

- 6 *Psalm 126*
Joy and laughter. Is there enough of this in your own walk with God? Have you ever felt like someone who was in a dream because their life was so blessed by God (see v.1)?
- 7 *Psalm 127*
“Unless the Lord builds the house ...” (v.1).
Thus, the notes conclude that ‘our real security comes not from our assets and achievements, but from our relationship with God.’ We return to this view several times in Sacred yet do we really believe it and, if so, do we really act upon it?
- 8 *1 Chronicles 2*
The so brief mention of Er (v.3) leads us to wonder how history might remember us. If you could write your own epitaph (albeit not for a good while!) what would it say?
- 9 *1 Chronicles 6*
The priests had a central role in Israelite community life. Do you think the local parish priest still has a central role in community life today? In what way(s)?
And considering the story in the notes about the Reaney ‘dynasty’ at one local church, do you think there is an optimum amount of time for a priest to stay at a specific church (or churches) before moving on?
- 10 *1 Chronicles 15*
Should worship be carefully ordered and choreographed (vv.19-22) or spontaneous and free even incorporating dancing (v.29) or both?
Is it simply a matter of personal preference, or is there something more fundamental at work here?

Closing Prayer

Sit quietly and pray about issues that have arisen for you personally from the discussion. Close by saying together the Lord’s Prayer.

SACRED

Group Resources

Month 34

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord,
Teach us to serve thee as thou deservest,
To give and not to count the cost,
To fight and not to heed the wounds,
To toil and not to seek for rest,
To labour and not to ask for any reward,
Save that of knowing that we do thy will.
Amen.

(St. Ignatius Loyola, 1491-1556)

General Question

- 1 Have you found anything in the chapters you've read this month that has made you think in a different way about your walk with Christ?

Activity

The Songs of Ascent (*Psalms 120-134*) are a series of short pilgrim psalms that would have been recited (rather than read) en-route to Jerusalem to celebrate one of the major festivals.

There is a real power in listening to scripture recited by those for whom it is God's living Word. You may have tried it last month with the very short *Psalms 117*. This month's activity is to try again. Select one or two of the Songs of Ascent (I suggest *121*, *123* or *126*), allocate a couple of verses for each person to learn and then, when everyone is ready, sit in a circle reciting the whole psalm(s).

As you listened to one another, did the psalms come alive in a new way for you?

Further Ideas

Once again the aim is to think about a few of these questions rather than all of them, as the group decides.

- 1 *Psalms 121*
"The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and for evermore" (v.8). Have there been times when you've been going on a difficult journey where you've felt a real confidence that God was there watching over you through it?
- 2 *Psalms 122*
"I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord' (v.1). Do you feel you're missing out if you're away from church? What is it that you miss?"
- 3 *Zephaniah 1*
I wrote in the notes, 'When life gets too comfortable we can get too complacent.' Zephaniah thought this was true for Judah – indeed for others too (e.g. Assyria, *chapter 2*). Do you believe it's true for you? What steps can you take to combat this?
- 4 *Zephaniah 3*
God sees the beauty of what's possible, rather than the blemish of what's past. Have you known personally where a life has been transformed (perhaps your own life) through coming to a relationship with Christ?
- 5 *Nahum*
The prophet offers a graphic portrayal of the destruction of Nineveh. God is against them (2:13). But why? They had been the agents of God's judgment against the northern kingdom, so what clues are there as to why this change of heart now? What lessons can we learn from this today?