

The Essentials of Discipleship 1: Encountering the Living God

Part 1: Sharing about Meeting the God Who is Really There

Here are some ways that people come to believe in God:

- They see the hand of God in the beautiful world around us
- They see him in others who know him
- They are brought up believing in God
- They realise that they need him to sort out their lives

In small groups, share:

- When and why did you come to believe in God?
- Can you think of a time when God seemed particularly real to you?
- When you have felt distant from God, what was it that convinced you that he was there?

Part 2: Thinking about What God is Like

Right from the beginning when God made the world he has been speaking and acting. There are lots of aspects of God that are revealed in the Bible that we are not trying to cover here in detail - like the fact that he made the world or that he is the God of Israel. Here we focus on three things, that:

- ***God is Living and Active***
- ***God is Holy***
- ***God is Love***

Read quickly one after another:

Genesis 32.24-31; Exodus 3.1-6; Ezekiel 1.26-28

- What do you think of these three different images of God?
- Do you have a mental picture of God? What is he like?
- How has your understanding of God changed over time?

Read Isaiah 6.1-8.

- How did Isaiah respond to the holiness of God? How should we respond to the holiness of God?
- In what sense is it right to fear God? Or: Is there right and wrong fear of God?

Holiness is a rather religious word. Sometimes holiness is made very personal and presented as being about avoiding doing certain things.

- What is it that makes a person really holy? Or: think of a person that you have met who you think is holy. What was it about them that made you think of them as holy?

- Look back at Isaiah 5 (esp 5.18ff). What was God angry about in Israel?
- What does it mean in practice today to be committed to corporate and social holiness as well as personal holiness?

Read 1 John 4.7-12

- How do we know that God loves us?
- Have you ever found it difficult to believe that God loves you?
- How can we ensure that our knowledge that God loves us is secure?
- What can we do week by week to ensure that we constantly grow in our awareness and knowledge of God?

Part 3: For Further Study

Christians believe in the God who has revealed himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- In what ways can each of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be seen to be active, holy and loving?