

God's heart for justice

Vision: to realise how much is at stake and that caring for the poor and the vulnerable is not an optional extra, but absolutely essential to having a relationship with God.

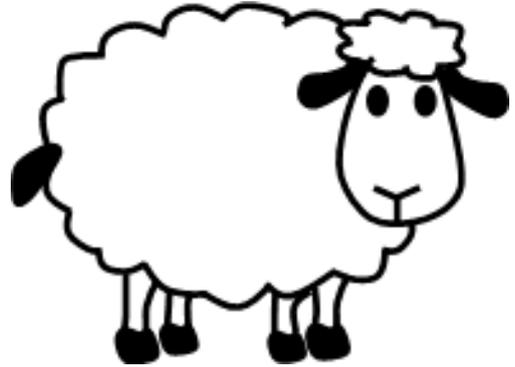
Optional video: What is true worship? <https://youtu.be/OJQsZRzqPSM> (4:54)

Matthew 25:31-46 - the sheep and the goats

Questions to discuss:

Context: Jesus tells a story about what will happen on the day of judgement

1. What is happening in this passage?
2. How do we feel while we are reading it?
3. Who do the sheep and the goats represent?
4. How, according to this passage, can we tell if someone truly has a relationship with God?
5. This passage tells us to look at everyone in need as if they were Jesus. What would we do if genuinely saw Jesus suffering? What lengths would we go to? How should this change the way that we relate to our community?
6. When have we failed to do this? How can we ensure that Jesus does not say to us, 'Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me'?



Act of Love: ask the group to pray for God to show them an action we can take individually or together before we meet next that treats someone who is very vulnerable as if they were Jesus.

Going deeper:

Participants enact passage while it is being read. Pause at various points to ask people how they are feeling.

Extra resource: Bible Project video <https://youtu.be/A14THPoc4-4> (6:17)

Notes for facilitator: see over page

Notes for facilitator:

- *God is judging people and dividing them between those going to heaven and those going to hell.*
- *If people say the goats are those that do not believe in Jesus, challenge this – the passage describes them as people that do know Jesus: they respond to Him by name, they clearly have some sort of relationship with him, and are shocked to be not allowed into heaven.*
- *How we show love to the poorest and most vulnerable shows whether someone truly has a relationship with God.*

God's heart for those experiencing poverty and injustice are key themes throughout the Bible. There are more references to poverty and injustice and our responsibility to respond than to many other themes that are given high priority in our church meetings - God places very high priority on this and knew that we could easily forget if we were not constantly reminded.

Everyone has the opportunity and challenge to respond to the biblical call.