

Homegroup Notes for Week Beginning 1st February 2026.

Introduction:

For the first part of this term, we will be looking at stories from 1 Samuel under the title, 'God rules, OK?'

One of, if not *the* central prayer of scripture is the heart of the Lord's Prayer where Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, '*Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*' It outlines the end of the biblical narrative where the rule of God is realised and experienced on earth, where people live harmoniously out of the character of Christ and steward creation together in such a way as to bring glory to God. When we pray '*Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*', this is what we are praying. It brings together God's plans for the world, for ourselves and for the church. We want to see God's will done in our hearts and our lives, the church is commissioned to be an alternative society acting as a beacon in a world of sin and we seek for the reconciliation of all things, where God's perfect reign brings peace.

The series we are looking at in 1 Samuel, like many of the biblical accounts in the Old Testament, sees the people wrestling with being able to live with God as their LORD or their king. Put otherwise, it is a wrestle played out in the hearts of sinful people about whether they want to live in such a way as to communicate that 'God rules OK'. It is only in the New Testament, in the person of Christ that this is lived out faithfully.

1 Samuel happens at a particular stage in the story of God and his people. The call of the Old Testament is for Israel to be a 'light for the nations' by living in accordance with God's will under his 'kingship' and distinctively. They are to be a distinctive people, different and holy. They serve a God who opposes the proud and lifts up the humble. This is the theme of 1 Samuel and, of course, is reflected throughout the bible, but so often we choose to be 'like all the other nations'. This tension is worked out in the stories of Samuel and Saul. What sort of priest, what sort of king does God want?

This tension is worked out in our hearts as well- Romans 12.1-2 addresses this directly, as does the fresh commission of the church in 1 Peter 2.9-10.

What does it look like to say *Your Kingdom Come, Your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven?*

The following resources may be helpful:

Bible Project Summary video	https://bibleproject.com/videos/1-samuel/
The Message of Samuel (BST)	Mary Evans (exposition)
1 Samuel For You	Tim Chester (exposition and application)
Samuel for Everyone	John Goldingay (devotional)

1 Samuel 4v1 – 7v17



What help have you received this week? From who?
Pause and give thanks to God for this help and these helpers.

This section of 1 Samuel covers themes of God's glory, God's help, and our place in His work. It's a long passage and we'll only pick up a couple of short sections, however, it'd be good if people read through the whole passage before the study. A quick overview can be seen in the 1 Samuel bible project video in the section 2m40s to 3m34s.



Read 1 Samuel 4 v 1 - 11

What did the Israelites expect of God?
What did the Philistines expect of the Lord?
What was the impact on both groups when the ark came into the Israelite camp?
Whose voice was heard?
What sort of assistance did the Israelites seek?
Are there things that we find ourselves trusting in for signs of God's support?

This might be a good place to play the video



Now 20 years on and it seems that idols remain within the community. The people come to recognise that they need the deliverance (help) of God. They come to Samuel for guidance.

Read 1 Samuel 7 v 2 - 13

What is the heart of repentance?
What differences can you see between this conflict scene and that in 1 Samuel 4?
Whose voice was heard in the camp? What sort of help did the Israelites need now?

Samuel sets up a stone to mark this occasion. This place is called Ebenezer (Help-Stone). God gave deliverance.

CS Lewis writes about a right attitude towards God when he describes Aslan, the in *the Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*. "Of course he isn't safe, but he is good, He's the King".

The Israelites had tried to tame God, and learned that wasn't possible. God brings deliverance to his people. For us that is in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Our job is obedience to God, living under God's rule rather than trying to control Him. How can we retain that right attitude - individually and together?

It's good to speak about and mark how God has delivered us. Where can we say the Lord has helped us? What are our stories of help?



At the beginning of the year, we introduced a process in prayer that you might like to close with here. It sees three stages in prayer:

- We tell God what we want, speaking of our heart's desire for the help we need.
- God questions this by asking us to see His rule in the situation
- We settle to a place where we want what God wants...where God rules OK!

Can we pray this way for personal, community and international situations?

Pray for our worship to be serving God not us, for our world to be led in ways of justice and peace.