

QUESTION 5

- a) Fear of the difficulties of going to that 'great city'.
- b) It was renowned for its wickedness.
- c) How would he be received? There would be hostility; even danger.
- d) Would he be ridiculed? Would he know what to say?
- e) What would his own people think of him going to the enemy to warn them of God's judgement?
- f) Nineveh was indeed a great city. The population was around five times that of Jerusalem. It had imposing 100 ft high walls; 1500 watch towers. Did he doubt the success of the mission?
- g) The real reason for Jonah running away from God is his fear that God was going to be gracious to Nineveh (see **Jonah 4:2**). The warning in **Jonah 3:4** might be heeded and the Ninevites saved.

QUESTION 6

- a) This passage is about obedience, but it is also about sharing God's heart for the salvation of the nations.
- b) It is easy to think that our concern should only be for those who live around us.
- c) We won't all get called to go to another country like Jonah. But as the motto for the Coca Cola company puts it: "*Think globally; act locally*".
- d) Even if we consider our local mission; are there those we don't want to reach? Or that we think are beyond that reach?
- e) Are we going to obey God's will for our lives to serve Him?
- f) Are we obeying the call to declare the gospel to the nations?

GROUP LEADER'S NOTES – SESSION 1

QUESTION 1

Examples:

- **Providence:** God has placed us where we are to be salt and light. That includes our family situation and our work situation: **1 Corinthians 10:31**.
- **Gifts:** We should use the gifts that God has given to us order to serve Him. E.g. musical, practical, people centred: **Romans 12:6-8**.
- **Passion:** When we are living lives centred on serving God and obeying Him, the needs that we see in the world and the ones that move us most deeply, are indicators to what we should do. We often develop a growing interest in something which might point to action.
- **Through living out His word.** The Bible is not always specific in what we should do. It gives us a broad framework for living and as we understand and read it more, we hear God speaking through it. We know that we must go and tell others about Jesus (e.g. **Matthew 28:19-20**). God word speaks and inspires us.
- **The confirmation of trusted Christians.**
- God uses the church to help us discern His will for our lives. If we feel that there is something laid on our hearts to do, we can be helped by the wisdom and experience of other believers to confirm it or suggest it.

QUESTION 2

- a) In some respects, we need not ask the question. God's purposes are perfect. He knows What He is doing.
- b) God could have used more willing people; yet chooses not to. God uses flawed people for His purposes. And He uses Jonah's preaching.
- c) God's word to Jonah is to 'get up and go'. The call is for 'now' and the demand is for obedience.

QUESTION 3

- a) At first glance we might think that Jonah is sent to declare judgement on Nineveh; seeing it was the capital city of a wicked nation.
- b) Indeed, forty years later they would totally destroy Israel.
- c) It was always God's intention to extend His grace to all the nations.
- d) We see from Jonah's concerns later that he knew the message he was to take to Nineveh was a warning with a call to repentance (see **Jonah 4:2**).
- e) Jonah was to tell them of their wickedness and God's anger.
- f) But this was to give them the opportunity to turn away from sin and turn to God. This is repentance.
- g) Jesus tells us in Luke 11:32 that they did repent. He used the illustration when rebuking the current generation of Jews who ignored the sign of Jonah and refused to repent of their sin.

QUESTION 4

- a) God said 'arise'. Jonah 'rose'.
- b) You would expect to see that 'he rose and went to Nineveh'.
- c) But Jonah's response was to head in the opposite direction to the one to which God called him.
- d) Nineveh was to the east of Israel and Tarshish was about as far as you could go west. (Nineveh was in what we now call Iraq. Tarshish was in what is now Spain).
- e) He could not have chosen a more contrasting action.
- f) This emphasises the difference between God's way and man's way. Jonah substituted his own will for God's will.
- g) Note his intention to 'flee from the Lord'.
- h) He must have known that he couldn't escape from God (see **Psalm 139:7-8**).
- i) How easy it is to assume that if we take ourselves out of a situation that God will somehow forget it and send someone else.
- j) Fleeing from the presence of God is basically saying that Jonah is being disobedient.
- k) In **Genesis 3:8** we read of Adam and Eve, that after they had sinned: "*they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden*".
- l) Jonah might not think about God's presence; but he cannot escape from it.
- m) He is also challenging the sovereignty of God.