

Home Group study: week beginning 18th July 2021

Better Together — Going to the Temple to Worship

Intro:

As Ken asked us on Sunday, Where — outside home — have you ever felt at home?
And, to add a supplementary, why?

Read: Psalm 122:1

New King James Version: I was glad when they said to me,
'Let us go into the house of the LORD.'

NIV: I rejoiced with those who said to me,
'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'

Understanding

This Psalm is ascribed to David though not in all original sources: and the text suggests it may have been written at a later date. Never mind that! Why is the writer, David or not, glad — or why, in the NKJV, does he rejoice? Is there a sense of him feeling 'at home' in the House of the Lord? Why do you think that might be?

The NKJV version, 'I was glad', is the more familiar of the two translations quoted here; it was made well known by the great Coronation anthem, 'I was glad' (*written by Charles Hubert Parry for King Edward VII's coronation in 1902 and then used in the following Coronations including Queen Elizabeth II's*). However Ken told us that the NIV version, 'I rejoiced', encapsulates the sense of what the Psalmist is saying than the more familiar 'I was glad' wording. How would you define 'glad' and how would you define 'rejoiced'? As Ken asked us on Sunday, when was the last time any of us rejoiced?

What does the Psalmist mean by 'the House of the Lord'? Can we use that phrase to describe the Jubilee Centre? If not, how might we better use the phrase?

Who do you think 'they', or 'those who said to me', are? Are we more or less likely to go to church if we are encouraged by other members of the church family?

Some people say, 'I don't need the church to practise my faith'. Some may be reluctant to come to church for a number of reasons. They may have had a bad experience, they may have felt unwelcome in a church — or of course in these times they may just be concerned about being in a confined space with too many people, especially when they're likely to sing. What would you say to such a person?

Application

You may not know much about the Shorter Catechism, a list of 107 questions and answers adopted by the Church of England and the Church of Scotland in 1648. But you may have heard the first of those 107 questions:

‘What is the chief end of man?’ and its answer:

‘Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.’

Firstly would you agree with that answer? What one word may sum up ‘to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever’? (*Clue: it begins with ‘W’ and isn’t ‘wombat’.*)

How does David, or whoever wrote Psalm 122, show that he is living out the glorification of God, and is enjoying him forever? Do we actually enjoy worship? If not, how can we seek to ensure that we do?

Assuming we *do* agree with that answer about man’s chief end, how easy is it to glorify God and enjoy him forever on our own? What advantages are gained by doing it together as a church family? Are we longing to get back to worshipping together or do we now prefer worshipping in the comfort of our own home?

Spend a bit of time glorifying God and expressing enjoyment to him in a time of worship. If you don’t have access to music to do this you could go through a worship Psalm together. Ps33: 1-11 would be one possibility; or Ps136:1-9, in which we can proclaim praise by reciting the psalm and using the response in each verse (*verse 10 onwards is perhaps less relevant to us today than it would have been to Jewish people in Old Testament times, for whom remembering God’s part in their history was an important part of worship*).

And don’t forget, anyone can turn up for church now on a Sunday and we can worship together: masks are still encouraged so as not to spread any infection.