

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 17:1-15

In his attempt to present a model for how to live while we wait for the promises of God to be fulfilled, the Chronicler has begun his historical overview with the reign of David. His account, however, has been focused. He has not included any of the events leading up to David's reign that are found in 1 & 2 Samuel. There is no reference to his anointing by Samuel, no reference to his defeat of Goliath, no mention of his meteoric rise in the kingdom, no reflection on Saul's jealousy or David's time in the wilderness fleeing from the king, no account of his exile in Philistia, or of the seven-year civil war that engulfed Israel after Saul's death. Instead, the Chronicler has focused on "essential" David. And our passage this week is certainly essential.

The Lord's promises to David form a key theological foundation of the Old Testament and one that was particularly troubling for the Chronicler's readers. And what was so troubling? The promise of the Lord that David's house/dynasty would be established forever. For a group of people living a century after the return from exile, the delay in this promise was so great that it appeared to have failed. Why would the Chronicler

bring this promise up? Why not focus on David's patient waiting in the wilderness? Why return to this promise? [To see how deep a wound this promise had left, see Psalm 89. A psalm that reflects on the seemingly failed promises of God to David.]

A comparison with the parallel account in 2 Samuel 7 provides a clue about what the Chronicler is doing. For the most part, the Chronicler has cut and pasted the account from 2 Samuel with very few changes. There are, however, two changes that appear a bit more significant. The first is that the Chronicler deletes the reference to the Lord disciplining David's descendants. This was past history and was well known. The second is that instead of describing David's house and kingdom, the Chronicler refers to God's house and God's kingdom. This shift of perspective is critical. It reminds the people that what they are waiting for is not the kingdom of David to be restored but for the kingdom of God to be established. The Chronicler is seeking to shift their gaze from the stump of David's house to the forest of God's plans and purposes.

And the kingdom of God is a prominent theme in Chronicles and picks up an important theme of the grand plans of God. It goes all the way back to creation and the mandate to humanity to have dominion; to reign as God's stewards and expand the garden until the whole earth was filled with the glory of God.

When humanity decided to attempt to rule on their own behalf and in their own wisdom (with disastrous consequences) the Lord didn't abandon his plans but called Abraham and promised to bless the whole world through his descendants. When those descendants became a mighty nation, the Lord brought them up out of Egypt and declared that they were to be a kingdom of priests; mediating the blessing of the Lord to the whole world. David and his descendants were to be part of that plan but through their unfaithfulness were exiled.

The promises of God were delayed but had not failed and the Chronicler is reminding his readers of this. He wants them to look beyond the stump of David's line to the forest of God's plans and live accordingly. And the same is true for us.

We can often get fixated by the delayed promises of God rather than remembering the arc of history that points to the ultimate fulfillment of those promises.

And the time would come when the delayed promises of God, even those to David, would be fulfilled (see Isaiah 11:1-3).

Questions to Ask

1. Describe a time when keeping the big picture in mind was helpful in managing the little picture. Why was this so helpful?
2. How do you think the Chronicler's readers had tried to deal with the delay in God's promises? What answers do we often give to God's delay?
3. When does a delayed promise become a failed or broken promise?
4. We live in the tension between promises made and promises fulfilled. What helps you live faithfully in the midst of delay?

A Prayer to Pray

1. Pray that we might be encouraged to remember the big promises of God in our day to day lives.

A Practice to Try

1. Focus on the big promises of God this week; reminding yourself as often as you think of it, to keep them in mind. Observe how this practice influences your decisions.

Readings to Read This Week

The readings this week reflect the texts Marc referred to in his sermon.

1. Psalm 89

2. 2 Samuel 7:1-17
3. 1 Chronicles 17:16-27
4. Isaiah 11:1-9

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.)

Again, the mission that we are invited into is a perfect place for further reflection.

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. Many of our ministries are on break due to the school holidays. Pray for our kids and youth teams as they have a break.

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.