

# GBC LIFE GROUP RESOURCES 2024

## Series: Our Extra Ordinary Life Together

### Introduction to GBC Life Group Resources

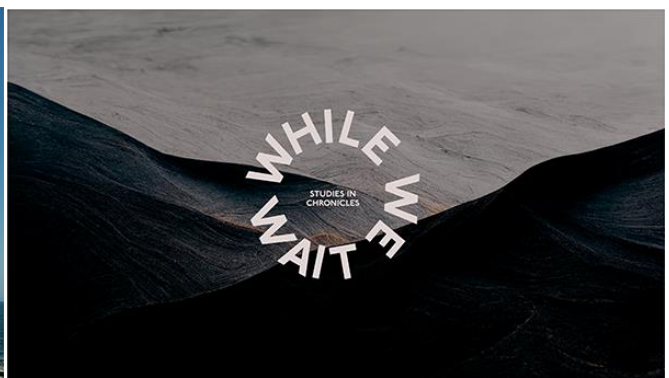
Life Groups are a critical ministry of our extra ordinary life together at Gynea Baptist Church. These resources are produced each Monday as a companion to the sermon series. Choosing to use these resources facilitates our sense of community as we share together around common themes and passages.

Each week's resource includes a brief overview of the sermon series and of the sermon (which can be accessed on GBC's YouTube channel or via your favourite podcast platform), along with a series of activities to do together. Don't forget that The Big Ill podcast comes out mid-week as another companion to the sermon.

These range from questions to ask, prayers to pray, practices to try, and biblical passages to read (usually in the time between Life Group meetings). Feel free to pick and choose what will work well for your group – you don't have to do everything!

In 2024 we have also begun to include some additional information that we are encouraging our Life Group leaders, as leaders of GBC, to be sharing with your group. These include reflecting on a particular mission commitment of GBC, promoting and praying for GBC initiatives, and celebrating what God is doing in and through our community of faith.

If you have feedback on these resources, please email Nicole Jones: [office@gymeabaptist.org.au](mailto:office@gymeabaptist.org.au).



### While We Wait—Studies in Chronicles

While We Wait is our Old Testament series for 2024 and we will be dipping in and out of Chronicles over the course of the year. This is the second block and will run through to May.

Chronicles was written to provide God's people with a model for how to live while they were waiting, with increasing desperation, for the promises of God to be fulfilled. Part of our extra ordinary life together is to encourage one another while we wait for the promises of God to restore and renew all things in Christ Jesus to be fulfilled. I believe that there are important and timely lessons for us to learn in Chronicles and look forward to diving more deeply into this text over the course of the year.

### A Brief Overview of This Week's Sermon

Key Text(s): 1 Chronicles 15:25-28; 16:7, 8-36

The Chronicler begins his account of David's reign with David's determination to bring the ark of the covenant up to Jerusalem. The amount of space dedicated to this event (it is a significant expansion of how the same story is told in 2 Samuel) should give us reason to pause and consider the importance of this event to the Chronicler's history.

The ark of the covenant was the symbol of the Lord's presence with his people; almost a portable throne. It had been built according to the Lord's specifications by the Israelites at Mount Sinai after the exodus. Like the account in 2 Samuel, the first attempt to bring up the ark was stalled when Uzzah touched the ark and was struck dead.

After consultation David makes a second attempt. This time, instead of putting the ark on a cart, the Levites carry it on poles as was intended. The procession was a national holiday of sorts. The Levitical choirs sang, there were sacrifices, royal food was prepared for the crowd, and the ark was brought in with singing and dancing.

The Chronicler (who many commentators believe was a Levite given his access to and knowledge of Levitical records) includes much more detail than the account in 2 Samuel. One of the most interesting additions is the psalm that is found in 1 Chronicles 16:8-36. This is a mash-up of three psalms found in the Psalter that the Chronicler has compiled because they contain critical themes that have marked the worship of God's people from David's time. To put it another way, the psalm that the Chronicler includes may not have been the actual psalm sung by Asaph and his associates, but it represents the identical themes that they did celebrate before the ark.

The psalms used by the Chronicler are Psalm 105:1-15, Psalm 96, and Psalm 106:1, 47-48. The selection of these three psalms is deliberate. Psalm 105 is an historical psalm that is focused on God's faithfulness to his covenant promises to Israel as demonstrated in the lives of the patriarchs (the section included by the Chronicler) and in the exodus (the section of Psalm 105 that the Chronicler does not include). The focus on the lives of the patriarchs is telling since the patriarchs, like the Chronicler's audience, were few in number and living as strangers in the promised land. Recalling the past faithfulness of God is a critical practice for those who are waiting for his new work.

Psalm 96 is what is known as an enthronement psalm; a psalm celebrating God's rule and reign. What is particularly interesting about the Chronicler's selection is that this psalm doesn't mention the king as the representative of God's rule on earth. This is particularly striking since the Chronicler is describing David's reign and rule; a model rule in many ways. Psalm 96 focuses exclusively on the reign and rule of God apart from any human, earthly representative – again, a parallel with the returned exiles to whom the Chronicler is writing.

Finally, the Chronicler refers to Psalm 106 but only to the opening verse and the closing verses. If all the Chronicler wanted was a psalm that started with praise and ended with supplication he could have used any number of psalms. Instead, he has used Psalm 106 which, after the opening invitation to praise, reflects on Israel's history of failure, before calling on God to rescue and save.

Psalm 106 is a companion to Psalm 105 and together they end Book IV of Psalms (which some scholars believe takes as its theme the time in exile). The first focuses on God's faithfulness, the second on Israel's failure. They fail to remember God's mighty acts, they fail to wait for God's plan to unfold, they give in to their cravings, fail to trust the leaders God has raised up for them, seek other gods, disobey, rebel, and act wickedly. This decision by the Chronicler would not have been missed by his original audience. The excision of the well-known failures of Israel was a reminder that the promises of God were not threatened by their actions nor brought to pass by their righteousness. The promises of God depend on the character of the one who made them. However, the failures of Israel are still the failures of the people and there is a subtle invitation to confession in the Chronicler's use of Psalm 106.

Ultimately, the psalm that the Chronicler has constructed as a 'typical' psalm of God's people, from David's time to his own (and beyond) functions a bit like an overture. It introduces key themes that will shape the way he tells his history of Israel. The faithfulness of the Lord in the past and the reign of rule of God that exists and continues even when Israel doesn't have a king is a prominent one. Another is the invitation for the waiting community of faith to commit to remember the faithfulness of God and to a life of continual confession as they wait on the Lord.

We'll hear these motifs and themes throughout our study in Chronicles.

### Questions to Ask

1. The Chronicler's psalm encourages the waiting community of faith to remember the faithfulness of the Lord in the past. How has the Lord demonstrated his faithfulness to you, this community of faith, and to his church in the past?
2. How would our lives change if we truly lived like "The Lord reigns!" (16:31)?
3. Read the failures of Israel in Psalm 106 (vv. 7, 13-14, 16, 19-22, 24-25, 28-29, 32-39, 43) and reflect on how closely they relate to a failure to wait for the Lord's promises to be fulfilled (Note: This does require some familiarity with the stories that Psalm 106 refers to. You may need to return to Exodus and Numbers to refresh your memory.)

4. The promises of God are not realised by our faithfulness or threatened by our failure but are based on the character of the one who made the promises. How does this reality shape our understanding of confession?

#### A Prayer to Pray

1. Pray for faithfulness while we wait and take some time to confess our sins (perhaps using Psalm 106 as a pattern). Be sure to begin and end with a focus on God's faithfulness to respond with mercy!

#### A Practice to Try

1. If you kept a faithfulness journal (see LGR #7), share them with the group.

#### Readings to Read This Week

The readings this week are related to the return of ark including its backstory.

1. Exodus 25:10-22
2. 1 Samuel 4:1-11
3. 1 Samuel 5
4. 1 Samuel 6:1-7:2
5. 1 Chronicles 13

#### A Mission Commitment to Reflect on

We hope that our Life Groups help people feel connected to one another and committed to our mission together as a community of faith. To that end, we encourage Life Group leaders to remind your group about our mission commitments. Each week we'll draw attention to one or more of those commitments that fits neatly with the topic or theme. (See "GBC Mission Commitments" document for an overview of our commitments).

The idea that God invites us to participate in his plans and purposes reminds us that it is up to God to bring transformation. We are called to faithful participation, but it is God's work!

#### A GBC Initiative to Promote/Celebrate

Each week we will provide you with a key aspect of our community news that we would encourage you to remind your Life Group about.

1. Community Hubs are a ministry initiative of GBC and Hopefield where non-professional volunteers from GBC join with Hopefield to serve our community. Hopefield have several community hubs that require volunteers (e.g., a social connection group, a walking group, and a need for creche helpers). Encourage your group to consider if they might be willing and able to join in these important strategic initiatives. For more information see GBC link tree or the Hopefield website ([hopefield.org.au](http://hopefield.org.au)) under Volunteers.

## Additional Resources

### The mission commitments of GBC

We have made several references to the mission commitments of GBC. This is the title we have given to our vision, purpose, and values. These will no doubt be familiar to you, but we thought it might be helpful to provide a clear overview of them.

Our mission commitments begin with **John 20:21, “As the Father sent me, I am sending you.”** These words contain a central belief about what we are called to as a community of faith: that we are to continue to ministry and mission of Jesus to restore and renew everything according to the will of the Father and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we reflected on this commission, we formulated a mission statement to attempt to summarise what we wanted to do. While we don't refer to it very often, it is helpful to see the progression of our thought. The **mission** we formulated was: **Everywhere we go and in everything we do, we will invite everyone to follow Jesus.**

Taking the pattern we find in the Gospels we affirm that anyone can begin to follow Jesus; regardless of what they believe about his, what they know about him, and without changing their lives. When Jesus called his first disciples, he demanded none of these things; only inviting them to follow him. Over time they learned about him which challenged their beliefs about him and raised the implications for their lives, but initially, they only needed to be willing to follow.

The individual transformation that comes as people place their trust in Jesus and the commission that he has sent us to participate in led to a simple **vision statement**; what we want to see. **We want to see lives changed by Jesus.**

All of this took shape in our **purpose** as a community of faith – our “why”. **To be a community of faith who courageously take up the invitation of God the Father to participate in His grand plan to restore and renew all things in Christ Jesus through the enabling presence of the Holy Spirit.**

It was only as we gained clarity on our purpose that we identified a set of values that we believed were aligned with these mission commitments. The five values we identified are:

- To be **On-Purpose**. Intentional to create margins in our lives to participate in God's mission.
- To be **Big-Hearted**. Generosity in all our resources as a reflection of God's own generosity to us is a central value.
- To be **Whole-Life Learners**. As followers of Jesus we are called to ongoing transformation of our lives; learning to be more like Jesus. This also invites humility as we recognise our ongoing need of change.
- To be **Others-Focused**. To demonstrate love and care to others, over and above ourselves is a key characteristic of followers of Jesus.
- To be **Trust-Worthy**. We don't want to get in the way as people begin to follow Jesus. We want to reflect this value in our commitment to being a Safe Church.

These are the mission commitments that we hope will serve to give us some common language that reminds us of our unity together as followers of Jesus and the community of faith here at GBC.