

Way of Discipleship Small Groups

Hearing God through the Bible



Touching base (5 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone



Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

What makes you trust that God might want to speak to you, personally?



Understanding the information (20 minutes)

Share these thoughts in your own words or read them together:

At the heart of discipleship is paying attention to God. In a general sense this means our main focus is to “keep God before our minds” (Dallas Willard). In a more specific way we are to be “watching, listening, learning” because “The master is going to speak” (Archbishop Rowan Williams). “We are what we hear from God” (Emil Brunner), We are those who hear His words and put them into practice day by day. The prophet Samuel is a good model for us – his first real prayer was perhaps, “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.” What God “says” to us makes all the difference.



God communicates in a general way (general revelation) through His creation and through the qualities within human beings such as conscience or self-awareness which point to His existence.

In his book *What is the Bible?* Rob Bell writes that, as the One who brings things alive by His words, God can “speak” in many different ways – through all that He has made: planets, music, people, children, life circumstances... God is active in everything, if we are open to listen.

It is also good to remember that for thousands of years many people did not have a book called the Bible, and, even when it existed, still might not have had access to it – as many do not today. This does not mean that God’s words are unable to be heard.

But God's covenant relationship with us is personal – He calls us to “be with Him”, and He has communicated, and does communicate with us in two very specific ways (specific revelation).

Firstly it is through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus that we are able to see and understand God's purposes.

And secondly it is through the gift of the Bible that we are able to both keep God before our minds and hear what He says to us personally.

St. Isidore (c. 560-636), the Archbishop of Seville in Spain, said that reading the Bible was the chief way in which God talks to us: “Prayer purifies us, reading instructs us. Both are good when both are possible. If we want to be always in God's company, we must pray regularly and read regularly. When we pray, we talk to God; when we read, God talks to us. All spiritual growth comes from reading and reflection.”

The Bible can become a way in which God can communicate with us personally, and through which our minds can be renewed so that we increasingly see the story of our lives, and the story of the world, as God sees them. The amazing claim is that through feeding on the Bible we have access to the chief way in which He can communicate with us. As Jesus said, the question is, “Do you have eyes to see and ears to hear?”

In the Bible we are given, through a selection of books, an incredible and reliable record of what God has been and is doing in the world.

The Bible contains the complete foundational content of what God wants His people to know, and so when God uses the Bible to speak to us today He does so not to add anything new to what it reveals, but to enable us to apply it to our lives.

The Bible pulls together the rich variety of what God has revealed of Himself through the story of His relationship with people, which comes to its fulness in the record of Jesus, into a laser-sharp focus. To read the Bible is to have access to our most complete way of seeing into the heart and work of God. This is why the Bible is called “Holy” – it is unique, special or sacred in its power to reveal God to us.

While God may speak to human beings in many ways, the Bible claims that God's Spirit works as we absorb its words to transform our lives in every aspect of our discipleship, making us more fully human by:

Teaching us about how we and the world are rescued and made whole in Christ and Training us in right living (2 Timothy 3: 14-17).

Refreshing our sense of God's love and helping us to grow as disciples.

Giving us wisdom in how we develop as people and make good decisions.

Helping us understand our deepest motives and thoughts as we follow God.

Building our lives on what God is doing forever. “Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:4)

Discuss: Why is the Bible more than an instruction manual?

Reading the Bible (15 minutes)

Read John 10: 27-28.

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:
What does this passage teach me about God?
What does this passage teach me about people?
How does this passage call me to obey God?
What might I do in response to this this week?



Seeing how it looks in real lives (10 minutes)

Watch the video at:

<https://youtu.be/i1UZAMoT8EA>

What struck you as important in the video?



Responding to God's leading (5 minutes)

Give people an opportunity to think about, "What might God be showing me and how might I respond?" They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, "Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?"



Group prayer (5 minutes)

Your word,
that lamp for our feet,
reveals to us
the stony ground
we often tread upon,
where, stumbling
in our weakness,
we reach out a hand
for you to hold,
asking simply
that you lead us
once again
to firmer ground,
toward that rock
upon which
our journeying began,
where, in safety
we can rest awhile.



Amen



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