

# GBC LIFE GROUP RESOURCES 2024

## Series: Our Extra Ordinary Life Together

### Introduction to GBC Life Group Resources

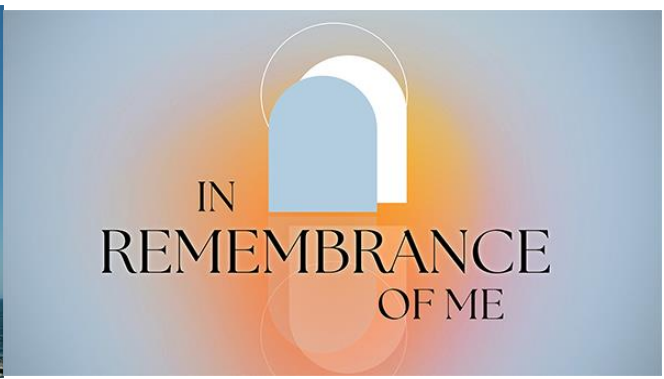
Life Groups are a critical ministry of our extra ordinary life together at Gynea Baptist Church. These resources are produced each Monday as a companion to the sermon series. Choosing to use these resources facilitates our sense of community as we share together around common themes and passages.

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@gyneaabaptist.org.au](mailto:office@gyneaabaptist.org.au).



### In Remembrance of Me

In Remembrance of Me is our theme for Easter this year. Given that Easter falls in school term there will be Life Group resources for both Sundays of this brief series (though not for Good Friday). The focus is on “remembering” in Luke’s gospel and the three passages we’ll be looking at include Mary’s song, the thief on the cross (Good Friday) and the women at the tomb.

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

Key Text(s): Luke 1:46-55

Mary’s song is not usually thought of as an Easter reading but Luke has placed this song (along with Zechariah’s) at the opening of his gospel, and they have an interpretive role; setting the stage for what is to follow (much like Hannah’s song in 1 Samuel 2:1-10). There are several themes that are found in both songs. The first to draw attention to is our theme for this series: God’s remembering of his people. What is critical about remembering is that it is more than mental recall but an action. If I mentally recall that I need to buy milk, but don’t actually buy the milk, my declaration that I remembered to buy milk will fall on deaf ears! When God remembers his people, he acts (see Genesis 8:1; Exodus 2:24; Psalm 25:6-7). This signals Luke’s intent to demonstrate how God has remembered his people in sending Jesus.

A second key theme (also reflecting Hannah's song) is that of the reversals that indicate God's activity in the world. These reversals have already been evident in the way Luke has told his narrative. Zechariah, a priest with a lifetime of experience with the Lord and given the task to teach God's people responds to the message of the angel with doubt and is silenced until the promised son is born while Mary, a young woman from a non-descript part of Judea responds with faith and it is her song that we hear first. And that song reflects on the reversals of fortunes that accompany the remembering of God.

The song invites us to consider all that Jesus does against its backdrop; to keep an eye out for reversals that indicate God is at work – and we certainly do! The reversals present in Jesus' ministry are myriad. From those who Jesus interacts (social reversal) to the many healings (physical and spiritual reversals) we see God at work.

Mary and Zechariah both recall God's actions, but their recall is not complete without action. If God is at work, it is not enough to recall it! We are invited to jump onboard with God's activity in reversing the destructive trajectory of our world and bringing forgiveness and life!

### Questions to Ask

1. Read through Mary and Zechariah's songs and identify the reversals that they identify.
2. Where do we see those reversals in Jesus' ministry? Flick through Luke's gospel (maybe break it into smaller sections and have pairs of people look through them) and see how many reversals you can find.
3. How might we begin to live – in our priorities, values, and behaviours – to align ourselves with God's work in the world? What reversals might we be invited to participate in?

### A Prayer to Pray

1. Ask the Lord to remember you, your family, our church, and the world.

### A Practice to Try

1. This month, HopeDrive coincides with Easter. While we will not have the drive-thru option in the afternoon, we are encouraging people to bring non-perishable goods to our services. Take this opportunity to participate in a reversal – “filling the hungry with good things” (Luke 1:53a) – and make this a spiritual practice this weekend.

### Readings to Read This Week

The following passages are examples of God's remembering. As you read them, consider the actions/reversals that follow.

1. Genesis 8-9 (There are a couple of instances of “remembering”).
2. Exodus 5:22-6:12
3. Leviticus 26:40-45
4. Psalm 74
5. Isaiah 38

### 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 create discussion points for participating in the reversals.

### 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. Our Easter services include a Tenebrae service on the Thursday evening (a service of shadows in which there is no sermon but only a series of readings reflecting on the growing darkness that surrounded Jesus), Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.

Research by the National Church Life Survey found that 42% of Australians would accept an invitation to an Easter service. Who might you invite to our Easter Sunday service?

## 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.