

# 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 first block is only two weeks long (March 10 & 17), but we will return to it after Easter.

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 1-9 (the genealogies)

When we wait for a long time with few indicators that what we are waiting for we can begin to give up. Or, rather, our sense of anticipation and readiness begins to erode until we finally end up no longer really waiting.

The people that the Chronicler was writing to were in danger of giving up; their anticipation and readiness worn down by the long wait. There is some evidence to suggest that the Chronicler was writing in the closing years of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (400s) to the remnant who had returned from exile more than a century earlier (530s). That return – after half a century of exile – was a miraculous fulfilment of prophecy; the down payment on the promises of the Lord to remain committed to his plans to bless the world through his people. As the return faded further and further into their past, the people were finding it more and more difficult to wait with anticipation and readiness. Into this situation the Chronicler wrote his reforming history – a historical review meant to reform his readers.

And he began his work with nine chapters of genealogical records.

The placement (at the beginning) and the scope (nine chapters) inform us that these records are important to the Chronicler. So, what can we learn from these records?

Scholars point out that the records are arranged in a seven-fold chiasmic pattern where the first part corresponds to the last, the second to the sixth, the third to the fifth, and the fourth stands alone. In a chiasmic pattern our eye is drawn to two locations: the first pair (#1 and #7) and the middle.

When we pay attention to these two sections we learn two important things about the Chronicler's purposes. The first section of the genealogical records begin with Adam and include the founding of the nations (e.g., the Kittites and Rodanites in 1:7). The story of Israel, which the Chronicler will go on to tell, is set against the grandest backdrop – creation and the Lord's purpose for all humanity (represented in Adam). This is confirmed by the last section of the genealogical records (beginning in 9:2) describes the remnant who returned from exile. The remnant are not just a small group of relatively unimportant people living in a small part of the Persian Empire, but those through whom the Lord will accomplish his grand plans!

The second section that catches our eye is the middle of the chiasm – the genealogical records of the tribe of Levi. (The other sections include the records of the other tribes: Judah, the northern tribes who settled on the east side of the Jordan; Levi, the northern tribes who settled on the west side of the Jordan; and Benjamin. Judah and Benjamin made up the southern kingdom who remained loyal to David, the northern tribes made up the northern kingdom who did not.) The tribe of Levi was the priestly tribe; the tribe who were set apart to teach the people how to live according to the ways of the Lord and with the care of the temple. This is a prominent theme (so much so that many commentators believe that the Chronicler was a Levite!) in 1 & 2 Chronicles and forms a centre piece to the Chronicler's model for life while waiting; a life of worship. This is more than sacrifices and offerings, but is a life aligned in values, priorities, and behaviours to the ways of the Lord.

The genealogical records set the stage for the remainder of the work; a story with universal implications and one where right worship plays an important part in the waiting community.

### Questions to Ask

1. What are you waiting for? Have you ever waited so long for something that your anticipation and readiness eroded to the point that you found yourself no longer waiting?
2. What are the implications of no longer anticipating or being ready for God's work to happen?
3. The Chronicler wants to remind God's people that they are, believe it or not, part of a grand, universal story and that one of the things they can do as they wait is prioritise worship (which is more than synagogue attendance, but the alignment of values, priorities, and behaviours to the ways of God). How might these reminders help us as we wait?
4. Marc drew attention to the list of people in Hebrews 11 – a faith genealogy of those who persevered even though none of them received what they were waiting for. How do others encourage us to hold firm to a life of readiness (and faith) while we wait?

### A Prayer to Pray

1. As a community of faith we regularly speak about God's grand plan to restore and renew all things in Christ Jesus. This is a hope that is difficult to wait for. Commit each other and our community of faith to the Lord; asking that we might remain expectant and ready to participate where we are invited to do so.

### A Practice to Try

1. Using Hebrews 11 as a model, create your own genealogy of faith – a list of those who have encouraged and inspired you to persevere in faith. They may be actual family members, but the list will most likely include many others. Share this genealogy of faith with your group when you meet next.

### Readings to Read This Week

This week read through Hebrews 11. Pay attention to any lessons we can learn about how to live while waiting.

1. Hebrews 11:1-7
2. Hebrews 11:8-22
3. Hebrews 11:23-31
4. Hebrews 11:32-38
5. Hebrews 11:39-12:3

### 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.)

Both our purpose statement – to participate in God's grand plans to restore and renew the world – or our vision – to see lives changed by Jesus – describe what we are waiting for and may provide a fruitful place to discuss how hard it is to wait.

### 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. Good Job sermon series response survey. The link to this survey is on the GBC LinkTree page. If your group participated in the series, we'd love to get some feedback this week on the series.
2. Annual General Meeting. Sunday March 24 (11:30-1:00) is our AGM where we receive the annual report for 2023 and hear a few reports on the start of the year. Please encourage your group to read the report and to attend if they are able. (Meeting documents are also on GBC LinkTree).

## 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.