

Introduction

Bible studies

The six Bible studies can be used to help prompt conversations about hospitality. They can be used in the order suggested or randomly.

All the Bible readings provided are from the New International Version (NIV), however you can use different translations.

knowing you, knowing me, knowing God

Each Bible Study is designed to explore what hospitality looks like in relation to others, yourself and God. (knowing you, knowing me, knowing God). The Bible studies can be used in different settings and, where possible, across different generations:

- At church
- In small groups / house groups / youth groups
- At school
- In homes
- Amongst friends
- With colleagues at work

Alternatively, the Bible studies can be used by individuals for personal study and reflection.

Bible Studies in groups

- Explore what the Bible verses have to say about hospitality.
- You might want to read the passage a few times allowing a few moments of silent reflection inbetween
- Use the questions as prompts, listening to what each person has to say
- Identify a prayer focus, or use the suggested prayer focus
- Set a challenge for the week ahead, or use the suggested challenge provided.

Lent 2022

Bible study resource



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Living the story. Telling the story.

Reading

1 Kings 17:7-16 Elijah and the Widow at Zarephath

⁷ Sometime later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. ⁸ Then the word of the Lord came to him: ⁹ “Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.” ¹⁰ So he went to Zarephath.

When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?” ¹¹ As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.”

¹² “As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

¹³ Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. ¹⁴ For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.’”

¹⁵ She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. ¹⁶ For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

Questions

Question 1

Think about a time when you were in a desperate position as Elijah was. Who did you turn to and why? What was the outcome?

Question 2

We read that the widow and her son were also in a desperate position. What stands out to you about how she responded to Elijah and what subsequently happened?

Question 3

What can be learnt from this Bible passage about hospitality and how it relates to:

- Others
- Yourself
- God

Suggested prayer focus

Pray for the widowed, orphaned and bereaved, especially those who find themselves in desperate circumstances.

Suggested challenge

Spend time this week with someone who is widowed or bereaved, or with someone who really needs your support. You could consider baking them a cake.

Reading

Luke 14:12-24 The Parable of the Great Banquet

¹² Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

¹⁵ When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

¹⁶ Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. ¹⁷ At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

¹⁸ “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’

¹⁹ “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’

²⁰ “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

²¹ “The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’

²² “‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’

²³ “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. ²⁴ I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’”

Questions

Question 1

Think about an occasion you were invited to but were unsure about attending. What was the outcome?

Question 2

In the passage, Jesus uses the earthly setting of a banquet to talk about a heavenly perspective. What stands out to you about those who were invited and those who eventually attended?

Question 3

What can be learnt from this Bible passage about hospitality and how it relates to:

- Others
- Yourself
- God

Suggested prayer focus

Pray for those who are often forgotten, left out, marginalised or who are never given the opportunities others are given.

Suggested challenge

Try to have a conversation this week with someone at work, in your neighbourhood or at school who normally seems to be left out or on the outside of things. You could use one of the everyday questions to prompt the conversation.

Reading

John 4:1-14 Jesus Talks with a Samaritan Woman

⁴ Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— ² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ³ So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.^[a])

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

¹¹ “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

¹³ Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Questions

Question 1

Think about a conversation you had with someone from a different culture or background. What did you discover about that person as a result of the conversation?

Question 2

In the culture of the day, it would have been shocking for Jesus to be seen in public talking to a Samaritan woman on her own. What stands out to you about the shared conversation Jesus and the Samaritan had and what happened?

Question 3

What can be learnt from this Bible passage about hospitality and how it relates to:

- Others
- Yourself
- God

Suggested prayer focus

Pray that the walls, attitudes and prejudice that divide people, cultures and nations diminish so that humanity can live with greater acceptance and understanding.

Suggested challenge

Go online and find out something about a different culture that you currently know little or nothing about. Then try to have a conversation with a friend or family member about what you discovered.

Reading

John 2:1-10 Jesus Changes Water Into Wine

¹ On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴ "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."

⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.^[b]

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

¹¹ What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

¹² After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.

Questions

Question 1

Discuss/think about a wedding that you have attended. What was the hospitality like and who was providing it?

Question 2

As the wine began to run out at the wedding feast, what stands out to you about the conversations that took place and what subsequently happened?

Question 3

What can be learnt from this Bible passage about hospitality and how it relates to:

- Others
- Yourself
- God

Suggested prayer focus

Pray for those who are preparing for marriage, or who are recently wed. These couples could be heterosexual, same sex, from different backgrounds, cultures or religions. Pray also for an end to enforced marriages.

Suggested challenge

If you know a couple who are recently married, why not buy them a small gift or bunch of flowers to let them know you are thinking of them.

Reading

Ruth 2: 1-23 Ruth Meets Boaz in the Grain Field

¹ Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, a man of standing from the clan of Elimelek, whose name was Boaz.

² And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favour."

Naomi said to her, "Go ahead, my daughter." ³ So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek.

⁴ Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, "The Lord be with you!"

"The Lord bless you!" they answered.

⁵ Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, "Who does that young woman belong to?"

⁶ The overseer replied, "She is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi." ⁷ She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.' She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter."

⁸ So Boaz said to Ruth, "My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me." ⁹ Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled."

¹⁰ At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, "Why have I found such favour in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?"

Questions

Question 1

Think about a time when you were in a vulnerable or potentially dangerous position that eventually worked out okay. How did you feel, what was the outcome and who was there to support you?

Question 2

In the passage, Ruth found herself in a vulnerable and dangerous position. What stands out to you about what happened with Ruth and how Boaz responded?

Question 3

What can be learnt from this Bible passage about hospitality and how it relates to:

- Others
- Yourself
- God

Suggested prayer focus

Pray for the displaced, for refugees, those forced into modern slavery and those who have recently been rehomed from war torn situations.

Suggested challenge

Contact a local organisation helping to resettle refugees to find out what is happening in your area. You could then ask if there is anything practical you, your church, your school or place of work can do to help.

Reading

11 Boaz replied, “I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. ¹² May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”

¹³ “May I continue to find favour in your eyes, my lord,” she said. “You have put me at ease by speaking kindly to your servant—though I do not have the standing of one of your servants.”

¹⁴ At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar.”

When she sat down with the harvesters, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over. ¹⁵ As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, “Let her gather among the sheaves and don’t reprimand her. ¹⁶ Even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don’t rebuke her.”

¹⁷ So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah.

^[a] ¹⁸ She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough.

¹⁹ Her mother-in-law asked her, “Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!” Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. “The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz,” she said.

²⁰ “The Lord bless him!” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. “He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.” She

Questions

Suggested prayer focus

Suggested challenge

Reading	Questions	Suggested prayer focus	Suggested challenge
<p>added, “That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers.^[b]”</p> <p>²¹ Then Ruth the Moabite said, “He even said to me, ‘Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain.’”</p> <p>²² Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with the women who work for him, because in someone else’s field you might be harmed.”</p> <p>²³ So Ruth stayed close to the women of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law.</p>			

Reading

Acts 3: 1-10 Peter Heals a Lame Beggar

¹ One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. ² Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” ⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

⁶ Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹ When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Questions

Question 1

When was the last time you encountered someone begging on the street? What did you think, how did you feel and how did you react?

Question 2

In the passage, Peter was not able to offer money to the man at the ‘Beautiful gate’, instead he prayed for healing. What stands out to you about what happened and how would you respond if you were faced with a similar situation today?

Question 3

What can be learnt from this Bible passage about hospitality and how it relates to:

- Others
- Yourself
- God

Suggested prayer focus

Pray for those living on the streets and having to beg. Pray for those who live with challenging illnesses and disabilities.

Suggested challenge

Contact your nearest organisation or foodbank that supports the homeless or those living in poverty. Find out what is happening in your local area and ask if there is anything practical you, your church, your school or place of work can do to help.