

## **Week 1            In the beginning**

### **This week's readings...**

Genesis 1,2

Genesis 3

Genesis 6:5 – 7:24

Genesis 8:1 – 9:17

Genesis 11:1-9

### **THE BIG STORY**

*The fall of human beings leads to the first of God's promises to man: a descendant of the woman will redeem fallen man... so the story of the Messiah begins.*

After the Flood, God makes his first covenant with mankind. Look out for the rainbow – the special sign of God's promise to Noah.

### **Way in**

Encourage each group member to say what element of creation they appreciate most and why. Use this as the basis for worship and praise to God for the wonder of his creation.

### **Review**

Encourage the group to give feedback on this week's readings.

- God was from the very beginning. He created humans and gave them two distinctives: God's life and standards.
- The first sin was about the questioning and challenging of God's will, followed by disobedience, resulting in the breakdown of a relationship with God.
- God is not watching and waiting to catch people out as if it gives him pleasure to punish. Rather, sin causes God pain and grief.
- Noah's first response on leaving the ark was to worship God.

- The win surrounding the building of the Tower of Babel was not about the technological achievement it represented but the pride that went with it.

## **Going deeper**

### *Creation*

What are the important issues surrounding the Bible's account of creation? How can the biblical view of creation be reconciled with our scientific knowledge? (Be careful that the issue of creation versus evolution doesn't take over the whole of your time! Christians have different views on this topic, and it's important, of course, to listen to one another with respect and in love!)

What impact does 'God as creator' have on your view of him?

### *Sin*

The heart of sin is rebellion against God, resulting in a breakdown of our relationship with him.

Some sins are sins of commission – doing things that are wrong; some are sins of omission – where we fail to do something we know we should (James 4:17). Talk about some specific examples from your experience. Do you tend to focus on one category or another?

Read Galatians 5:19-21 and Matthew 25:41-46, then discuss these passages' challenges.

### *Worship*

What is our first response when we experience something really good in our lives? Do we simply enjoy it, or do we first express our appreciation to God? In practical terms, what should we learn from the account of how Noah responds to God after leaving the ark?

## **Respond**

Give everyone a cutout heart shape. Write on your 'heart' any issues from the above areas you know struggle with. Are you doing something you know is wrong? Or can you identify an attitude that is not really what God would want?

Spend a few minutes in silence praying about the things that are challenging you, asking that God will help you change where it matters. If appropriate for your group, allow time to pray for each other. Remember Noah's response to worship, and spend a few minutes thanking and worshipping God for his faithfulness to you and for what he's done for you.

## **Week 2            Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**

### **This week's readings...**

Genesis 12

Genesis 15

Genesis 21:1-22:19

Genesis 27,28

### **THE BIG STORY**

*Abraham (first called Abram) was chosen by God to become the Father of his special people. God made a covenant with Abram and promised to create a great nation from his descendants.*

The ancestral line of the Messiah (Jesus) is traced through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah.

### **Way in**

Ask everyone to talk about where they were born and then about the different places they have lived over the years. Share the reasons why each move took place and the significance for your lives of new homes, schools, jobs, friends, relatives, children, etc.

Using a map, look at where Abram was born (the city of Ur) and show how he traveled to Canaan via Haran.

### **Review**

Invite the group members to give feedback on this week's readings.

- Abram showed great faith by obeying God and setting out on the journey to Canaan.
- God promised that they would have a son despite Abram and Sarai's age, and his descendants would become a great nation. God gave Abram a new name, 'Abraham,' meaning 'father of many.'

- Abraham was ready to obey God's command to sacrifice his son.
- Jacob tricked his father, Isaac, and received the blessing that should have been Esau's. He fled, traveling north to Haran. On his journey, he had a special encounter with God.
- Jacob sought to be reconciled with his brother. Esau demonstrated great grace as he welcomed him back.

## **Going deeper**

### *Failure*

Failure does not result in God abandoning us. Talk about how both Abraham and Jacob fail.

What has caused the failures? What does God do in each circumstance? What can we learn from this when thinking about our failures?

### *Guidance*

Discerning God's direction is often very challenging. How should we handle times when we don't know the exact details of what God wants? Encourage everyone to share how God has revealed his plans to them. Talk about biblical ways of hearing God speak today.

### *God's promise*

Discuss the implications of God's promise in Genesis 28:14 and Jacob's profession of faith in 28:20-22. Look at Galatians 3:14 to help you think about the implications of these verses for Christians today.

### *Reconciliation*

The idea of reconciliation is often much easier than the reality. What are the faults and good qualities shown by Jacob and Esau?

Read the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:21-35) and Jesus' words in Matthew 6:14,15. What are the key principles we need to incorporate into our relationships?

## **Respond**

Write the words 'Failure,' 'Guidance,' 'God's promise,' and 'Reconciliation' on paper, enough for one each for everyone in the group.

Scatter these on the floor and ask everyone to pick up a sheet showing an issue about which they feel God has been speaking to them. As people feel able, share thoughts about the following:

- What does God want to say to you?
- What reassurance do you need from God?

If there is someone with whom you have had a fundamental breakdown of relationship, what is God calling you to do to put things right?

Pray for each person in your group, asking that they experience a sense of God's love, his direction for the future, and his grace to bring reconciliation where it is needed.

## Week 3            The Story of Joseph

### **This week's readings...**

Genesis 37

Genesis 39-41

Genesis 42

Genesis 43,44

Genesis 45:1 – 46:7

### **THE BIG STORY**

*God's people are saved from the famine through their move to Egypt. Around 400 years later, this will be the scene for God's rescue of his people from slavery in the Exodus.*

### **Way in**

*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* has been a top West End musical for many years. Has anyone in your group seen or participated in it? Invite people to share when and where this was. Encourage them to talk about which parts they liked most. You may even want to suggest going as a group to see it.

### **Review**

Invite the group members to share what they have read.

- Joseph's dreams made his brothers very angry, resulting in their selling him into slavery in Egypt.
- Joseph resisted the temptation of Potiphar's wife. His resulting time in prison allowed him to explain other prisoners' dreams and even Pharaoh himself.
- The famine made Joseph's brothers need to go to Egypt to find food.
- Despite all that his brothers had done, Joseph still loved them dearly. A few tricks, however, were played before there was reconciliation.

- Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

### **Going deeper**

We can respond in several ways when we go through difficult times or temptations.

Place a large sheet of paper in the center of your group and ask a volunteer to write down what you discover as you talk. Start by writing the following headings on your paper: 'Situations,' 'Possible responses,' and 'Joseph's positive responses.'

Work through the past week's Bible passages, identifying the range of situations Joseph faces that have the potential of a positive or negative response. With each, highlight the different emotions or responses he could experience (e.g., pride, arrogance, rejection, jealousy, resentment, anger).

Explore the positive ways in which Joseph responds, such as:

- Ensuring the offenses against him didn't lead to negative responses.
- Showing himself morally strong when tempted.
- Being willing to serve others.
- Trusting that, ultimately, God was in control.

How could we build similar response patterns into our lives?

### **Respond**

This study could stir a range of painful emotions God wants to deal with.

You may be feeling hurts from years ago, which have stayed unresolved or led to bitterness and resentment. Or, you may be going through



times of isolation, be a victim of injustice or be feeling uncertain about how present difficulties can be resolved.

The Bible story you have been thinking about this week is an important reminder that even when everything seems to be falling apart around us, God still has a plan, and he is in control.

Encourage people to express their hurts in appropriate ways and then pray specifically for each other.

## Week 4                    Moses and the Exodus

### **This week's readings...**

Exodus 1,2

Exodus 3:1-4:17

Exodus 6:28-11:10

Exodus 12:1-42

Exodus 13:17-14:31

### **THE BIG STORY**

*The Passover is a key symbol that speaks of the death of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Like a lamb, he was slaughtered to rescue God's people from death.*

### **Way in**

Get the group to devise a list of biblical characters who, from a human point of view, were surprising choices for God to use (e.g., Gideon, David).

Who knows or has known who has been used in significant ways by God despite obvious shortcomings or difficulties?

### **Review**

Invite the group members to share what they have read in weekly readings.

- Moses was miraculously rescued by one of Pharaoh's daughters and was brought up in the Egyptian royal court. On an impulse, he attempted to set the Israelites free from slavery by force. This resulted in him having to flee the country.
- Years later, God spoke to Moses through the burning bush.
- A sequence of disasters hit Egypt, giving Pharaoh opportunities after each to allow the people of Israel to leave Egypt.
- A climax came with the celebration of the Passover supper.

- In an amazing demonstration of God's power, the Red Sea was parted, and the Israelites crossed to the safety of the desert beyond.

### **Going Deeper**

Moses is an ordinary man with an extraordinary mission. Explore some of the following issues together.

#### *Older people*

Moses is 80 when God calls him to lead his people out of Egypt. God continues using people in their old age. What does this say to your Church at a time when society seems to think that those over 50 have less to offer?

#### *Trust and obedience*

'Trust' and 'obey' are key words from these readings, with Moses' call to go to Pharaoh, the challenges of the signs before Pharaoh, and finally, the action required to part the Red Sea.

What does this say to us, both in life in general and for those times when God specifically calls us to do something?

#### *Passover*

What are the implications of the Passover supper:

- In terms of judgment on Egypt?
- As a symbolic reminder for the Israelites for the years ahead?
- As a pointer to the life and death of Jesus?

### **Respond**

In pairs, talk about the following:

Is God calling you to do a certain task from which you are holding back? Do you feel that you are too old to be used? Or too young?

Acknowledge that God is in no sense ageist, and then offer yourself again to be used by him.

Affirm the fact that although most of us are 'control freaks,' there is a strong biblical mandate to trust and obey.

Pray for one another.

## Week 5            The Law and the Land

### **This week's readings...**

Exodus 19:1-20:21

Exodus 32-34

Joshua 1

Joshua 3,4

Joshua 5:13-6:27

### **THE BIG STORY**

*The covenant between man and God moves forward with the giving of the Ten Commandments.*

*Although Jacob had twelve sons, the resulting twelve tribes of Israel do not include Joseph but the two half-tribes of his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Levi's descendants become the priestly tribe and do not inherit a region of the Promised Land.*

*The covenant God made with Abraham to give him land is fulfilled.*

### **Way in**

Begin by asking the group to share the experiences of people who have been key players in the development of their faith. This might be a Sunday School teacher from childhood, a minister, or a friend.

### **Review**

Invite the group members to share what they have read.

Having escaped from Egypt, the people of Israel journeyed through the wilderness and into the Promised Land.

- The Ten Commandments were given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, not as a set of rules that would take away people's pleasure

and freedom, but rather to act as a framework for their relationships with God, each other, and material possessions.

- The making and worship of the golden calf revealed the vulnerability of the Israelites' faith.
- Joshua was appointed to succeed Moses.
- Joshua listened to and obeyed God as he was directed to cross the River Jordan. Setting up the stone memorial would be a reminder of what God had done for generations to come.
- Joshua once again listened and obeyed the directions God gave him for capturing the city of Jericho.

## **Going Deeper**

### *The Ten Commandments*

Take a look at the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17). What are the implications and challenges for our relationships with God, with each other, and with material possessions?

Which commandment does Jesus build on? How does he take them to a deeper level of application? (See Matthew 5:17-20, 21,22 and 27,28).

Explore the implications of these developments for us in our Christian living.

### *Joshua*

Joshua is characterized by 'bold faith' and humility.' Think about these two characteristics in relation to life and ministry. What might be the benefits and the pitfalls?

### *Rahab*

The account of Rahab is both surprising and challenging. She appears to be a very unsuitable person to be saved, yet her response to the living God means she is kept safe when the walls of Jericho fall.

Can you think of people groups today that could be represented by Rahab? How are they viewed by the Church?

Are there encounters in the life of Jesus that demonstrate a similar learning point?

### **Respond**

In a quiet time, read slowly through the Ten Commandments, pausing between each one. As you do so together, pray that the Holy Spirit will bring to mind any especially relevant areas for you.

What positive qualities do you see in your church leaders? Pray for them now.

Are there any people groups against whom you may have prejudice? Ask God to reveal and remove those barriers. Pray that he will give you a genuine, loving acceptance of them. Is there something you need to do as a result of this? Pray for one another.

## **Week 6            The Judges**

### **This week's readings...**

Judges 2:6-3:6

Judges 4,5

Judges 6,7

Judges 13-16

Ruth 1-4

### **Way in**

Think about the four main characters from this week's readings.

Deborah, Gideon, Samson, Ruth.

Ask the group to consider which of these they relate to most closely and why.

### **Review**

Invite the group members to share what they have read.

- The period of the judges is marked by a cycle of disobedience and defeat. The Israelites failed to learn lessons from their history. Yet, in the midst of the unfaithfulness, some characters stood out from the crowd, pointing people back to God.
- Deborah, the only female judge and an unlikely choice in a male-dominated culture, obeyed God's call, showing great courage in the face of adversity.
- Gideon, a reticent leader who wanted to be doubly sure that his call was from God, placed his total trust in God's ability to win the battle, not simply the size of the army.
- Samson, with God-fearing parents who set their son apart from birth, rebelled against the constraints of his parents' religion, resulting in humiliation and captivity.



- Ruth used personal tragedy to develop character and a lasting testimony instead of allowing it to make her bitter and resentful.

## **Going deeper**

### *Faith in hard situations*

Talk about some times when, like Deborah, you need faith in a difficult situation.

### *Discovering God's will*

Which is harder: discovering God's will or obeying it? Think about Gideon's guidance experiences, then discuss what methods we might use to know that God is calling us to pursue a certain path.

### *When loved ones reject God*

Remembering Samson, think about Christian families who have experienced their children turning away from God. Explore some of the reasons why this might happen, the resulting feelings of parents, and the attitudes of others. (Be sensitive and supportive to anyone in your group for whom this may be an issue.)

Consider some ways in which your Church could support families going through the trauma of their children's rebellion against God or the Church.

If possible, share some stories of how a young person who has turned away from God has later in life come to faith.

### *Coping with tragedy*

Compare the reactions of Naomi and Ruth to what happened to them. How can we help people come through times of personal tragedy in ways that result in the development of strong and positive character and faith? (Although she lived in the period of the judges, Ruth was not a judge.)

## **Respond**

Arrange in advance for group members to bring to this session photos of family and friends with stories that fit into some of the categories you have been thinking about. Place these at the center of the group. As appropriate, share some of the stories about the people in the photos.

Are you looking for God's guidance? Pray that you will know which way he wants you to go. How do you view those who have 'gone off the rails?' Pray for Christian families who have children who have turned away from God.

How have you handled the tragedy in your life? Has it left you bitter and resentful? If so, allow God to break into that area to bring his healing. Or, if you have never had such an experience, pray that should there be such an event, you will be equipped to respond as Ruth did. Close by, praying for one another and for those in the photos whose situations you know.

## **Week 7            The Rise of Israel**

### **This week's readings...**

- 1 Samuel 1-3
- 1 Samuel 8-10
- 1 Samuel 16:1-18:16
- 1 Samuel 23:7-24:22
- 2 Samuel 5-7

### **THE BIG STORY**

*The people of Israel want to be like other nations and have a human king. Thus, a succession of kings who rule with varying levels of success follows.*

*Honoring God results in prosperity; turning from him leads to problems – a pattern seen throughout the rest of Old Testament history.*

### **Way in**

David's success in his battle against Goliath is one of the most well-known stories in the Bible. Get your group to share examples of when they have achieved some great challenges. It could be something physical or practical with a relationship or spiritual.

### **Review**

Invite the group members to share what they have read.

- Hannah cried to God for a son – and was given Samuel.
- The people of Israel wanted to have a king like other nations. Unhappy with having God as their ruler, they demanded a human ruler – and were given Saul.
- Saul failed to be the leader God had hoped for, which resulted in Samuel anointing David as the future king. With David's defeat of Goliath, it wasn't long before Saul was filled with all-consuming jealousy of this gifted young man.

- Despite attempts by Saul to kill him, David responded by sparing Saul's life – just one indication among many that David was walking closely with his God.
- Finally, David became king, leading to a period of great success for the Israelite nation.

## **Going deeper**

### *Waiting on God*

What qualities does Hannah display that might be an example for us to follow in situations we are facing at present?

### *Following the crowd*

The people of Israel, God's holy nation, want to be like the surrounding nations and have a human king. As Christians, we are called to have Jesus as our King, yet often, we want to be like those around us.

Talk about areas of life that can bring similar conflict for us. How could those lead us to compromise in our holy living for God?

### *Failure and success*

Look again at the events surrounding the reigns of Saul and David. Where does Saul go wrong? What lies at the heart of David's success? What can we learn from this for our own lives?

## **Respond**

David, although he sometimes fails, seeks God's direction with an open heart; he celebrates all God has done and is doing through his worship and is focused on God's priorities in his life.

These attitudes give God his rightful place as King. Do these characterize our lives?

When God works through us, do we have the humility that gives the credit to him, rather than thinking it has been done in our strength?

Consider these things, praying that God would highlight where we are just 'doing things our way,' as Saul often does. Instead, ask that we develop a heart that gives God his rightful place in our lives.

## Week 8            The Fall of Israel

### This week's readings...

2 Samuel 11:1-12:25

1 Kings 2,3

1 Kings 8:1-9:9

1 Kings 16:29-19:18

2 Kings 25

### THE BIG STORY

*Disputes about who should rule resulted in the division of the kingdom of Israel, with Israel in the north and Judah in the south.*

*Repeated turning from God ultimately means defeat by their enemies, exile, and captivity. God, however, does not forget his covenant; there is the promise that 'a remnant will return.'*

### Way in

We all encounter problems, but one of the greatest antidotes is focusing on the good things God has done for us.

Get the group to share one good thing God has done in their lives. Use these testimonies to praise God that he is living and active.

### Review

Invite the group to share what they have read.

- King David was so successful, yet despite his openness to God's will, he failed in the events surrounding Bathsheba.
- Solomon sought wisdom, but he, too, had a failing – dabbling in idolatry.
- The temple's dedication was an amazing event: '...the glory of the Lord filled his temple.' (1 Kings 8:11).

- The story moves on to the depths of failure characterized by Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah heads up the remarkable showdown on Mount Carmel – and then flees, feeling rejected and in total despair.

## **Going deeper**

### *Iron sharpening iron*

Others often don't see what is going on in our lives. So, David, the great, God-following leader, sins. The nation has a key role in David's repentance.

Proverbs 27:17 says: 'An iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.' How have others helped you see your failings and grow in your relationship with God?

### *Sin and forgiveness*

What is the difference between Saul and David, as one is removed, but the other is given a second chance? What can we learn from this about repentance, forgiveness, and God's grace?

### *Worship*

The temple's dedication is memorable because God turns up in all his glory and fills the place.

How can we ensure that the mechanics of worship in our Church don't get in the way of an encounter with the living God?

### *Victory and despair*

We've seen two sides to Elijah's character: victorious on Carmel and in the depths of despair on Horeb. How can we develop on-fire faith yet reduce the risk of spiritual and emotional burnout?

## **Respond**

Allow a time of silence for confession of sin. Then, as a sign of God's forgiveness, invite people to write their confessions on paper and burn them (with care!).

Reflect for a few minutes on the nature of worship. How can worship become a more meaningful experience?

Pray that the group will develop an open accountability that will enable their faith to grow and their integrity to be maintained.

Encourage everyone to continue engaging with God's Word frequently to hear what God wants to say. Pray for each other about this.



## Week 9

## Psalms and Proverbs

### This week's readings...

Psalm 23

Psalm 51

Psalm 103

Proverbs 1-4

Proverbs 16-18

### Way in

Get the group to write their own psalm using the following model. Provide each person with a sheet of paper large enough to be folded eight times. Then:

- 1 Ask everyone to write an opening sentence of praise on the top of their sheet of paper, e.g., 'God, I worship you.'
- 2 Get everyone to fold back that line of writing and pass the sheet of paper to the person on their left.
- 3 On the next line, encourage everyone to write an aspect of God's character, starting: 'because you are...' Fold and pass on.

And so on...

- 4 Another aspect of God's character, starting: 'and...'
- 5 Two things about how wonderful creation is.
- 6 Something God does for you, e.g., 'You guide me.'
- 7 A message to Jesus, e.g., 'Jesus, I love you because...'
- 8 A resolution, e.g., 'Therefore I will...'

Read your 'psalms' aloud as an opening act of worship.

### Review

Invite the group members to share what they have read.

- Psalm 23: David used his own experience as a shepherd to highlight key aspects of God's nature and character.

- Psalm 51: David acknowledged his sinfulness in his relationship with Bathsheba and sought God's mercy and forgiveness.
- Psalm 103: David praised God for all he is: forgiving, healing, redeeming, renewing, revealing, compassionate, endlessly loving, faithful, ruling.
- The proverbs of Solomon: wise sayings to help us in godly living. Living by them protects us against the consequences of evil and brings happiness and well-being.
- Solomon highlighted our choices and conflicts: wisdom and folly, humility and pride, God's will and human action.

## **Going deeper**

### *Repentance*

Living in a time when we emphasize the loving and forgiving heart of God means that confession may seem too easy. David affirms that God doesn't want sacrifices of burnt offerings (Psalm 51:16), but how can we ensure that we take sin seriously? How do we respond to sin in our own lives? What does it mean to have 'a broken and contrite heart.'

What could we learn from David's example, referred to in his son Solomon's words in Proverbs 4:3,4, where he writes about the influence of his parents?

Acts 3:19-20 speaks of 'refreshing' being a consequence of repentance. How do these fit together? What do you think is meant by spiritual refreshment?

### *What is God like?*

List all of the different qualities of God you can find in Psalm 103. Think of examples from the Bible that demonstrate some of these characteristics of God.

### *Wisdom*

Wisdom and knowledge are very different: wisdom is demonstrated when we use our knowledge wisely. In 1 Corinthians 1:20, Paul highlights the difference between worldly wisdom and the wisdom of God. Encourage your group to think of some specific examples of how this is the case.

### **Respond**

If the group is comfortable doing so, you could place a cross at the center of the group as a reminder and symbol of God's wisdom. As you focus on this, consider the question below and pray for one another.

Are there areas of your life where you are living according to the wisdom of the world rather than the wisdom of God? Pray that the Holy Spirit would reorder your thinking, pulling it back to God's will.

## Week 10      The Prophets

### **This week's readings...**

Isaiah 51-53

Jeremiah 1:1-3:5

Daniel 6

Jonah 1-4

Malachi 1-4

### **THE BIG PICTURE**

*The prophets are God's spokesmen. Predicting the future is part of what they do, but their main function is to declare God's view of how his people live amid compromise and waywardness. Warnings, as well as a call to repentance and change, are core to their message.*

### **Way in**

Get the group to name as many of the prophets mentioned in the Bible as possible. Explore together what the prophets in the Bible were like, who they were, and what role they fulfilled.

### **Review**

Invite the group members to share what they have read.

The five readings in this section look at five of the prophets:

- **Isaiah:** the heavyweight of the prophets, living during the reigns of several kings. His messages clearly emphasized warning and judgment, hope and salvation. God would send a savior to rescue his people.
- **Jeremiah:** a young man who was given a frightening message. Yet God took him beyond his human ability, providing the confidence to declare God's warnings and his desire to forgive and restore his people.

- Daniel: an exile who was committed to living for God no matter what the consequences, knowing that his trust in him would be honored.
- Jonah: the prophet who tried to run from God. He learned that you cannot hide from God.
- Malachi challenged Israel about her unfaithfulness. Judgment is always the consequence of sin.

## **Going deeper**

### *Called by God*

God uses many 'ordinary' people in the Bible to fulfill his purposes. Think about some examples (e.g., Jeremiah, Moses, David). What is it about these people that makes them God's choice?

It's easy to think that certain people are called to 'full-time Christian work' while others do 'ordinary' jobs. Can a case be made for this from what the Bible teaches?

If each of us is called to be a full-time Christian worker whenever God has placed us, what are the implications for how we do our jobs and simultaneously fulfill our calling?

What might these implications be for how churches equip their members to serve?

### *Reaching out to non-believers*

Most Christians are keen to affirm God's grace, which reaches out to 'sinners' who are out there. But how do you feel about reaching out to those who you might think are undeserving of forgiveness? Or how about people within our Church whom we see failing?

To help your discussion, look at the parables of 'the lost sheep' and 'the prodigal son' (see Luke 15, Romans 3:23,24).

## **Respond**

Do you have a personal league table of sins, which means some people don't qualify for God's love and forgiveness?

Invite God to let his grace sweep through your heart and mind, bringing you again to the point of owning the fact that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory – and that his love embraces anyone who truly repents and welcomes them into his family.

Have you felt God might be calling you to a specific task but have shied away owing to feelings of inadequacy? Ask the group to pray about this for you so that his call would be clarified and you would have the faith to lay your life completely at his disposal.