



Session 1: A people prepared

JAN 1 - JAN 11

ICEBREAKERS

How have you prepared for an event such as a party or exam?

What are your hopes for the year ahead?

KEY THOUGHT

At the start of this year we need to be a people prepared, spiritually fit for what lies ahead if we are to impact our world.

KEY VERSE

'And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah ... to make a people prepared for the Lord.' Luke 1:17

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. As Selwyn asks on 1 Jan, how can you be spiritually fit for what lies ahead?
2. John the Baptist was a catalyst for change. How can you be?
3. On 3 Jan Selwyn predicts a new spiritual renaissance - what signs of it can you see?
4. In this post-Christian culture, in what sense are we missionaries in a Christian country?
5. Why may people feel Jesus has had His day?
6. Why can we slip into the habit of praying out of duty rather than relationship?

7. What different views of prayer may people have (see 7 Jan for some suggestions)?
8. On 8 Jan, Selwyn suggests that perhaps some things are contingent upon prayer - do you agree?
9. Discuss the quote of the elderly saint, found on Jan 9.
10. Communion and commission are the heartbeats of prayer. Do you have both in your prayer life?
11. Have you ever asked someone to teach you how to pray? What can you learn from 11 Jan's comments - and from each other?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.' Luke 22:42

PRAYER POINTERS

- Spend time asking God to help you realign your life to His will and purposes.
- Pray for God's help and inspiration as we study this new issue together.

Session 2: Read the Bible and listen to God JAN 12 - JAN 21

ICEBREAKERS

What is your favourite Bible passage and why?

Play some well-known songs so quietly that people have to really concentrate to identify them.

KEY THOUGHT

To be properly spiritually prepared, we need to read God's Word and learn how to listen to His voice.

KEY VERSES

'as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby' 1 Peter 2:2 (NKJV)

'his sheep ... know his voice' John 10:4

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why do you think so few Christians read the Bible every day?
2. How does the Bible correct our thinking?
3. Discuss Selwyn's reply to 'Why do you read the Bible?' found on 14 Jan.
4. Discuss the 'seven Rs' Selwyn mentions on 15-16 Jan. What practical suggestion do you find most helpful?
5. How much time do you spend listening to God?

6. Discuss together how God has spoken to you personally.
7. Discuss how helpful you find the suggestions on 19 Jan on how to listen to God.
8. How can we differentiate between God's voice and other voices?
9. What safeguards can we use to ensure that it is God's voice we've heard?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.' John 12:49

PRAYER POINTERS

- Ask God to help you allocate and prioritise your activities so you have sufficient time for reading and prayer.
- Spend some time tuning in and listening to God. Make a note to feedback at the start of the next session as to how much reading or listening you have done in the coming week. How much more have you heard God?



Session 3: Self-discipline

JAN 22 - JAN 28

ICEBREAKERS

Watch and discuss the discipline demonstrated by the children in the following video clip:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=amsqeY0k-w

KEY THOUGHT

Self-discipline is not self-effort to discipline yourself, but God helping your spirit discipline your self-desires and thereby renouncing things that would prevent you becoming like Christ and doing God's will.

KEY VERSE

'I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should.' 1 Corinthians 9:27 (NLT)

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- 1 How good are you at disciplining yourself?
- 2 What is the difference between striving to gain self-control and surrender?
- 3 How can we achieve the correct balance of grace and discipline?
- 4 Consider the quote by Churchill and Selwyn's addition, which are both found on 25 Jan.
- 5 How can discipline and joy go together?
- 6 Discuss the quote of Bill Gothard from 27 Jan: 'Freedom is not the power to do what we want, but the power to do what we ought'.

- 7 Discuss what you can learn from Selwyn's statement: 'We do not gain Christ through self-control, we gain self-control through Christ.'

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore, I have set my face like a stone, determined to do his will.' Isaiah 50:7 (NLT) (see Luke 9:51)

'At that time Jesus ... [was] full of joy through the Holy Spirit' Luke 10:21

PRAYER POINTERS

- Surrender together your desires and self-effort to God and ask for His help to become the disciples He wants you to be.
- Pray for each other, that you might be both disciplined and joy-filled.

Session 4: The centre of our attention

JAN 29 - FEB 4

ICEBREAKER

The sun is the centre of our solar system, but can you name the planets in order of their distance away? (You could ask people to draw the solar system on a sheet of paper.)

KEY THOUGHT

We cannot control the marginal issues of our lives if Christ is not central. But when Jesus is central, we will be spiritually self-disciplined because His love will burn in our hearts.

KEY VERSE

'He must become greater; I must become less' John 3:30

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- 1 Discuss the quote of Doctor Andrew Bonar about de-emphasising self on 29 Jan.
- 2 How might we surrender the marginal but keep back the central?
- 3 How could you be more in control of what you think about?
- 4 Could you take any steps to improve your general health?
- 5 How much do you agree with this description of our generation, which says we are 'a generation which is trying to eat and drink its way to prosperity, war its way

to peace, spend its way to wealth, and enjoy its way to heaven'?

- 6 Discuss how well each of you thinks you prioritise your time. Are you always in a rush and stressed, or have you learned to be poised like Jesus?
- 7 What do you think Selwyn means when he says, 'We become what we say'?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'when Christ came into the world, he said; "... a body you prepared for me ... I have come to do your will, O God.'" Hebrews 10:5-7

PRAYER POINTERS

- Thank Jesus that as head of the body He is the centre of our attention. Surrender yourselves to Him again today and ask Him to help you keep Him in His rightful place in your lives.
- Ask God for help in specific issues that give you difficulty, such as appetite, thoughts, speech, addictions, etc.



Session 5: The Holy Spirit

FEB 5 - FEB 9

ICEBREAKER

How many symbols of the Holy Spirit can you list? Which mean the most to you?

KEY THOUGHT

There is no way we can meet the needs of the modern world without the person, presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

KEY VERSES

'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you' Acts 1:8
'be filled with the Spirit.' Ephesians 5:18

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Discuss the words from William Cowper found on Feb 5.
2. Discuss the way in which the Holy Spirit interacted with the early church in Acts.
3. Discuss Selwyn's last paragraph from Feb 7 - have any of you got personal experience of having tried to be confident in yourself, but instead found confidence through the Holy Spirit?
4. How could you change to be more like a thermostat, triggering change, rather than merely registering the temperature around you like a thermometer?

5. Assess your spiritual condition so that you can become a 'person prepared' - how often do you feel strengthened by the Spirit?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.' Mark 1:10

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray for each other to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for a Holy Spirit-empowered revival in our nation.

Session 6: A sense of history

FEB 10 - FEB 15

ICEBREAKERS

What are your favourite memories of the past (eg. hot summers and England winning the World Cup!) ?
If appropriate, take Communion together.

KEY THOUGHT

To be a people prepared, we need to be conservative enough to preserve the best of the past but radical enough to trigger change for the future.

KEY VERSE

'another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.'
Judges 2:10

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why do we need to be both conservative and radical?
2. Discuss what type of books you read. Are the 'Christian' titles mainly about the future or the past?
3. Who inspires you most from the Old Testament and why?
4. What does Communion mean to you?
5. Discuss how keeping Jesus in our thoughts regularly allows Him more access to our hearts.

6. What is your favourite remembrance of Jesus?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them.' Matthew 5:17

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray that we will not reject our history simply because it is old but embrace the best of the past.
- Pray that we adapt to change and embrace the best of new initiatives so that we can show people that God is relevant today.



Session 7: The Bible and the Church

FEB 16 - FEB 19

ICEBREAKER

Watch www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMIQff2MkFk and www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPTMRn9PdiA
Now discuss the following question: How do modern discoveries help us explain our faith to doubters?

KEY THOUGHT

The Bible and the Church were initiated by God Himself thousands of years ago for the benefit of humankind and to help us be a people prepared to make a difference in our modern world..

KEY VERSE

'you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.' 2 Timothy 3:15

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why has the Bible lost its influence in our modern world?
2. Have you ever struggled with the reliability and veracity of the Scriptures? How did you overcome that struggle?
3. What part can you play in building the Church?
4. How can you help your church to be prepared for the future?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.' Matthew 16:18

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray for a new appreciation and confidence in the Bible and those organisations promoting it.
- Pray that your church in particular and the Church in general becomes all that God designed it to be.

Session 8: A new harmonious radicalism

FEB 20 - FEB 28

ICEBREAKER

Watch www.youtube.com/watch?v=J029rs4mJGs
How do all the children manage to perform in harmony?

KEY THOUGHT

God has made us a new creation, to live a life of genuine love and harmony with others so we truly represent Him and help a lost world reconcile to its Creator.

KEY VERSE

'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation' 2 Corinthians 5:17-18

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Is love a feeling or an action?
2. Discuss Selwyn's question on 21 Feb:
Do you put the needs of others on the same level as your own?
3. Define what Christian unity looks like.
4. How do you respond to Selwyn's description of 'a true Christian's response' being 'Because you say so' (found on 23 Feb)?

5. Do you find Martin Luther's comment from 24 Feb uncomfortable? Why or why not?
6. Discuss the following quote, from 25 Feb: 'Christians can learn to think straight and think biblically, and bring their knowledge and understanding to bear on world situations'.
7. How can you and your church engage with people where they feel comfortable?
8. Reflect honestly on whether your home life is a good example to others of your Christian faith.
9. What has impacted you most while looking at the subject of being prepared and how will you change as a result?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.' Ephesians 5:1-2 (NIV 2011)

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray for new harmony amongst Christians, radical evangelism and believers in spheres of influence.
- Pray that Christians of all denominations will be a people prepared for the challenges this year will bring.