

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@gyneabaptist.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 22:2-19; Deuteronomy 31:1-8

The Chronicler's depiction of David has been focused on the king's dedication and commitment to the temple. This is by far the most prominent activity of David's reign and this focus continues in the closing chapters of 1 Chronicles which is taken up with David's preparations for the temple and the transition from David to his son Solomon who is charged with completing this task.

This is, however, no mere transition of power. The Chronicler has patterned his account of the transition on one of the great transitions in Scripture; that between Moses and Joshua. The parallels are significant. In both cases the older leader is unable, by command of the Lord, to complete the task that is being handed over. In both cases the task is linked to the promises of the Lord and it is in the Lord's strength that it will be completed. In both cases, the leaders of Israel are called to help and in both instances the successor is told to be "strong and courageous".

This exhortation is one that is given in the context of covenant faithfulness rather than the project at hand. In both instances this is made clear by the context and points to an important distinction between the promises of the Lord and the purposes of the Lord. In the case of Joshua, the entry into the land and its conquest was according to the promise of the Lord. In the case of Solomon, the completion of the temple was the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to David.

The purposes of the Lord, however, were not completed in either the conquest of the land or in the completion of the temple. The purpose of the Lord – and what the encouragement to be “strong and courageous” points to – was much, much more than that. Israel was to be planted in the land of Canaan in order to be God's people; aligning their values, priorities, and behaviours with those of the Lord. They were to be a living, breathing, display home to the nations of what it looked like to live in relationship with the Lord. In the language of the Old Testament, they were to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests.

The Chronicler wants to remind his readers of the same distinction. The completion of the temple was a significant event, not because of the architectural feat that it may have been, but because it was a reminder of their purpose. The temple was to be a reminder of the organising principle of their lives; the right worship of God.

In this context, then, David's example becomes more striking. He is not just making preparations for a construction site! The temple will symbolise their relationship with God and the purpose that they have been given.

David's attention to detail – while it makes for tough reading – is admirable. There would have been very little for Solomon to actually do! Likewise, the resources that David sets aside for the temple were excessive. We would do well to do the same in our own endeavour to live into God's purposes for us.

David's example is inspired by a very important principle; that the purpose that Israel had been given was the Lord's and he had chosen them to participate with them. The divine choice overrides their failures and flaws. Israel (and, by extension, you and I) had not been invited to apply to join God's activity, but had been, so to speak, divinely head-hunted. On an application basis David would not have been able to participate, but he understood that the Lord's choice made it possible for an imperfect man to throw himself fully into what God was doing.

We are called to do the same!

Questions to Ask

1. Read Deuteronomy 31:1-8 and compare it to 1 Chronicles 22:2-19. What other similarities do you notice? (If you're feeling keen, have a look at Joshua 1 and 1 Chronicles 28 for the second telling of each transition.)
2. Discuss the distinction between the promises and purposes of God.
3. The purpose of God's people has always been to be a living, breathing display home of what it looks like to live in relationship with God. Discuss.
4. Marc used the distinction between applying for a job and being head-hunted to help us recognise the significance of God's choice of each of us. We are invited to participate, not apply to God's plans, meaning that our failures and flaws do not necessarily disqualify us. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this analogy?
5. David's example of attention to detail and vast resources provides us with a model for our own pursuit of God's purposes. How can we be more attentive and what resources can we set aside for this purpose.
6. Is there someone in your life who exhibits a passion for God's purpose in their life? How do they demonstrate that?

A Prayer to Pray

1. Spend some time giving thanks for God's choice and his invitation to participate rather than apply. Commit yourselves to living into God's purposes for his people.

A Practice to Try

1. If you identified someone in Question 6 above, take an opportunity to let them know that they are an encouragement to you in faith.

Readings to Read This Week

The readings this week focus on God's choice. Pay attention to the implications of the divine choice for his people.

1. Deuteronomy 4:32-40
2. Psalm 105
3. Isaiah 44:1-5
4. Romans 8:30-39
5. 1 Corinthians 1:26-2:5

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.)

Our purpose is God's purpose; to restore and new all things in Christ Jesus. We try to keep this front and centre for our community of faith.

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. It's May Mission Month! Encourage your group to pray for the various projects (there is a Thursday night Zoom prayer, hosted by the elders, from 7:30-8:00 that will focus on these projects). One of our success criteria for May is that we have more people contributing year on year. Encourage your group to prayerfully consider how they might participate this year.

Link to Thursday Prayer Night Zoom:

You can join in using this link <https://bit.ly/gbcthursdaynightprayer> or using the Meeting ID: 983 2435 8394 and Passcode: 071929.

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.