

Outline One



WELCOME

If you had to choose a favourite verse in the Bible, which one would it be and why?



WORSHIP

Praise Pile

Requires preparation: a selection of pebbles or rockery stones from DIY store or garden centre.

Use stones to build a monument to remind you of what God has done for you.

As each member of the group lays a stone on the pile ask them to thank God for different aspects of his plan of salvation.

Recognise, remember and celebrate: sins forgiven, adoption into God's family, eternal life, the gift of the Holy Spirit and so on.



WORD

Genesis 12:1-3

The Lord had said to Abram, *'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.'*

Read the passage and ask the group what strikes them about it?

Background to the passage

In this passage we see something of the heart of God and his desire to bless all people. Although God could do this perfectly well on his own, he chooses to involve Abram in his plan. Why would God do this? Doesn't it just complicate things and mean that they may not happen in the way that he imagines? Surely an almighty and all-powerful God would not need to take this sort of risk? What we see here is that God chooses to use Abram. In the same way he chooses to use us in his plans. Just as he chose Abraham, so in Jesus he has chosen us.

God, whose essence is love, chooses to work in partnership with us. This is an expression of his love. By blessing us he says that we also should be a blessing to others, in this way we are expressing God's love to those who we choose to bless. Abram hears God's words and obeys them and the rest as we say is history!

Question

What does this word 'blessing' mean to you and how have you experienced God's blessings? (Sometimes 'blessings' are hard won - Abram had to leave his home and face childlessness for example. Not necessarily things we would count as experiences leading to blessing.)

Pray in the Word

Make a list of the blessings we as individuals have received in all sorts of ways, in our work, relationships, beliefs. The list is long. Share these together with the group and celebrate them.

In verse 3 there is an implication that we are all a conduit of blessing. As we are blessed, we will bless others. Discuss as a group how you can bless others in the ways that you have received blessings from God. Be practical and specific. Find something you can do, as well as noticing who you can be. Also note any themes through the whole group. Is there something we can bless others with as a group?

Anticipate moments in the next week when you might have the opportunity to bless others. Share these anticipated moments and pray for each other that you will be a blessing to those who you come in contact with. Also be aware that there will be unexpected times over and above these where you can be spontaneous.



WITNESS

Shape your project

So, it might be time to put your best ideas in writing and put a little strategy on encounter, engage and embrace around each project. As you do this as a group pray and reflect on which of these projects you think is the right one for you.

