

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Pray: Ask God for open hearts to receive the grace of his Word.

1. What gives you joy?
2. Read Luke 15:11-32
3. Which character do you most relate to? Why?
4. In the parable Jesus tells, what do you think Jesus wants us to know about God? Is the description of the Father, in Jesus' parable, match how you are inclined to view God?

(For the leader, a quote from the sermon – to be used when, and only if, helpful in the conversation...let people answer first how they are led):

“Jesus portrays the Father as a person of joy – as a person who waits, who watches, and waits, who watches and waits...and when what has been lost, what has been fractured, what has wandered from him, returns and is restored...the Father rejoices, celebrates, is filled with joy”.

5. In the parable Jesus tells, what do you think Jesus wants us to know about people who lose their way? In the sermon, reference was made to the “gift of addiction”. What was meant by that? What will it take for us to enter into Father’s celebrative joy, like the younger son?
6. In the parable that Jesus tells, what do you think Jesus wants us to know about people who are in covenant relationship with God (Israel, and by extension the church)? Jesus directed this parable at the Pharisees and the ruling elite that took issues with Jesus “eating and drinking with sinners”. Discuss how the parable is a rebuke?

The Father pulls the older son aside, and says what?

How do you respond (internally) to the words of the Father, as Jesus tells them?

(For the leader, a quote from the sermon – to be used when, and only if, helpful in the conversation...let people answer first how they are led):

“When the Father was waiting, and watching, and waiting - where was the older brother? Wherever he was, he wasn’t watching and waiting with His Father. He wasn’t watching and waiting; and because he wasn’t watching and waiting he could share his Father’s joy.”

7. It seems that the best way to receive God’s joy is to wait for what God is waiting for – to long what God is longing for.

Spend some time together listing things that give God joy.

Bring it closer to home: think of your life, and the lives of the ones you love – what would bring God joy?

What might you, as a small group, do in order to align with God's longings? Is there a shared habit in which you can engage, and report on at your next meeting?

8. Can you think of anyone in your life – at church, in your neighbourhood, at your work – that is coming near to you wondering "is there life here for me?"

If yes, spend some time together as a group to pray for the person who shared.

Pray: Ask God for the grace of his presence this week as you commit to responding to his Word to you today.