

God's strength in weakness: Job and Unanswered Prayer discussion guide



based on **Job 40** (Linked to sermon of 16/05/21)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks

This was part of a series: God's strength in weakness

As a slightly different way to engage with Simon's sermon, Simon has provided a series of different material to be used selectively with your group. You could begin your session by listening to the worship song and having a time of worship. You could then either read the passage together or use one or more of the podcasts and discuss them afterwards or read the blog together. I have included a few open questions to use with the group around the topic of Job and unanswered prayer.

Resources:

Worship song <https://youtu.be/qyUPz6TciY>

Pod casts:

overview of the book of Job <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/job/> (12 mins)

Podcast on Job and suffering <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07AWWJiyAU8> (10 mins)

Blog about the problem of pain <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/god-shouts-to-us-in-our-pain>

You might like as a group to reflect on the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Hymn:

By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered
and confidently waiting, come what may,
we know that God is with us night and morning,
and never fails to meet us each new day.

Yet are our hearts by their old foe tormented;
still evil days bring burdens hard to bear;

O give our frightened souls the sure salvation
for which, O Lord, you taught us to prepare.

And when the cup you give is filled to brimming
with bitter suffering, hard to understand,
we take it gladly, trusting though with trembling,
out of so good and so beloved a hand.

If once again, in this mixed world, you give us
the joy we had, the brightness of your sun,
we shall recall what we have learned through sorrow,
and dedicate our lives to you alone.

Questions to ponder:

1. How satisfying or not do you find God's answer to Job in chapter 40?
2. What questions do you have for God about unanswered prayer and suffering?
3. How do you explain unanswered prayer?
4. Job in chapter 42:3 says "therefore I have uttered what I do not understand". How does that answer Job's questions (and yours) about suffering and unanswered prayer?
5. In what ways can pain and suffering bring us closer to God? Conversely how can it distance us from God?

Finishing:

You might like to finish with a time of prayer in which you specifically lift up unanswered prayers to God as an offering and ask Him to show you how to pray for those situations in new and fresh ways. It may be that God's answer is not yet, sometimes it is no. Pray for insight and understanding. There will be hurt and emotional distress because of some unanswered prayer. Pray for one another that there will be healing, even when there is no understanding of the reasons.