

Time for God – Take 2

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

Week beginning Sunday 22 July 2018 God on the move

Pray that we would always be willing to sense where God is at work and be ready to move ahead with his plans and purposes, avoiding the temptation to try to freeze things as they are.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). 2 Samuel 7 :1-14.

Background David is becoming more settled in his new capital, Jerusalem. He recognises that he lives in a substantial house built from the best of woods, cedar whereas the Ark of the Covenant the focus of place for God's dwelling among his people remains in what was essentially a tent. David tells Nathan the prophet that he plans to build God a substantial house to house the Ark. Nathan, initially encourages David, but after a sleepless night and some further guidance from God informs the king that God has other ideas – that it will be his son who will build the temple.

Possible questions/points to consider

1. On the face of it David might be commended for his plan to build a house fit for the Lord. Why do you think word comes back that God has other ideas? How might motivation come into it? How do we assess that something might be right to do but wrong for a particular individual? How do we discern God's will in such things? Who can be an issue, but so can when? How do we discern God's timing?
2. Can you remember losing sleep over an important decision? How did it feel at the time? How much was God in it? Was there prayer? Or just a tossy turny night and unease? How did you feel afterwards (other than tired!)? Looking back on it what did you learn?
3. It seemed good to the king – but as it turned out it didn't seem quite so good to God. How could we alter the way we go about making important decisions to try to be more open to what God wants from us a) as individuals b) together as a congregation?
4. David was bedding down, digging in. That is perhaps to be understood given the years he spent on the run from King Saul and then from some of Saul's supporters after the death of the king. Some of us are people who like to be on the move, open to new ideas, perhaps even those who like to change job often or take up new opportunities, maybe even move house a lot. Many of us prefer stability and the familiar. There is room for both. However, how do we avoid our preferences getting in the way of God's plans? Are we as aware of our "style and preferences" as we should be? How might it help to be more aware of our preferences when we come to discerning God's plans?
5. Nathan is initially happy to go along with David's ideas – on the face of it they seem reasonable. However, after a sleepless night and further thought he senses that all is not what it seems and believes God to be putting a stop to David's plans. How often do we go with our initial gut feelings? How often do we take time to reflect and consider (and pray)? Whatever we do how might we remain always open to God's leading?
6. The theme was "God on the move" – perhaps a reminder that we are to be a pilgrim people. Our home is not the roof under which we sleep or the church building in which we worship but ultimately is spiritual – heaven with our Lord and his people. How might this thought affect how we live, how we worship, how we engage in mission?
7. Please discuss/consider anything else that arises from the passage or service.

Prayer Lord thank you that you do make your ways known to us even if at times we are slow on the uptake. Help us to discern your will and to do it placing more store on that than on our personal preferences. May we be a pilgrim people ready to move in line with your purposes. Amen.