

Reach the world: caring for God's earth

discussion guide

based on **Genesis 2.4b-9, 15 etc** (Linked to sermon from 21/1/18)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

This was part of our 'Love is an action' series, unpacking what it means for us to 'Love God, Love each other, Reach the world'.

Intro: What's the most beautiful view you have ever seen (eg a particular sunset / mountain range etc)?

*If you want, watch this brief segment from Planet Earth 2:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4QNolP7Khc*

Read Genesis 2.4b-9, 15

Humanity comes from the dust of the ground (v7). Why might that be important in thinking about our relationship to God's earth?

Trees (and other parts of the creation!) are pleasing to the eye (v9). How often do you stop to appreciate the beauty of creation? What helps you do that?

Our 'creation mandate' is to take care of the earth (v15). So picking up rubbish / cultivating plants / reducing plastic use etc can all be acts of Christian obedience and worship. How might that motivate us to increase our personal level of care for the earth?

Read Matthew 22.34-40

David talked about 'loving our neighbour' as including our 'global neighbour' and 'future neighbour'. How does that speak into our creation-care thinking?

Read Romans 8.19-22

Part of our hope for the new creation is that the old creation will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into glorious freedom. What would help you think of the gospel as good news for all creation not just all humanity?

How do all these passages speak to our desire to be a God-dependent, grace-filled, Bible-based, mission-focused, authentic community?

Up (love God): Spend some time worshipping the God who made the heavens and the earth; and confessing the times when we fail to care for his creation.

In (love each other): What could you do to 'spur one another on to love and good deeds' (Hebrews 10.24) in this area of Christian discipleship?

Out (reach the world): David mentioned 4 areas which individuals can work on: food (reducing plastic consumption and food miles etc), travel (using less polluting means of transport, offsetting airmiles etc), recycling and energy (using green energy tariffs, switching the TV off rather than keeping it on standby etc). Remembering that love is an *action*, choose 3 of those areas, and think of one achievable thing you could each do in each as a practical response.

Pray: That we would move forward as a church with the EcoChurch project, with the right people forming a team.

Some additional resources:

David mentioned the '5 marks of mission' which is used as a definition of mission by the Anglican church. The fifth mark is 'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.'

To find out more about A Rocha, visit www.arocha.org.uk

David mentioned www.climatestewards.org as a way to work out your personal carbon footprint.