
Lent 2020: What is God's Vision for Eastleigh Parish Church?

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS MATERIAL

Session 2

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SUGGESTED ORDER/OUTLINE FOR THIS SESSION

1. Time of worship (10-20mins)
2. Recap/Feedback (10mins)
3. Bible reading & discussion (45mins)
4. Prayer (15-20mins)

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Important Notes

- ! PLEASE keep a brief note of any helpful points that might emerge from your group's discussions during Lent. This could be done on behalf of the whole group, or as individuals (or both). You'll have the chance to share from these notes with the wider church later in Lent.
- ! Try to involve the whole of the group in your discussions.
- ! The discussion questions are far from perfect... As leader, once you've got a sense of the direction of the questions overall, please feel free to lead the conversation as you see fit.

Section 1: Worship

Please worship together in way that is most suitable for your group. Here are a few *suggestions* that you might find helpful:

- Read Colossians 1:15-20 aloud, and then meditate on these verses in silence for a few minutes before singing or worshipping in another way.
- You could consider using one or more of these songs:
 - Above All, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_cxhf5ISeg
 - Light of the World, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MmRGSEG2LM>
 - Blessed Be Your Name, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnWKehsOXu8>
- You might find it helpful to read a Psalm aloud together; perhaps Psalm 67.

Section 2: Recap

- Please remind your group that the aim of these sessions is to ask the question, “*Heavenly Father, what is your vision for Eastleigh Parish Church?*”
- During last week’s session we talked a lot about being a disciple and making disciples.
 - Since last week’s discussion on this topic, have you had any new thoughts that you’d like to share with the group?
 - Has God shown you how we (at Eastleigh Parish Church) might be able to renew our vision for:
 - being disciples, and;
 - making disciples?
 - Are there particular issues that God has laid on your heart that we need to consider as a whole church with regards to our discipleship?

Section 3: Bible Reading & Discussion Questions

- Explain that you’re now going to read a Bible passages, and then have a discussion.
 - Please read **Luke 4:14-20** aloud.
 - Pray and ask for God’s guidance as you discuss things as a group.

Discussion Questions

A Vision for Scripture

1. 2 Sundays ago, Adrian talked about “A Vision for Scripture”.
 - a. What did you find helpful; memorable, and; challenging in what he had to say?
2. In today’s Bible reading, Jesus was quoting directly from Isaiah 61:1-2 (you might want to take a look at the Isaiah passage). In the passage that directly precedes it (Luke 4:1-13/Jesus in the Wilderness), Jesus quotes 3 further Bible readings.
 - a. Why do you think Jesus uses so much Scripture on this occasion?
 - b. As His disciples (and therefore wanting to be like Him), do we do enough to encourage one-another to use Scripture in the same way that Jesus did? Or are there ways that we could inspire/teach/train members of EPC to know and use the Bible more fruitfully? If so, please can you describe what those ways might be?
 - c. Are there any habits that we’ve fallen into as a parish that are not helping our devotion to Scripture? If so, what might they be, and how might we overcome them?

A Vision for New Beginnings

3. Following on from Adrian’s talk about a vision for Scripture, last Sunday Phil used the lectionary readings to encourage us towards a vision for New Beginnings.
 - a. What did you find helpful, memorable, or challenging in what he had to say?

- b. What are some of the ways that Eastleigh Parish already encourages a vision for new beginnings?
 - c. Are there any new beginnings that you think God is laying before us at this time? If so, what might they be:
 - i. For you personally?
 - ii. For us as a whole parish church?
4. During his talk about Abram (from Genesis 12:1-5), Phil suggested that many of the problems that Abram encountered later in his journey could have been avoided if he had done exactly as God had said in the first instance, rather than doing things that went against God's call on his life (e.g. taking Lot with him).
- a. Are there mistakes that we – the members of Eastleigh Parish Church - have made that we need to repent of as a whole community? If so, what might they be?
 - b. In your own life, is there an area of discipleship in which you need to return to the Lord and His ways? *[There is – of course – no need for people to share these personal things out loud. What is important is that we're all dealing with whatever God raises in our own hearts.]*

Note to the Group Leader:

- When appropriate, please bring this discussion to a close.
- Explain that, just like last week, we're going to have a moment of quiet prayer to regather our thoughts and to invite God to speak to us.
- Explain that after this prayer, you're going to be asking one final question for discussion.

- Please invite the group to be silent for a whole minute. *(You might like to open your hands in your laps as a way of saying, 'Lord, I'm listening'.)*

Final Discussion Question

1. Read Isaiah 43:16-19.
 - a. Can you think of 2 or 3 ways that verse 19 found its fulfilment in Jesus' ministry?
 - b. It has been said that, *'By using Isaiah 61:1-2 as the launch-pad for his ministry, Jesus was fulfilling the hope that had been lying dormant in the prophecy of Isaiah 43:16-19.'*
 - i. Do you agree with this? Why/why not?
 - ii. Are you aware of any prophecies/hopes/visions that came from God but are currently lying dormant:
 1. In your own life?
 2. In the life of Eastleigh Parish Church?
 - a. If so, what are they? How did God first reveal them to you/others? How might we help/encourage one-another to see them fulfilled?

- When appropriate, please bring this discussion to a close. Please remind/invite everyone to keep a note of their thoughts/ideas from tonight's session.

Section 4: Prayer

- Please spend some time praying for:
 - The specific needs of your group, and;
 - Any themes/topics that may have emerged from your discussion tonight. (Including things that we may need to repent of as a church community.)

- Now is a good time to pray the Lord's Prayer together.

- Finally, please end your time of prayer using the suggested prayer for Lent from this week's Outlook:

"Dear Heavenly Father, what is your vision for Eastleigh Parish Church? Please give us ears to hear, hearts to care, and the willingness to respond to all that you show us. Amen."