

Prayer

1: Listening

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing & sharing together. If you want an ice-breaker, you could try this...

What do you like listening to? (could be music, sounds, radio, talking etc etc)

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God.

You could try this...

Read the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9ff or the version we use on Sunday). Then spend about 5 minutes in silence (perhaps with some quiet instrumental music). Deliberately ask God to speak to you. After at least 5 minutes, share anything that you feel that God has been saying.

WORD 1 Samuel 3

First: Without looking(!) try and re-tell the story of 1 Samuel 1 & 2 – about Hannah, which we've looked at in church over the last 2 weeks.

Discuss any particular things that have stood out from the story.

Read 1 Samuel 3

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?



Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!*)

- What does verse 1 tell us about the state of the Israelite nation at this time? How does it compare with today in our nation?
- Do you think God doesn't speak today or people don't hear or people don't listen? Why?
- Why did God choose Samuel? You may have several ideas/answers for this! Think of why God chose other characters in the Bible (eg. Moses, Joseph, Gideon, David, Peter, Paul, etc.)
- In what ways does God speak today? Which have you experienced?
- What do you think God is saying to this nation/community; his church; you as an individual?
- Samuel hears God speaking but does not realise it is Him! Have you ever experienced this? How did you respond?
- Samuel is learning to recognise God's voice. When do you find you are most likely to hear God? How could you hear God more in these times? How could you hear God more in your life?

WHAT NEXT?

With most of the home groups being re-organised, give thanks for your current group & also pray that the new ones will be a blessing to everyone.

Prayer

2: Saying Sorry

There was a one-off set of notes (Part 1) on Samuel. These 3 sets are designed to run with the start of the new Growth Groups.

WELCOME

If you are a newly formed group, you might use this section more often

Discuss: What has God done for you? Go round the group each sharing the first things that come to mind. (Be honest -this isn't a competition to sound most 'spiritual'!)

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God.

You could try this...

Put a large bowl of water in the middle of the room + towel.

With quiet music on, take time to think of things you've done wrong.

Read through Psalm 51:7-12. Give people time to wash their hands in the water as they ask God to forgive their sins. Read through the Psalm again.

WORD

Explain: David committed adultery with Bathsheba, had her husband Uriah killed and then married Bathsheba. The prophet Nathan then comes to David & confronts him with the truth, using a story. David admits his sin. God reduces his punishment. (2 Sam 11 & 12). David then writes Psalm 51.

Read Psalm 51

Growth Group Notes

Feb-March 2008



Discuss your initial reactions to the passage (**if you're a big group, you may like to do this in 3s or 4s**)

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!*)

- Why does David think he has primarily sinned against God (v1,4)? Is he right?
- Uriah is dead, so David cannot ask him for forgiveness. How do you think this affects the situation?
- v1-2: David admits he's sinned. Do you think God should forgive him?
- v3: David is constantly aware of his sin. How aware are people today of their sin? What about you?
- Which do you think is better: Someone who does 'small sins' and pretends they don't or someone who commits a serious crime and asks God for forgiveness?
- When you do things wrong to someone else, how do you feel about saying sorry to... a) God b) the person concerned?
- Does saying sorry form a regular part of your conversations with God? How easy/quickly do you do it?

WHAT NEXT?

Either as a whole group, or in 3s or 4s...

Share & then pray for...

- 1 Things that are personal for you (even if they seem relatively minor).
- 2 Things relating to people or situations known to you

Prayer

3: Praising God

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing & sharing together. If you want an ice-breaker, you could try this...

Each share: What's the best thing anyone has said/could say about you?

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God.

You could try this...

Try a traditional approach to the psalms. Each verse of Psalm 139 has two halves. Try one half of the room reading the first half of each verse and the others reading the second half. When you've finished, in quiet, reflect on which verse of the psalm you find most meaningful.

WORD

Read Psalm 139 (if you haven't already)

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!*)



- This is a prayer set to music addressed to God. David expresses his wonder at who God is & tells God what he thinks of him. There are lots of similar examples in the Bible. How do you feel about praying in this sort of way?
- David describes God as 'hemming him in' (v5). Do you think he sees this as a comfort or challenge –a reason to be confident or afraid? Why?
- How do you find the idea that wherever you go, God is already there (v7-10)? Does it feel like that? Share examples.
- To what extent do you believe that God 'knit you together' (v13)?
- How do you respond to the hatred that David expresses (v19-22)? How do you think Jesus would respond to David's feelings?
- Many of us had a go at writing a Psalm of our own similar to Psalm 23. Take a few moments to think, then discuss: What would you put in your own psalm in the style of Psalm 139? You might prefer to discuss this in 2s or 3s.

WHAT NEXT?

Share things you think are good about God & use these as short one sentence prayers of praise. You could go round the room using verse 14: 'I praise you because...' (Try to avoid 'thanks' at this stage!)

Now share things to thank God for & ask him for.

Please also pray for us as a church that we would become better at praying –as individuals and together.

Prayer

4: Prayer from Despair

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing & sharing together. If you want an ice-breaker, you could try this...

What do your friends think about Easter? What about you?

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God.

You could try this...

Try singing a song or hymn together that focuses on the cross.

You might like to look at Matthew 26:36-45

WORD

Read Psalm 22; Matthew 27:45-46

Don't discuss the Matthew passage at first. Try to start by sticking to Psalm 22 in it's own right.

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!*)



- How does David respond to his sense of being abandoned (v1) through this psalm?
- How do you feel about such a psalm being in the Bible?
- How does this psalm compare with Psalm 23, which follows it?
- Jesus quotes this psalm on the cross in the Matthew reading. It is unlikely that David went through the torture described here in detail (e.g. v14-18). To what extent do you see this passage as David's feelings or as a prophecy about Jesus or as both?
- How do you respond to the accuracy of this prophecy?
- What do you think about Jesus feeling abandoned on the cross?
- Have you ever felt abandoned by God? How might this Psalm help?

WHAT NEXT?

With Easter approaching, how could you invite people to what's happening? How do you feel about telling others the message of Easter? Are there ways that you could help one another do this as a group?

Share what you're doing over the Easter period & pray for one another as well as for the events going on at church and in the town.