

The Psalms

3. Psalm 103

Psalm of Praise

Aim: To think about how a psalm can inspire us to praise God in different ways and in everyday life.

Note to Leaders: This study contains several sections. It is suggested that you do the Section A and then one or two others that you think would be the most helpful to your cell. The aim is to let this psalm inspire us to praise God.

To start with:

- What activities do you enjoy doing so much that you can say you do it with your whole heart? Why do you enjoy it so much?
or
- How far would you say you enjoy worshipping God? How much do you think that matters?

Engaging with the text:

SECTION A - Reflecting on the Psalm

Give everyone a copy of the sheet attached with Psalm 103 on it. Have one person read through it out loud and then give people five minutes to read it silently - get everyone to underline, highlight or annotate anything that strikes them. Now ask people to share anything in the psalm that particularly inspires them to praise God

SECTION B - Praising Everyday

1. What is your favourite way to praise God? Offer suggestions e.g. singing, dancing, art, serving others, through mission, drama, sport, playing music, listening to music, reading psalms.
2. On a typical day, how do you offer praise to God? What routines do you have that help you stay focused on God?

3. Referring back to Psalm 103, discuss how we can praise specific facets of God's character in our daily lives.
4. Gather round a large piece of paper (or several smaller pieces) and make sure everyone has a pen. Give everyone five minutes to write on the paper anything they can think of to praise God for. (or give them 'post its' to write on and then stick on the paper)

SECTION C - Praising God for Loving us

(You might want to use this section in small, single sex groups)

1. Write down any words you would use to describe what you know God thinks of you? (even if you struggle to believe it)
2. Read verses 1-5 of this psalm aloud. Then read them again, replacing you/your with me/I/my. How do you react to that?
3. What do you think the word 'crowned' in verse 4 reveal about God's view of you?
4. Read verses 6-19. What other words can you add to your list of what God thinks of you?

Make sure everyone can see a copy of the same translation. Then everyone, together, read verses 20-22 aloud five times. Then try reciting them a few times without reading.

SECTION D - Inspired Praise

Give out the lyrics to 'Praise, my soul, the king of heaven' (see handout). This hymn uses ideas from Psalm 103. Split into groups to identify which parts of the hymn come from which parts of the psalm.

Then, still in groups, write the psalm in your own words - it could be a poem, a song, a rap, or the like. Give it a title, then read/sing/rap your version to the other groups.

