

# Grief and compassion

## discussion guide

based on **1 Samuel 30** (Linked to sermon of 13/11/16)  
which can be accessed at [www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series](http://www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series)

*This is from our series on David from the OT – looking at his characteristics that made God describe him as "a man after God's own heart" (Acts 13.22). The aim of this series is to see how we can be people after God's own heart as well.*

Read 1 Samuel 30.

### Grieving

- a) It was argued that there are four responses to grieving in the reading (30.4-6): weeping (emotional), bitterness, blaming & lashing out, 'strengthened himself in the Lord his God'. Can you recognise these responses in yourself? How do you deal with them?
- b) How do you think David 'strengthened himself in the Lord his God' (compare 1 Sam 23.16-17)?
- c) 'Big boys don't cry.' True or false? Is the issue about gender, nurture, or culture? Does a man weeping need comforting, or just to be given the space and time to get on with it?
- d) It was suggested we 'grieve' (often badly) over relatively minor issues - a cancelled holiday, a lost career opportunity. Is this true of you? If our grieving over these minor issues was guided by this passage, would we be better equipped to cope with a bereavement?
- e) We often wrestle with God over why something bad happens to us (an illness or bereavement). How often do we take time out to wrestle with God over why something good happens to us (an engagement to be married, the birth of a child, a new career). What does your answer say about your relationship with God?

### David as a 'messiah'

- a) 'Ziklag was David's Gethsemane'. Put yourself in David's shoes. Would it have been easier to give up the whole 'anointed one' business, hop on a fast camel, go somewhere quiet, and be a successful shepherd? Or stay, get his troops in hand, and set off after the raiders - even if he didn't know where to look?
- b) Put yourselves - as a group - in the captives' shoes as they were taken away by the raiders. Discuss the best attitude to take towards your captors. (Some people in the Middle East will be doing this role-play for real) Bear in mind that as far as you all know, David didn't even know about the raid. One of you pretend to be, say, Abigail, and argue that he will come to the rescue. What arguments would you use? Would 17.35-36 help? Would this passage help you understand living as a Christian in a pagan society?

### War and Peace

- a) Put yourself in the shoes of one of David's soldiers, with your wife and children taken captive. As a Christian who hates killing, would you check your weapons, sharpen your sword, bring the raiders to battle, and kill them?
- b) Read 1 Tim. 1:1-3. What reasons does Paul give for praying for our leaders?
- d) This statement was made in 2014 by a British MP who had served in the forces: 'The West readily finds billions when it comes to fighting a war. But when it comes to preventing conflict or rebuilding peace, we offer little more than pennies'

e) In a democracy, should we stop at praying, or actively, politically, work for peace (by writing to our MPs, or campaigning or joining a political party of our choice)?

Prayer:

Once conflict and war break out, many, many bad things follow.

- Pray for all those in captivity
- Pray for our leaders, that they would seek justice and peace
- Pray for our armed forces, that God will strengthen and protect them, and give them success
- Pray for servicemen and their families as they are away from home for long periods
- Pray for ex-servicemen, that society will meet their needs
- Give thanks that we live lives that are 'peaceful and quite' and that we are free to live in 'godliness and holiness'.
- Give thanks for all those who have made sacrifices so that we can enjoy this blessing.