

## Small Group Meeting on ‘The God who provides’

### Review (20 mins)

Reflect together on your experiences over the last week. What has God been teaching you? Where have you been growing in your walk with Him? Had you set yourself a challenge in your discipleship? How is that going? Share those experiences with your small group.

### Read (10 mins)

Recap on the sermon from last Sunday. Try to give a summary to those who were not able to be present.

### Psalm 104

This is a very pictorial psalm. Consider reading it through twice – the first in the NIV with Bibles open before you, the second from The Message with everyone else eyes closed.

As you listen, let the big picture sink in – if it helps, think of the psalm as a huge painting in the National Gallery, yes you can look at little sections, but the real power is the BIG picture (and they don’t come much bigger than this psalm)

### Setting the scene:

- The psalm has a strong resemblance to the ancient Egyptian ‘Song of Akhenaten’ regarding the fecundity of the created order and the provision for each part of it. The big difference with the psalm is the naming of the one who provides – God, the external Creator of all things.

## Reflect (20 mins)

After listening, be still for a while and let God continue to speak to you through the pictures it paints.

Share how God has spoken to you in the silence.

You might also like to explore these questions:

Q1. The psalm speaks much of God's provision: what aspects of that provision struck you most and why? Were those aspects human-centred or creation-centred and what does that say about your understanding of God?

Q2. The picture painted here is one of provision which goes beyond the 'necessary' – 'wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their face shine'. What does that have to say about your response to such an extravagant God?

Q3. Michael Barram (see series introduction) asks whether we make our stewardship decisions out of a fear of scarcity or a joy of abundance. His two examples are:

- The contrast between the rich ruler who sees what he would lose if he sells all he has and goes away sad (Luke 18:23); and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8) who, after paying compensation to those he has wronged, unblinkingly offers gives away half of his possessions to the poor.
- In Eden, the man and the woman are given all the trees of the garden for food except one. The temptation is to ignore the abundance and focus on the tree that is forbidden.

What forms your thinking on stewardship – abundance or scarcity?  
Does your answer sit well with Psalm 104?

## Respond (20 mins)

As you draw near to the end of your session, consider how you might respond to your reading and reflection by “walking the talk”. How will you review your stewardship of time, talents and money over the coming weeks?

### **Some new challenge ideas**

#### **1 Assign all to God**

Draw up and sign a document whereby you assign all that you have (time, talents, money, relationships etc.) over to God and then live in the light of that.

#### **2 Add thankfulness to your prayer times**

You may already do this, but if not: change the pattern of your regular praying as an individual or household so that the first thing you do is to give thanks to God for his goodness and provision.

## Group Prayer

As a group, pray for one another this week as you seek to let God change your attitudes to what he has provided, so that you are full of thankfulness and making stewardship decisions out of a mindset shaped by his abundance.