

# Disability Justice in the Church:

A Second Hour Elective  
based on the book

“My Body is Not a Prayer Request”

By Dr Amy Kenny

# Remember:

- We come to this space with differing backgrounds and experiences.
- Humility, curiosity, and respect are important as we engage with and learn from one another.
- It's OK to ask questions!
- We'll attempt to elevate the voices of those who live with disability as much as possible.
- Each person's perspective is their own and is both valid and unique. The disability community is not monolithic.
- God is with us.

# Review:

## able·ism

/ˈæbəlɪzəm/ noun

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A system of assigning value to people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, productivity, desirability, intelligence, excellence, and fitness. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in eugenics, anti-Blackness, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism.

This systemic oppression leads to people and society determining people's value based on their culture, age, language, appearance, religion, birth or living place, "health/wellness", and/or their ability to satisfactorily re/produce, "excel" and "behave."

You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism.

working definition by @TalilaLewis, updated January 2022, developed in community with disabled Black/negatively racialized folk, especially @NotThreeFifths. Read more: [bit.ly/ableism2022](https://bit.ly/ableism2022)

# Learning the Terms:

## **Disability**

any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).

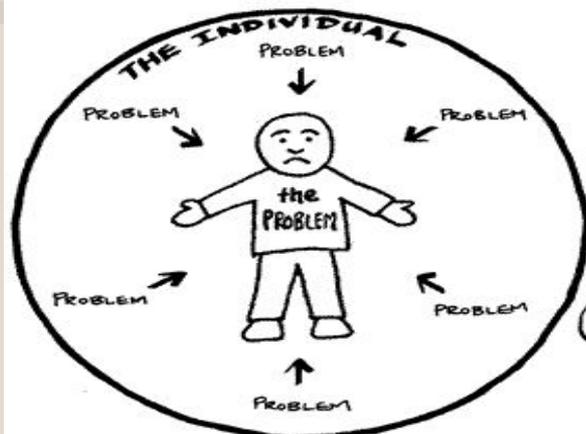
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# 3 Dimensions of Disability:

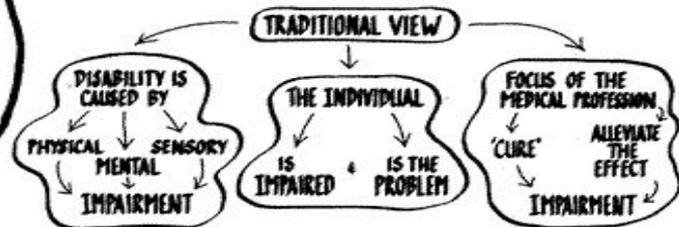
1. *Impairment* in a person's body structure or function, or mental functioning; examples of impairments include loss of a limb, loss of vision or memory loss.
2. *Activity limitation*, such as difficulty seeing, hearing, walking, or problem solving.
3. *Participation restrictions* in normal daily activities, such as working, engaging in social and recreational activities, and obtaining health care and preventive services.

Source: World Health Organization, [International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health \(ICF\)](#). Geneva: 2001, WHO.

# THE MEDICAL MODEL OF DISABILITY



IMPAIRMENTS AND CHRONIC ILLNESS  
OFTEN POSE REAL DIFFICULTIES BUT  
- THEY ARE NOT THE MAIN PROBLEMS



# THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

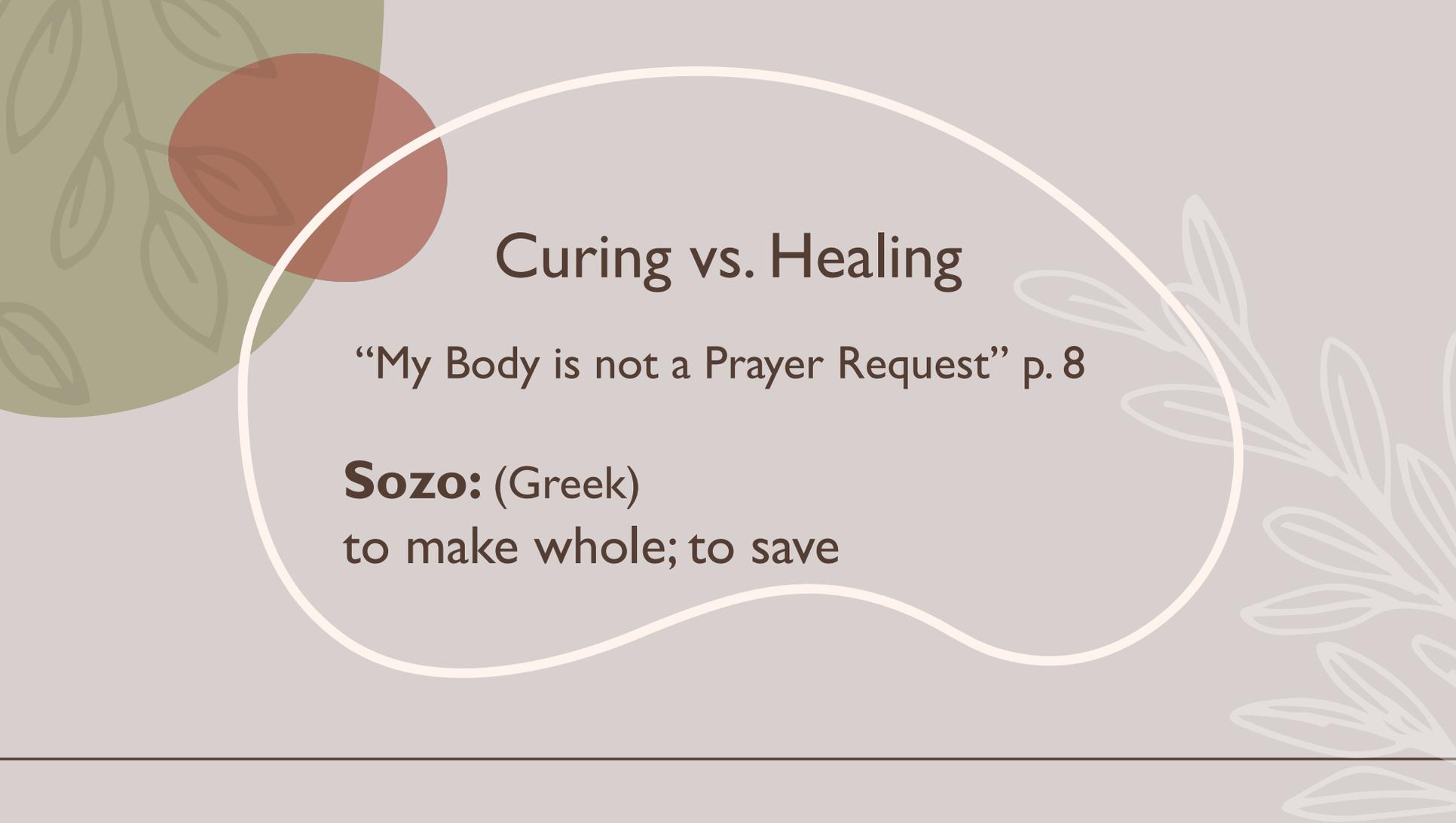


The



**Social Model**

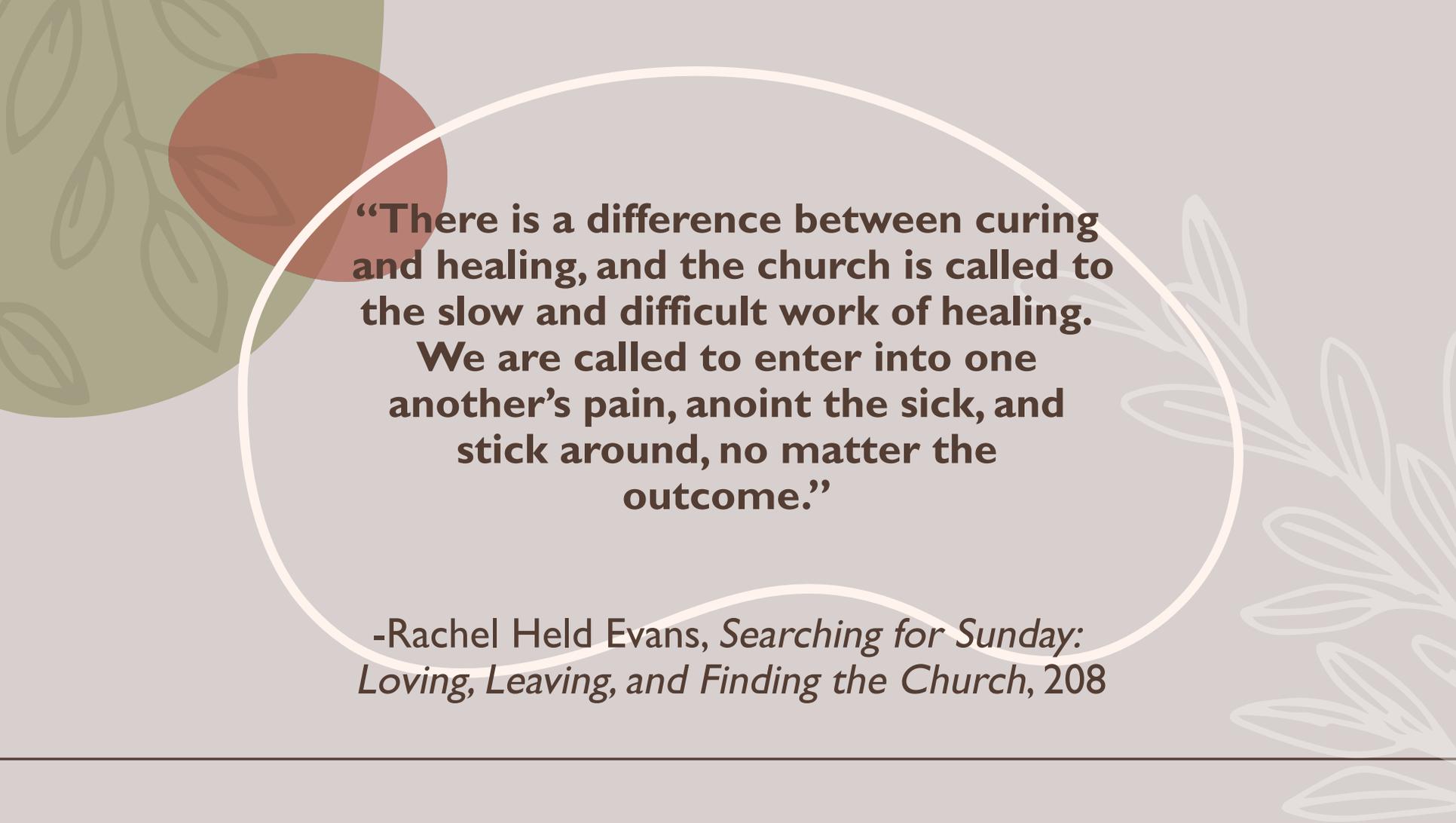
of Disability



# Curing vs. Healing

“My Body is not a Prayer Request” p. 8

**Sozo:** (Greek)  
to make whole; to save



**“There is a difference between curing  
and healing, and the church is called to  
the slow and difficult work of healing.**

**We are called to enter into one  
another’s pain, anoint the sick, and  
stick around, no matter the  
outcome.”**

-Rachel Held Evans, *Searching for Sunday:  
Loving, Leaving, and Finding the Church*, 208

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# Listening:

“My Body is Not a Prayer Request”

p. 60-62

**tov:** (Hebrew)

the goodness of the ties and relationships *between* things in creation

# Response:

## *Option 1:*

Take some time to imagine and dream about what it could look like to “co-flourish” at Salford.

Draw a picture or write down your thoughts.

## *Option 2:*

Do an inventory of Salford’s gathering space and etiquette toward disabled people. Is it accessible, including bathrooms, parking, and preaching spaces? Does the worship service allow for different physical and sensory needs (including the needs of those who are blind/low vision, d/Deaf, wheelchair users, and autistic)? Is the song choice, exegesis and theology inclusive to disabled people? Does your church encourage and mentor disabled people to lead?

The background features a light gray gradient. On the left, there is a large, solid reddish-brown organic shape. On the right, there is a large, solid olive-green organic shape. A white outline of a leafy branch is visible in the top left corner, overlapping the reddish-brown shape. The word "Discussion" is centered in a dark brown, sans-serif font.

# Discussion