

Judges *There was no King in Israel*

5. A hairy story: Samson

Judges 13.1-16.31

Aim: To consider the entire story of Samson: his origins, behaviour and the consequences of those. To understand what the Bible actually says about him, rather than what we have 'heard' from other places, and to reflect on what we might learn from this story.

To start with:

What do you know about Samson and where did you learn that from?

Samson is the last judge in Israel before the nation descends into chaos and civil war. That he is the man God chooses to use is perhaps indicative of the state of the nation!

Setting the scene: *(take about 10 minutes on this)*

Together read Judges 13.

1. What strikes you most about this episode? (and Samson's parents in particular)
2. Which other biblical stories does it remind you of and why might that be significant? (What might the author be trying to communicate by telling the story in this 'familiar' way?)
3.
 - a. What do you know about Nazirite vows?
 - b. **Read Numbers 6.1-21.** What do you think is the purpose of making these vows and why do you think there are these 'rules' for Nazirites.

The ongoing saga: *(take about 20 minutes on this)*

4. Now divide the group in four and give each group one of the following chapters to discuss in the light of Samson's origins. They should take about 10 minutes and then, in chronological order, briefly feed back to the whole group (a) the key events and (b) their observations on them.

Group A: Chapter 14 - Samson's Youth

Group B: Chapter 15 - Samson's Revenge

Group C: Chapter 16.1-22 - Samson's Downfall

Group D: Chapter 16.23-31 - Samson's Restoration

In conclusion:

5. In the light of the whole 'saga' of Samson's life - what reflections do you have?
6. What might WE learn from this story about how we live our whole lives?