



ENTER God's presence

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They are a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.

– Proverbs 1:7-8

Lord God, you are our Heavenly Father and your Word is full of your wisdom and instruction to us, your children. Help us to listen to what you are saying to us through your Word as we gather today. Help us to learn from you and to faithfully pass on your wisdom and truth to those who come behind us. Amen



SHARE life together

1. **Share your highs and lows with each other?**
2. **Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?**
3. **What were/are some family traditions that your family practice? Do you know how they started or why?**
4. **Some families have very strong physical or character traits which get passed on from generation to generation. Are there any in your family? What are they?**

Week beginning:
Sunday 30th August 2020

Worship series:

New Terrain



VERSE for the week

But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

Joshua 24:15



REMEMBER this week

In a world filled with options and choice, choose C every time. For the Creator, the Chief Cornerstone and Counsellor is the foundation that supports, empowers and enables thriving families through all the changes and crises of life.



LISTEN attentively

Read Joshua 24:1-18, 31

- 5. What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?**
- 6. What do you hear this scripture saying to you right now?**
- 7. What does it mean for your family or 'household' to serve the Lord?**

Joshua offers the people of Israel a choice in this passage. A choice to accept God and his continued blessing, which also meant keeping his laws and commandments, or to turn their back on all he had done and go off and worship the gods of the surrounding nations. But in amongst that choice, Joshua also leads by example declaring, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." What is interesting about this speech and ultimatum that Joshua makes to the people of Israel, is that before Joshua asks the people to make a choice, he reminds them of all the times and all the ways that God has chosen them. He chose their ancestor Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob, he was with them when Joseph brought them all to Egypt, he was with them as he called Moses to lead them out of Egypt. He was with them through the desert and protected them from those who would oppose them. In verses 16-18, we hear the people's response to Joshua's ultimatum and with what appears to be a united voice the people respond as Joshua himself did, however not because of what Joshua had done, but because they had recalled what God had done. Our families, our households, our LifeGroups serve the Lord when we do this, when we share and talk about all the wonderful things that God has done for us. Most significantly that includes our salvation through Jesus, but also the day to day experiences and encounters we have with him; the subtle ways he sometimes answers our prayers, the food which he provides for our nourishment, our freedom to access and read His Word and worship Him. These are the daily miracles that God does which inspire faith in us and in the next generation.

- 8. What is the most recent example from your own life of God being with you, blessing you, or protecting you? Who have you shared that story with?**



GROW deeper

Now look at Judges 2:6-11 and Deuteronomy 11:8-21

It turns out that while the people had Joshua as their leader and those who had seen first hand God's care and providence in the wilderness, they remained committed to serving the Lord. As those leaders began to die out, it became increasingly difficult for the people to maintain that commitment until they finally turned their back on it completely. Only when God intervened in dramatic and obvious ways through the various Judges he sent, were the people reminded of God's power and sovereignty and called back to faith. This is why it is so important that we do not let our faith be something that we keep to ourselves. If we do, it will die with us. We need to train ourselves and help the generations coming behind us in the faith, to see God at work in the world today, to remember the ways God has interacted with his people in the past, throughout all of human history which he has preserved for us in his Word.

- 9. How do you ensure that God's Word is taught and recalled in your family/home/household?**
- 10. God makes a promise in Deuteronomy 11, if we remember his words and keep his laws, then 'your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the Lord swore to give to your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.' What is our inheritance as God's people today? How does this promise still stand for us?**

We may not be heirs or entitled to inherit any of the lands that God promised to Abraham. Most of us do not have any way to demonstrate a connection to the twelve tribes of Israel, but in our baptism and rebirth as God's children we all share in the life death and resurrection of Jesus. As Romans 8:17 reminds us, "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory." Our inheritance is not of land in this world but is the

kingdom of God. When we keep God and his Word close to our hearts and central to our lives, then there is nothing that can take that away from us. As long as the heavens are above the earth, in other words, until Jesus returns and ultimately fulfills all things, when the Word of God is the hub which our lives and our families and our households and our churches revolve around, nothing will be able to remove us or our families or our children from the promises God has made to us.

11. What is one element of your faith in Jesus that you hope you can pass on to someone else?



LIVE purposefully

Family life comes in stages, it usually begins with a married couple, then often but not always, children are added to the mix and then there usually comes a time when children move out and begin their own journey apart from their parents. Each of these realities brings change and with that change, certain challenges. One of the challenges that we can have, particularly as parents, is to prioritise our children over our relationship with God. It can also happen with spouses or partners. Instead of finding our identity in Christ, we look to our partners or our children to find meaning and fulfilment in our lives. That is not to say that we should not pour love and care into our family relationships but rather, that we can really only offer the care and love that our families need when we are constantly receiving the love of Christ and being regularly nourished by God's Word. This needs to be our number one priority. Without a meaningful and sincere relationship with Jesus ourselves, we can not hope to encourage or foster the development of a sincere and meaningful relationship in our families.

12. We all have different family situations. If your primary role in your family is as a child, whether you live at home with your parents or in your own place, take this week to think about how you contribute to your family. What are some ways you could 'honour your father and your mother' this week? Get practical and make your ideas happen.

13. If your primary role in your family is as a parent, consider working with your family (depending on their ages) and try coming up with a family mission statement. What do you want your family to look and feel like? What are your families values and purpose? Make a commitment as a family to work together to make these things a reality.

14. If none of those categories apply to you, or even if they do, make a point this week of looking for the ways God is at work in your life and find someone to share that story with!



PRAY intentionally

- Praise God making you part of his family and for all the ways he blesses and cares for you as your Heavenly Father
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you notice and recall all the ways that God is at work in your life on a daily basis, and give you the courage to share those stories with others.
- Pray for those whose family situations are not loving and nurturing environments. Ask God to bring grace and healing to broken relationships, and to bring safety and security to those who suffer domestic violence.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

[Name], may Christ be the foundation of your family. Amen