

Small Group Meeting on Celebrating the God who forgives

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 103

Read the Bible passage for this week, slowly and prayerfully. Consider reading antiphonally – with half reading odd verses, the others the even verses, listening out for contrasts and intensifiers (see Setting the Scene below).

As you read, look out for *shockers* and *blockers*.

Shockers – a phrase, word, image or something from the text that resonates, stands out or connects with you.

Blockers – something from the text that raises questions for you.

Setting the scene:

- Remember you are reading a poem – not a letter by Paul. Psalms tend to get to the mind through the heart, not the other way round.
- Three techniques are often used:
 - The second part of a verse (or the following verse) repeats or reinforces the first (e.g. v.7 – not just Moses but Israel too)
 - The second part of a verse (or the following verse) contrasts the first (e.g. vv15-16 BUT vv17-18)
 - The second part of a verse (or the following verse) adds more information. (e.g. v12)

Reflect (20 mins)

After you have all had time to read the text, pause and be still to listen to God through the Scriptures.

Begin your reflection time by each naming your *shockers* and *blockers*. Listen carefully to each other, share your thoughts and reflect on this passage together.

You might also like to explore these questions:

Q1. How seriously do you take the idea of ‘sin’ in your lives – do you pass it off lightly or does it overwhelm you? How do the central verses of this psalm help you to deal with both these thought patterns?

Q2. What guilt from things you have done in the past are you carrying with you? How might v12 help you?

Q3. Jesus taught us to pray ‘forgive us as we forgive others’. Given the enormity and extravagance of God’s forgiveness in this psalm where do

you struggle with forgiving others? Share any testimony of where you found a breakthrough in this area.

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”. What are you going to be doing this week that will help you understand the greatness of God’s love for you? What will you do this week to forgive those against whom you are still holding something?

Some new challenge ideas

1 Learn the psalm

Spend time memorising the psalm and carry the words with you daily.

If you think song lyrics are easier to remember try the Psalm Praise version which is fairly true to the original.

[https://www.jubilate.co.uk/songs/bless the lord o my soul and all within me](https://www.jubilate.co.uk/songs/bless%20the%20lord%20o%20my%20soul%20and%20all%20within%20me)

2 Forgive as forgiven

If you are struggling with this, arrange to meet with someone else from the group during the week to pray for wisdom and courage to seek a way to show that forgiveness

Group Prayer

As a group, pray for one another this week as you continue to reflect on the depth and power of God’s forgiveness. Pray that those reflections will help you be honest and open with God and that, in recognising how he has forgiven you, you may be more ready to show forgiveness.

