

Time for God – Take 2

Purpose: To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service/passage.

Week beginning Sunday 5 August 2018 Bread of Life

Pray that we would appreciate our “daily bread” both in spiritual and material terms and be ready to make fullest use of all the provision God makes for us to share in his mission.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). John 6: 26-40 but with refs to other parts of the chapter.

Background The feeding of the 5000 is very familiar to most of us though it is quite clear that this was about far more than dealing with a food/hunger issue. The passage quite definitely wishes to indicate to us that there was a whole lot more to Jesus than met the eye. It wasn't yet time for Jesus to make any definitive declarations that he was the Christ or God's Son but these events were stretching both the disciples' and the crowd's understanding of who Jesus was. We need to be open not just to the story, but to its underpinning and intention. Jesus was from God and he came to bring the living bread, bread for eternal life, not just food for a day.

Possible questions/points to consider

1. Try to put yourself in the shoes of one of the crowd at the feeding of the 5000. Why might you have been there? What might you have thought about what happened? How would your view of Jesus have changed? What might you have told your friends the following day?
2. There are far too many people in the world today who are sorely in need of food. Jesus encouraged his disciples “you give them something to eat” – which scared them silly. What steps can we as Christians in an age of hunger take to rise to the responsibilities Jesus places on us? Discuss for example Fairtrade, food justice, international aid, charitable giving, campaigns and advocacy.
3. Clearly, Jesus was doing far more than giving the crowd something to eat though he did do that! What did the feeding of the crowd say about who Jesus was? People had the opportunity to have their eyes opened about Jesus' true nature. How can we be part of helping people today to have their eyes opened about Jesus? What opportunities have we? How might we be more willing to take them? What gets in the way? How do we deal with the obstacles?
4. We can understand that bread can still be a staple food for human survival although it might equally be rice or pasta or maize. However, many of us, while we might moan about the cost of our food, and some will be concerned about continuity of supply given the upcoming Brexit arrangements we generally don't have a problem. But spiritual food is a different story. How are people's spiritual diet? What can be done about it?
5. What do you understand by Jesus saying he is the bread of life? Or that he is the living bread for eternal life? On Sunday we touch on this saying that Jesus was 1) essential for life in all its fullness 2) was God's provision for life and 3) the means of resurrection life. But that does that mean in our everyday lives as Christians?
6. Please discuss/consider anything else that arises from the passage or service.

Prayer Lord thank you that you have revealed your Son Jesus to us and that you continue to stretch our understanding and our faith as we haven't taken it all in. Help us to receive with real gratitude all the many blessings of food and spiritual provision in Jesus and that we would be generous in sharing both the material and spiritual provision you have made for us with our neighbours near and far. In Christ's name. Amen.