annual Report, (2025) www.missionaustralia.com.au/who-we-are/our-governance/annual-report/

This could be through your local church's ministries or you can donate to Mission Australia securely online at missionaustralia.com.au or by phoning 1800 88 88 68.

Know someone who needs help?

Contact your relevant state-based information and referral service directly:

NSW/ACT	Link2home	1800 152 152
NT	ShelterMe	www.shelterme.org.au
QLD	Homeless Hotline	1800 474 753
SA	Homeless Connect	1800 003 308
TAS	Housing Connect	1800 800 588
VIC	Crisis Accommodation Service	1800 825 955
WA	Crisis Care	1800 199 008

Mission Australia's services are available at missionaustralia.com.au/find-support.