

Who is God?

Small Group Session Plans

Autumn 2023

These session plans are intended to be a guide. They are based on Mark Pickett's sermons in Summer 2023.

Please adapt and change these to suit your group.

Session 1: Who is God? God the Provider

Aims:

- To explore the nature of God as provider in both the Old and New Testaments.

Bible Passages: Genesis 22: 1-14
Matthew 6:25-34

Warm up

Allow 15-20 minutes for people to arrive, have refreshments and get chatting. Introduce yourself as the group leader.

Prayer

Pray briefly to focus on God at the start of the session.

Discussion

Genesis 22: 1-14

What do Abraham's statements to his servants and Isaac tell us about God's provision?

When does God provide the ram for the burnt offering? Are there times in our lives when God it feels like God has waited until the last minute to provide?

Which character in this story do you most identify with? What can we learn from Isaac's behaviour here?

How might our understanding of God as provider differ from those who live in more challenging circumstances e.g. Kings Highway Church?

Why would a generous, loving God ask Abraham to perform these actions?

How can we hold in tension both God as provider and God as tester in this story?

Matthew 6:25-34

What do verses 26 and 28 tell us about God's provision?

What might Jesus be implying about people who worry about food or clothing?

How might this passage be read differently by those who live in more challenging circumstances?

Compare this passage with Genesis 22:1-14. How does the concept of God as provider change?

Could it be seen as irresponsible to be so separate from the cares of the world? What does it imply for others around us (Christian and non-Christian)?

How could we show God's Kingdom in a world marked by anxiety and worry?

Response

You may like to listen to Jireh (You are enough) by Maverick City Music. Spend time thanking God for his provision.

Session 2: God the Healer

Aims:

- To explore the nature of God as healer in both the Old and New Testaments.

Bible Passages: Exodus 15:22-26
Mark 2:1-12

Warm up

Think back to last week. How has God provided for you in the last week?

Prayer

Pray briefly to focus on God at the start of the session.

Discussion

Exodus 15:22-26

How long had the Israelites been in the desert for before finding Marah?

Why does the Lord put the Israelites to the test?

How should we react to God's declaration of 'I am the Lord who heals you'?

How might we react to the conditions of 'If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes...? What does this imply for those who aren't healed?

The phrase 'Jehovah Rapha' only appears in the Old Testament, and frequently when people have turned away from God. How does this knowledge shape your understanding of Exodus 15:22-26?

Mark 2:1-12

Identify the order of Jesus' actions in this passage. What does this tell you about Jesus' priorities?

How might the presence of the crowd have shaped the events in this passage?

Which similarities or differences do you notice between Jehovah Rapha in Exodus and Jesus the healer in Luke 2?

How might these similarities or differences shape our understanding of the nature of God?

How will your understanding of God as healer change your attitude or behaviour in the week ahead?

Response

Spend time praying for those you know who are in need of healing.

Session 3: God our Banner

Aims:

- To explore the nature of God as the banner in both the Old and New Testaments.

Bible Passages:

Exodus 17:8-16
Romans 8:31-39

Warm up

Think back to last week. How have you experienced God as healer in the past week?

Prayer

Pray briefly to focus on God at the start of the session.

Discussion

Exodus 17:8-16

Where and when has Moses used his staff before?

Who were the key people in this story?

Why is it important that this event is 'something to be remembered'?

How might verse 16 shape our view of God?

Romans 8:31-39

Of what are we 'more than conquerors'?

Identify the questions in this passage. How might the Romans have read these questions?

Are there modern-day equivalents to those listed in verse 35? If so, what are they?

How might the similarities or differences between these two passages shape our understanding of the nature of God?

How will this understanding of God influence how you act in your neighbourhood and network over the next week?

Response

Spend time praying for each other in pairs for your situation and individual battles you are facing

OR

Make a banner with the names of God to wave over your group.

Session 4: God who is Holy

Aims:

- To explore the nature of God as the holy in both the Old and New Testaments.

Bible Passages: 1 Peter 1:14-22
Revelation 7:9-17

Warm up

You may like to use some liturgy at the start of this session to draw the group together.

Prayer

Pray briefly to focus on God at the start of the session.

Discussion

1 Peter 1:14-22

What does holiness look like? Feel like? Sound like?

Who are the 'foreigners' mentioned in verse 17?

Deuteronomy 20:7-8 says, 'I am the Lord who makes you holy.' How does this shape your reading of verses 18-19?

How are holiness and love linked in this passage? What does this tell us about the nature of God?

Revelation 7:9-17

How does this passage contrast with or correspond with your ideas of holiness?

Who is included in the great multitude? Who is missing?

Look again at verses 14-17. What does this tell us about the nature of God?

How will your understanding of being called to be holy change or shape how you think, speak or act over the next week?

Response

You may choose to provide a guided meditation, or a silent reflection following today's session.

Session 5: God who is Present

Aims:

- To explore the nature of God as the present in both the Old and New Testaments.

Bible Passages: Ezekiel 48:30-35

Ephesians 2:14-22

Warm up

Prayer

Pray briefly to focus on God at the start of the session.

Discussion

Ezekiel 48:30-35

What questions does your group have about this passage at the start?

Look briefly at Ezekiel 11. Establish that Ezekiel has previously seen a vision of Israel having to leave Jerusalem.

What comfort or reassurance does this passage now bring?

Ezekiel spent his whole life as an exile. How does this shape or change your understanding of the passage?

Ephesians 2:14-22

How has the nature of God being present changed from the Old to the New Testament?

What has brought about this change?

How does the idea that God is dwelling in us shape how we see and treat each other?

What does this mean for the local church? What about the global church?

How will this shape your actions, thoughts and speech over the next week?

Response

Consider the different elements of the names of God. Which one has been most influential for you?