

Growth Group Notes: I am the Good Shepherd



Warm Up

In which situations do you feel most secure?
Insecure?

Who makes you feel most secure and loved? Insecure?

Introduction

Shepherds in the ancient world had a close bond with their sheep. They would call their sheep by name and the sheep would follow him because they knew that protection and nourishment would come from their shepherd's care. Jesus uses this image that would have been very familiar to his listeners to convey powerful truths about his relationship with his followers.

Biblical Background

The Old Testament describes spiritual leaders as the shepherds of God's people. Ezekiel in particular speaks out against bad leadership. This is helpful background to appreciate all Jesus is talking about when he says I am the Good Shepherd. If you have time read:

Ezekiel 34:1-16, 22-24

What does this tell us about how God views Christian leadership?

Who will be replacement shepherd be?

Notice the different between v11-16 & v22-24. How do you reconcile these?

Read John 10: 1-21

What are the things this passage tells us that the shepherd does for the sheep?

How does this compare with the hired hand?

What are the responsibility/ies laid on the sheep here?

Several times Jesus talks about laying down his life for the sheep: What does this tell us about the value Jesus places on the sheep?

At this point in the gospel, Jesus is just *talking* about laying down his life. But, we know how the story ends - how should that make us feel / think about ourselves?

Is this something you can readily identify with?

How do Jesus' listeners respond to his words, v6, 19-21?

Getting personal...

Even with a careful shepherd, sometimes sheep wander off and get into trouble. When have you been wandered off / been tempted to wander off?

What helped you hear the voice of the Good Shepherd again? What can we learn from this to take into our everyday lives?

Psalm 23 is another great reflection of this theme. Why not spend a few moments reading this psalm together and turning the blessings brought by the Good Shepherd into your prayers?

- Please make sure that your group is aware of the 24-7 prayer week running as a joint venture between our church, St John's Stoke, Christ Church & St Peter's. Why not decide to go to some things / times as a growth group. Burpham is leading worship on Tuesday evening. Book a slot on the 24-7 website – link via home page on www.burphamchurch.org.uk

Summary

*Simple 20 minute service of Bible readings and led prayers

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Overnight
Palm Sunday 25 th March			6pm-7.30pm 24/7 Prayer Launch Service	11pm Compline*
Monday 26th March	9am Morning Prayer *	1pm Lunchtime Prayer *	7.30-8.30pm Sung Worship (live contemporary worship) 8.30-9pm Holy Week Reflection (Bible reading, reflection and prayer)	11pm Compline*
Tuesday 27th March	9am Morning Prayer*	1pm Lunchtime Prayer*	7.30-8.30pm Sung Worship 8.30-9pm Holy Week Reflection	11pm Compline*
Wednesday 28th March	9am Morning Prayer*	1pm Lunchtime Prayer*	7.30-8.30pm Sung Worship 8.30-9pm Holy Week Reflection	11pm Compline*
Maundy Thursday 29th March	9am Morning Prayer*	1pm Lunchtime Prayer*	7.30-8pm Sung Worship 8pm Holy Communion <i>(ending in darkness)</i>	11pm Compline*
Good Friday 30th March	9.15–10am Family Service	2-3pm Hour at the Cross 4-6pm Ministry & Healing prayer	6pm Encounter Youth Only Worship Prayer and Sleepover event, ends 7:30am	
Saturday 31st March		Open Hands service 4-6pm especially for those with special needs		Prayer room closes at 6am Sunday Morning
Easter Sunday 1st April	Sunrise Services 6:30am at St Martha's & 7am at Green by St Peter's All churches have normal Easter Sunday morning services - see church websites		6pm Easter Celebration and confirmation service with guest speaker Bishop Andrew Watson	