

Theme & Passages	Growing Together: Faithfulness Matthew 1:18-21; John 21:15-19	Notes prepared by Caroline Oliveira & Neil Casey
Welcome (10 mins)	Share something about yourself that you don't think anyone else will know eg. a hidden talent, a notable experience etc.	
Working with God (15 mins): Evangelism Discipleship Compassion Justice Creation Care	<p>With Advent nearly upon us, we want to turn our attention to what some of our international mission partners are planning as we step into Christmas. The festive season is an opportunity for evangelism, one of the five marks of mission, and our partners are taking the opportunity to bring hope to their local communities in a variety of ways in the run up to Christmas Day. This week we want to encourage you to dedicate time each day to stand in prayer with our partners, asking God to bless all that they are doing to share the good news this Christmas time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pray for our friends ABTS in Mansourieh in Lebanon, as they work with churches in the local community in holding a worship celebration event on December 8th. - Pray for our friends at New Life Church in Murska Sobota in Slovenia; for the Christmas message that will be broadcast on local radio on 10th December, the women's event on 16th December, the festive worship on 24th December, and all the friendship evangelism by members of the church in the run up to Christmas - Pray for our friend Dave Whitman in Krasnoyarsk in Russia. The church he leads will be holding a number of events including a Christmas play on 6th December, a Christmas service on 7th December, Advent services throughout December and the Christmas Eve service on 24th December. - Pray for our friends at Life Center in Beirut, who are looking ahead to Christmas in the knowledge that their is a war taking place on their borders. They are planning various Christmas themed events for the 350 children that attend various clubs throughout the week and plan to give every one a Christmas gift at a special event on Friday 22nd December. They are also planning to provide a Christmas food hamper for 360 people in the local community who attend bible classes. It will mean they can celebrate Christmas with a hot meal at a time when the people of Beirut are facing real hardship. 	
Worship (15 mins)	<p>Use this time to turn your hearts and minds towards the faithfulness of God. Use a psalm or song(s) to tell out God's goodness. Some suggestions: Psalm 36 or 136; Faithful One, The steadfast love of the Lord, Promises.</p> <p>And/or invite the group to pray out their thanks and praise in quick succession (aka 'popcorn prayers') for ways in which God has proved himself faithful to them.</p>	
Word (20-25 mins)	<p>Caroline preached at the 10.30am and Anthony at the 6ix. If you heard either of these sermons, what grabbed you? Share any reflections you have.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Matthew 1:18-21 <i>How does Joseph demonstrate faithfulness in this passage?</i> • Read John 21:15-19. Peter promised Jesus he would follow him wherever he goes, even to death. Hours later he denied and betrayed Jesus, pretending he didn't who he was. <i>What can we learn from Jesus' actions in this passage?</i> <i>How do we remain faithful to Christ when temptations or difficulties come our way?</i> 	

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Break into pairs or threes. We are called to be faithful (steadfast/trust worthy/fulfilling our commitments) in all of our relationships, even in the complexities and less-than-perfect situations we sometimes find ourselves. This could be in a romantic partnership, with extended family, children or parents, in the workplace or your neighbourhood. <i>Which relationship currently feels most challenging to be faithful in?</i> Pray for one another in those relationships, and for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; that we may grow in the faithfulness as He lives in us. |
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