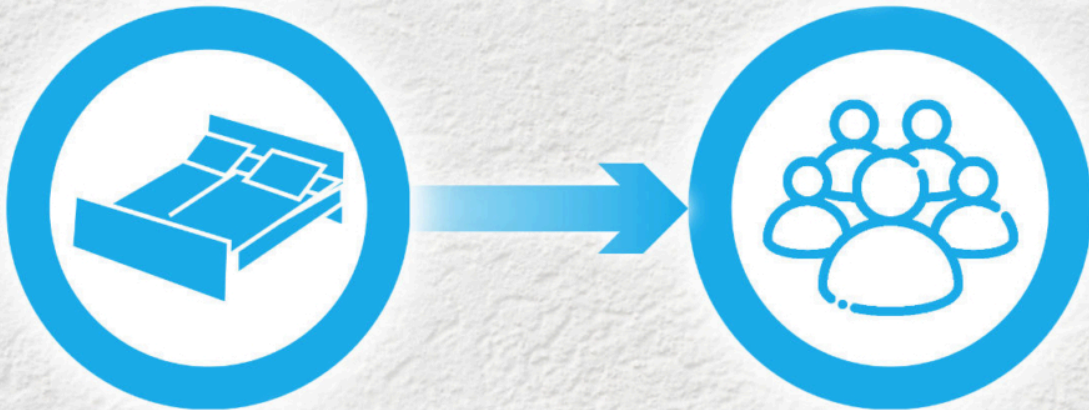


HOTEL TO HOME



23 Oct: From visitor to follower
30 Oct: From guest to investor
6 Nov: From spectator to player

*We all long for a place called "home".
Because that's how God made us.
When we know God as our Father, Jesus as our Saviour,
and other Christians as our family, we have truly come home.
And in that home, every member of the family is loved, valued,
and has a contribution to make – a life of purpose.*

INTRODUCTION

You could do these sessions either in advance of or after the Sunday dates above. This is an important theme for us this term. Please make sure you engage with it. No problem if you "fall behind" a week or two. After 6 Nov there is Remembrance Sunday and the last Sunday of the church year, so you have a couple of weeks to catch up.

Each session has a few suggested responses. As the leader, please offer these to the group towards the end of your session, but don't push for an immediate response. Advent Sunday (27 Nov) will be an opportunity to respond to all three themes. Please leave a couple of minutes at the end to make those suggestions, and send a follow-up email to the group with those possible responses.

As ever there will probably be more materials than you need for the session. I have tried to indicate how you can direct the Bible reflection towards the theme rather than just doing an unstructured Bible Book Club discussion. Note any contributions that are leading us on another path or theme but feel free to gently come back to the main theme. Any Bible passage will have materials for many different themes and it's ok to acknowledge that but not to engage with all of it in one session.

SESSION 1: From visitor to follower

In this session we explore whether we experience the Christian faith as an occasional visitor (at times of need or particular seasons of our lives) or whether we are truly at home

ICEBREAKER: Share either one of your worst or one of your best hotel experiences

DISCUSSION STARTER (optional): Ask one or two people how they came to faith in Jesus. Maybe you can ask someone in advance so they can prepare a little and go first. Keep a time limit (e.g. 2min max). If that seems unnatural, the reality is that often it's useful to tell people quite briefly why we believe in Jesus. They might not be up for a long story.

READ Luke 19.1-20

After some time of quiet reflection, invite the group to reflect on the story under the heading "Hotel to Home". The following questions can help shape the conversation:

- What are the key stages in Zacchaeus' journey from "Hotel" to "Home"? Is there a lesson for us? What other important stages have there been for me in my own journey to faith in Jesus?
- An encounter with Jesus leads to a response - what was Zacchaeus' response? What was mine?

FOR QUIET REFLECTION: Is there a response that Jesus invites me to make?

After some time read Revelation 3.20 twice with a reflective pause in between:

Jesus says: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."

(You may want to show Holman Hunt's painting, attached to this email)

QUOTE: Read this quote to the group:

"It's the choice of the bold and courageous to know God intimately. It's an invitation to all who desire a lifestyle that continuously seeks God's presence, power, peace, and purposes . . . in good times, hard times, major inflection points, and everyday moments too."

Stephen A. Macchia in *The Discerning Life*

RESPOND IN OPEN PRAYER

SUGGESTED RESPONSES to offer to the group:

Following Jesus as Lord of all our lives is the beginning and end of discipleship. How can I take a next step?

(1) Explore more deeply what it means to follow Jesus: Alpha in January / Baptism preparation (if never baptised before) / Meet up 121 with someone who has been a Christian for a while

(2) Re-engage intentionally with discipleship: Being part of a lifegroup or BBC is a great start - can I commit to being there as regularly as possible, even if I have to readjust my diary? Daily prayer (e.g. Lectio365) / Meet 121 with another Christian to pray / Confirmation (if you have never been confirmed)

(3) Growing as a Christian leader in the church and in the world: Sign up for a Leaders' Course at Denham Parish Church (details TBC) / Find specific training that suits you (e.g. St Paul's Theological Centre, London School of Theology, LICC) / Be equipped to meet with others 121 to help them grow / Read Mark Greene's book *Thank God It's Monday* and/or consider running LICC's course *Growing on the Frontline* with your small group.

> Remind people that we can respond as a church community by Advent Sunday.