

Justice matters

Vision: To reflect on our priorities as an individual, group and church and to align these to God's view of worship and how he wants us to continue/ deepen justice for those in need

Introduction

As go forward in our mission as a church and our engagement with our community, let us remember that *"True spirituality that is pure in the eyes of our Father God is to make a difference in the lives of the orphans and widows in their troubles, and to refuse to be corrupted by the world's values."* (James 1: 27 TPT). Reflect on the Bible passage below as a 'Lectio Divina', allowing God to align our values and focus with his.

Isaiah 1:1-13 – True worship

Lectio Divina

- 1. Reading:** Ask someone to pray for us to be open to the passage with our mind, heart and emotions and for his Holy Spirit to guide us. Read the passage slowly and prayerfully out loud. Read the passage again individually in our heads.
- 2. Meditation:** Take time now to reflect on the passage. You may want to move around; change seat; draw or write in a journal to help focus your heart. Be attentive to words, phrases and ideas that come to mind. Ponder them in your hearts and listen to what God might be saying to us.
- 3. Prayer:** Join up with one other person first to share your thoughts and feelings and to offer them together to God in prayer. Ask God to show you how he wants us to respond to and act on those.
- 4. Contemplation:** Come together in the whole group to sit or stand together in silence for a few minutes in the presence of God, allowing time just to be with God.
- 5. Living:** Share the thoughts and ideas that have emerged and what God might be saying to us through them and calling us to do.

Act of Love

Take time as a group to look back on the studies we have done together. Remind each other of some of the key things that God has said to you and how you have responded. Pray together and decide how you continue to take forward his priority for the poor and left out.

Going deeper:

Transect walk: As a group, couple of individual, walk across your local community, if possible with someone who is not from the church and who is connected to those who are struggling. Observe carefully what you see and ask them to share what they know about what people are going through, where they spend time, where they feel safe and where they feel scared, where they go for help and how they view the church. Feed this information into your prayers and ongoing actions to bring love and justice to those around us.

Summary for facilitator:

God says that the offerings and worship of the Israelites are 'detestable' to him as they are mistreating those who are poor and vulnerable. He 'hides' his eyes and does not listen to their prayers. Instead he calls them to 'seek justice', 'defend the oppressed', 'take up the cause of the fatherless' and 'plead the case of the widow'. The church must stand up for those who are overlooked and mistreated by others – that is what God sees as genuine worship.