

## Time for God – Take 2

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

### Week beginning Sunday 2 December 2018 People of Promise

Pray that we would be open to God opening our eyes to the future so that we might have hope to enable him to work in us and through us in our present and that that might have an impact upon those around us – giving them a flavour of what is to come in their midst.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). Jeremiah 33:14-16.

Background Jeremiah is locked up by the king who is angry with him for suggesting that they capitulate to the Babylonian invaders. At the same time, he expresses a positive message of hope for his people – pointing them to a day to come when there will be a new king who will reign as God intended. (Not exactly the message that would endear him to the incumbent). As recorded in Chap 32 he had put his money where his mouth was by buying a field - to many a foolish endeavour given that the country was on a war footing and the field might prove to be a battleground, but for Jeremiah – a tangible sign that he had real confidence and hope in God's future.

#### Possible questions/points to consider

1. Promise – why do we often associate promise with those times when we have been let down, when promises have been broken? What is it about God that ought to make us rest easier and rely more on his promises? What can still get in the way?
2. God operates over the long term even through eternity. What is it about modern day thinking and living that often presses for an immediate or very short term result? How can that militate against the long term? How do we encourage one another to hold on to God's promises through tough times and setbacks?
3. Why is it so important that we don't give the impression that following Jesus and trusting him is all sweetness and light? How can we help one another to "see" God at work not just when things are going well but even when they are not?
4. Waiting – why do we find it hard to wait? For anything? For things that really matter? "Time creates the opportunity for us to exercise faith" – what are the pro's and con's of that statement? How helpful (or otherwise) do you find the comment? Waiting is God's not yet – in a way, yes but God is also with us as we wait. Share any experiences of God in your times of waiting – be honest – negatives as well as positives. How can waiting prove to be a time when we can learn to trust God more?
5. Hoping – many these days talk about hope almost as hope-less (wishful thinking, hope against hope, forlorn hope). How does the Bible's understanding of hope differ? What is it that gives the Christian confidence about hope? How do we convey that to people who might not have any understanding of God? How might we show it in our lives, as well as speak it with our words? How do we get across the fact that having a sure hope doesn't make our lives a doddle?
6. Expecting – faith does involve looking for what is still to come, but with a degree of confidence (not in ourselves but God) that allows the future to impact on the present. How might our readiness to follow Jesus and do things God's way NOW be improved if we had a firmer grasp on what we might reasonably expect of God in the future?
7. Think about the news – how far are people's views about the future based a) on what is happening now and what might happen soon or b) a long term view?
8. Please discuss/consider anything else that arises from the passage or service.

Prayer Lord of the past, the present and the future, help us to have greater trust in your ability to work things out for good, to have real hope for the future and to be prepared to wait, to hope and to expect that you are able to lead us into life in all its fullness. Amen.