

The Waiting Game

Discussion guide

based on **Psalm 40:1-10** (Linked to sermon of 4 October)

which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks



This was part of a series: Listening to God

Intro: Hopefully you have begun to incorporate listening to God as part of your personal prayer times. Perhaps you find that God speaks clearly and often, or, perhaps, like me, there is a lot of waiting and silence! God can teach us through this too. He teaches us about persistence, resilience and faith. This week we look at what it means to wait on God and how God can speak to us in the waiting.

How does this passage speak to our desire to be a God-dependent, grace-filled, Bible-based, mission-focused, authentic community?

Up (Go deeper with God):

You might like to listen to a sung version of Psalm 40 <https://youtu.be/67jbBYbcqao> and then read Psalm 40:1-10 together. Verse 3 declares "He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God". Say (or sing!) your praises to God in a short time of thanksgiving.

You will notice that the psalm is attributed to David. David certainly knew what it was like to wait. Anointed king by Samuel as a young man, he waited about 15 years before becoming king! Share something you had to wait a long time for. How did that feel? What was the outcome? Did you learn anything in your waiting? Read verse 1-3 again, what was David's experience of waiting and how did it affect his relationship with God?

Often God will teach us about ourselves and Him as we wait upon Him. We often feel frustrated that God's timing is not the same as ours (2 Peter 3:8). In Romans 8:1-30 we are reminded that as children of God we are waiting for "future glory". In this passage, how does Paul suggest we can find help in our waiting (v.26)? Discuss together in what ways the Spirit can help us in our prayers as we wait for Him to speak to us, individually and as a church.

In (Grow closer to each other):

Read Ps 40:6-8 David suggests here that sacrifice (animal or otherwise) is not what God really wants. What do these verses tell us about God's priorities? Notice that we have the phrase "Here I am" again (compare Isaiah 6:8)! We need to make ourselves available to God. Spend some time in silence, asking God to reveal your own

availability, priorities and attitudes, which perhaps conflict or get in the way of hearing God. Be honest as you share these with one another.

In verse 8, the psalmist states "I delight to do your will, O my God". Is this how you feel? Or are you worried that God's will for you is scary or unattainable? Discuss between you and try to be honest about your own feelings.

Pray for each other that God will gently highlight wrong attitudes and priorities and allow you to deal with whatever is getting in the way of "delighting in God's will". You might also like to lift up anything that individuals are "waiting for" to God.

Out (Reach further with the good news):

David's reaction to hearing God and God's answering his prayers was not just gratitude to God. Read Ps 40:9-10. What does David do in response?

David speaks out in "the great congregation". He tells fellow Jews of all that God is speaking to Him about and what He has done for him. As we spend time listening to God for ourselves and our church, God may give us words or pictures for the church or for individuals. The challenge for some of us is "not to restrain our lips" v.9.

Jesus calls us not just to share our good news with fellow Christians but also with those who don't yet know the good news (Mark 16:15)

Some of us find speaking up in church and sharing our faith more difficult than others. Share your own experiences and feelings about this. How might you support and challenge one another to speak out?

Finally pray for boldness to share God's goodness both with other Christians and with those who don't yet know God.

*"And now Lord....grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness"
Acts 4:29*