

## Time for God – Take 2

**Purpose:** To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service and in particular with the Congregational Bible passage.

### Week beginning Sunday 10 September 2017

### On the move

**Pray** Thank God that he desperately loves his people and is concerned for all who suffer. Way back he rescued his people from oppression in Egypt. On the cross he secured our salvation through the death of Jesus. Thank him that he is working out his purposes of love for all in the grip of oppression be it spiritual or physical.

**Read** Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). Exodus 12:1-14.

**Background** The passage focusses on the Passover meal and the steps the Hebrews had to take in preparation to flee out of Egypt. As we know Jesus gave new meaning to the Passover when he instituted the Lord's Supper shortly before his death. While this is clearly going to be of major significance for Christians it is important that we take time to reflect on the importance of Passover and of the attitudes it encouraged for its original participants and those who have shared in it down the centuries. Perhaps for us we need to ask – are we really a people on the move with God?

### Possible questions/points to consider

1. Moses had been pleading with Pharaoh for a long time to deal fairly with his people and to allow them the freedom to leave Egypt. There had been broken promises, a series of plagues of increasing severity but to no avail. Finally, God says there is to be a further plague and the first born of every family would be killed unless blood was daubed on the door lintel. The angel of the Lord would "pass over" and those homes would be missed. The people were to eat a special meal and be ready to leave. While we may have reservations about the violence – it would not have been thought as drastic in those days as there was much more of a sense of the majesty, holiness and supremacy of God. Leaving aside the violence for now how have things changed with respect to a) obedience to God? b) honour/worship/ respect for God? c) how in one way or another God's will is done?
2. The people believed themselves to be entirely in God's hands. How much do we believe that today? How much do we think our future is in our hands? How do we reconcile any differences in views? The people were urged to be ready to move, they were to travel light and be willing to follow Moses (and God). To what extent are we too thirled to where we are/how things are/what we are currently doing? How can we be ready to make changes and to discern and follow God's lead? Someone once said Christians ought to have a healthy discontent with things as they are now because God wants to lead us into his future? How do we adjust?
3. On Sunday I used the sporting idea of being on the front foot, of leaning into the future. How might that illustration help us understand the change in attitudes we need to have to get from where we are to where God wants us to be? What changes do you see as being most needed? How can we be open to God in this?
4. Another aspect is God's concern for those who are not in the Church. How do we address the challenge to reach out? To be outwardly looking – engaged with the community, concerned for those who don't really have much time for God/Jesus? Why is it easier to look after ourselves and harder to be outward looking? What can we do to change attitudes here?
5. Anything else that arises from the passage or from the service.

**Prayer** Lord thank you that whatever our circumstances you are concerned to love, guide and protect your people but thank you that you don't let us become TOO comfortable. Help us to be open to follow your lead, to be on the move and concerned to be outward looking. Amen.