

## Review

Reflect together on your experiences over the Christmas break. 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

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

### **Isaiah 2:5-4:6**

Read the Bible passage for this week, slowly and prayerfully. It might help to use your imagination to picture the scene. At the end of the text you will find helpful background information in our 'Setting the Scene' section.

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:**

- Isaiah is speaking into a society that has forgotten God, a ruling elite that has made wealth for themselves and exploited the poor and marginalised
- The poetry has a word play on “filled”. Notice the four things that the leaders [House of Jacob] are “filled” with... forsaking the people. 2:6-8

- The poetry then focuses on the Lord’s response... which is an emptying... a “taking away” – 3:1 and 3:18
- Chapter 4 is hopeful reminding of the people that the emptying has the potential of restoring the people to a positive and blest covenant relationship – as it was in the days of Moses 4:5-6

## Reflect

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. Isaiah tells the people they have placed their energy and priorities on the wrong things. To what extent are we tempted to do the same – at a political level? At home?

Q2. How might we begin to realign our own priorities – so that they are more in line with God’s?

## Respond

As you draw near to the end of your session, consider how you might respond to your reading and reflection by creating your own challenge to help you develop a Bible reading rhythm this week, so that you are in line with the sermons on Isaiah through the next few months:

### Challenge ideas

**1 Read Isaiah alongside this sermon series**

Scripture reminds us the Word is “a lamp to our feet and a light to our path”. Why not set your self the challenge of reading Isaiah alongside the sermon series? On the other hand, you could read the Gospel of Matthew alongside to balance out a reading of Old and New testament over the next couple of months.

## **2 Challenge your own anxiety**

When you read, or hear, or discuss world news – don’t let it draw you into anxiety. Why not set yourself the challenge to pray into that situation immediately? Cry out to God and place that news item into His hands. Do it straight away – on the spot. Send an “arrow” prayer up. Reflect on how that has an impact on your emotions over subsequent weeks.

## **3 Consumer Challenge**

It is so easy to just simply consume unthinkingly – without openness to the Holy Spirit. Before you buy – ask yourself the question, “Would anyone have been exploited by the making of this product? [This is particularly pertinent in chocolate and coffee industries – but also in clothing]. Also in purchasing this product am I contributing to waste? [Plastic water bottles and other packaging].

## **Group Prayer**

As a group, pray for one another this week as you explore a deeper life with God through prayer. Pray that your times of prayer and your attempt to walk in the light of God’s ways will increase and become more habitual throughout each day.