

Elijah

Discussion Guide

Week of August 6 - **"God Calls"**

Scripture verse: 1 Kings 17:1-6 / James 5:17-18

INTRO TO OUR THEME: Our view of faith and being called to God's mission is often hijacked by our own thoughts and fears about what we think God is going to ask us to do. Many people feel being called by God is limited to missionary and pastoral vocations, and hours and hours of volunteer service. To counteract those suppositions, we find ways to "disqualify" ourselves, hoping to be excused. Despite our misgivings, however, God is still calling us to His mission where we are.

LOOKING BACK:

Giving Thanks. Take some time to have each person share something they are thankful for.

Leader Tip: Your group should be a safe and welcome place for your members to meet, grow, and share. It should also become a place where group members turn for support in times of need. If you have not already, identify someone in your group who is intentional about getting to know everyone in the group and is a natural encourager to consider being the group's official Prayer Chain leader. Ask him/her to keep track of prayer requests and in addition to tracking prayer requests, ask this person to track how God answers those prayers, as well!

OPENING QUESTION: If you stop and close your eyes, take a deep breath, and take in the silence for just a few moments, what is it God is calling you to? What is that nagging or yearning

you know comes from God but have been unwilling to face? If anyone is willing to share that calling with the group, encourage them to do so at this time.

LOOKING UP:

1. Elijah is one of many prophets God sent to try to remind Israel He is the one true God, and the only One worthy of their worship. Before we dive into what Elijah did, let's look at who Elijah was.
 - a. Ask a group member to read aloud the first sentence of the Scripture passage found in **James 5:17**.
 - b. What does that sentence tell you about Elijah? Here, he is not praised for his faith, his good looks, his intelligence, or even strength. He is simply referred to as "a human being, even as we are."
 - c. Based on that, what special talents or distinctive characteristics do you think Elijah had to make him worthy to represent God as a prophet?
 - d. To give a little more context to the passage we will be studying, let's look at **1 Kings 16:30-33**. Our "Ordinary Joe," Elijah (a shepherd and fig farmer), is about to face off against King Ahab. What characteristic of Ahab stood out to you in these verses? (see v. 33)
 - e. Go back and read **James 5:17-18**. What does the passage tell you about Elijah that might help him in the confrontation he is about to face?
2. We know from the passage in 1 Kings 16 that King Ahab is a formidable enemy. But James reveals Elijah's power source...prayer! And, as you can see, unlike many of us, Elijah used it as his first line of defense instead of his last resort.

3. Before moving on to the study passage, ask a group member to pray for your discussion time and to ask the Holy Spirit to make his presence known to each member in the group. Select two group members to prepare to read the passage **1 Kings 17:1-6**. Answer the first two questions after the passage is read in one translation of the Bible, then re-read the passage in a different translation and answer questions 3 and 4.

READ THE PASSAGE**1 Kings 17:1-6**

Answer the first 2 questions after reading the passage

1. What stood out to you most?
2. What was challenging or hard to understand?
3. What does this teach us about God?
4. What does this teach us about people?

RE-READ THE PASSAGE

Read the passage again using another Bible translation... then answer the last 2 questions

LOOKING FORWARD:

1. Elijah courageously faced King Ahab and threatened him/his kingdom with a punishment over which he had no personal control. What gave Elijah the confidence to hand out such a threat against the King?
2. What makes Elijah different from you and me? How is he similar? (Ordinary person, doing ordinary things, from an ordinary town)

3. Ask several members from your group to pray for boldness, courage, and wisdom.
4. Choose someone far from God but close to you to pray for this week... writing out one of your prayers and sending it to this person.
5. Close with prayer by praying... "Lord, where in me have I made the excuse and disqualified myself from your 'call' to be on mission with you. Help me overcome any obstacle to answer YOUR call."