

In Good Time
STUDY QUESTIONS
July 2022 (3 July - 6 August)



In Good Time

III GOOD TIME

We talk about 'good time' in lots of different ways. In the present we talk about having a good time. In the past we look back to the good times, sometimes 'the good old days'. In the short term we talk about it being 'a good time' to act, the timing is right to do something, and in the longer term we talk about things happening 'all in good time'. But what makes these times *good*? What makes this current moment good? What makes our memories good? How do we know when the time is good to act? And when exactly will we reach 'all in good time'?

Our God is the God of all time and all times. Good times and bad times. The passage of time weighed and balanced through the universe – measured in revolutions of the Earth – gives us a way of moving and understanding movement, of perceiving the world. Time flows and we flow with it! We're not static and neither is God. God is always moving. What does it mean to move through time with God, someone who is beyond our understanding of time? God has a unique perspective on our memories of the past, longings for the future, and experiences in the present.

Can becoming more self-aware and God-aware help us to rediscover the good times? Can being open to the working and moving of the Holy Spirit help us to act in good time? Can striving and persevering and finding our flow state help us to have a good time? Do the acts of celebration and worship in our lives give us a glimpse of what 'all in good time' could mean for us? And, when is it a good time to turn to God?

To explore this we are going to be doing something special and a little bit different...

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For each of the five weeks of this theme we are going to be diving into the archive and selecting a past week of Daily Worship to revisit. Our writers for July will take us back in time as we meditate on time itself! As we consider what it means to live in 'good time' we have an opportunity to slow down and to discover or rediscover some fantastic writing. We might catch things we missed first time around or read things that totally passed us by. Time flows, but not always in a straight line...

So, these questions are compilation that will reprise, refresh and add to the Bible study prompts from those original weeks.

As time flows and we flow with it we have picked up on a common thread to do with movement. We begin by thinking about how we are not stuck, we are on a trajectory, we are called, we are going somewhere! Then we think about the Holy Spirit who hovers over the water of time moving in our world spurring us on to good things. We'll think what it means to strive and persevere in the current moment, the focus that sport and activity give us to surf on the wave of this current moment. Then we'll think about the invitation we receive to celebrate, to dance, to *be*, and finally what it means to emotionally, spiritually *and* physically turn to God.

In time, out of time, on time and all in good time.

With thanks again to our Daily Worship writers.

These discussion questions adapt our monthly themes for small Connect Groups or personal Bible study (look up the [In Good Time Resource Pack](#) for more information on this month's theme). The questions are divided into 5 parts to correspond with the 5 weeks of the Daily Worship theme. They are offered as a guideline and there is no need to go through all the given questions in a single session, or in the following sequence. Feel free to pick and choose, or adapt to what interests you or your group.

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Part 1: Being self aware and God aware

Intro

God calls you as you are. Not as you will be, not as you once were — but just as you are — reading this right here and now. You don't have to prove anything. But that doesn't mean you're stuck the way you are. You're not static and with Jesus' help you can grow into a new identity that is still you, that is in fact, a fuller realisation of who you really are. As time flows we flow with it realising who we are by the grace of God.

(This material was drawn from the Holy Endings theme.)

Read 1 Samuel 3: 1-10

How do you think this formative experience would have shaped the rest of Samuel's life? How would he have carried the memory of this night through the years?

Read Psalm 139, twice

God calls us into being and calls us on into life.

Reading this psalm what words or phrases leap out at you? Does anything in particular strike you or resonate with you?

Read John 15: 9-17

Jesus wants to have a relationship with us. What makes you — *you* matters to Jesus. What makes you distinctive is important.

What do you think Jesus likes about you?

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Part 2: Sweeping over the void

Intro

We turn to thinking about the Holy Spirit sweeping over the void and creating community and meaning, removing emptiness. Creating a world that was good. The Great Commission — going out into the world, bringing order out of chaos. The Spirit moves in the world through people to continue his purpose.

Paying attention to the Holy Spirit can help us act in good time, in God's time.

(This material is drawn from the Swept Away theme but pre-dates when we started producing weekly Bible Study questions and so some new questions have been drawn from those readings.)

Read Psalm 8

The name of God sweeps through the earth. God's majesty rings in canyons, soars through waves and leaps through canopies.

God is called by many names in scripture, in our worship songs and prayers. What names for God resonate particularly for you?

Read Matthew 28: 16-20

As disciples of Jesus, people looking to follow his example, we are directly related to this commission! Indeed we are a consequence of those disciples sweeping out to tell the world about the Gospel. If it wasn't for those disciples you wouldn't be sitting here looking at this now!

As people who have benefited ourselves from The Great Commission how can we carry its torch in our own lives helping to disciple others?

Read Exodus 31: 1-11

Let's imagine God's *worship* as God's *workshop* where he quietly sweeps away, gently tidying up and guiding us, offering pointers, as we craft together.

What would it be like to be Bezalel or Oholiab? Where do we see Bezalels or Oholiab at work today?

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Part 3: Striving and persevering — Games as training

Intro

Games and sports are often tests of our physical and mental endurance. Can we keep up, can we break ahead, can we push that last inch? This week our readings and prompts focus on the idea of sports and games as ways of training ourselves to persevere that bit further, to give that bit more. As we revisit this sporting theme it is compelling to think about metaphors of personal bests and pacing as we consider what it means to live in good times, with our loving God keeping time.

(This material is drawn from the Game On theme.)

Read Psalm 77

The psalmist, in a time of trouble, gets motivation by reaching out to God. Many of us when pushing against our limits when playing an intense sport or game find ourselves recalling past experiences to give us the strength to continue.

Can you think of a time when you had to 'dig deep' in the middle of a game, sport or another kind of competition? Maybe it was to push yourself over the finish line?

Remembering past experiences can help you dig deeper — in the middle of a game and in the middle of life. Can you think of a time when recalling memories from the past has helped you overcome an obstacle in your life?

Read Galatians 5: 13-25

Spending time working together as a team or striving graciously against an opponent in a game gives us ways of cultivating these fruits of the Spirit. How can playing games help you improve your self control? How can they help you to become more kind, generous and faithful?

What have you learned about yourself from playing games over the years? What kind of 'player' are you?

Read Hebrews 12: 1-3

Jesus is our pioneer, perfecter, and pacemaker! He helps us push that bit further. With Jesus setting the pace where might we end up?

Professional runners and cyclists have whole teams working obsessively to reduce any excess weight in their clothing and equipment to make them as aerodynamic as possible. Metaphorically speaking, what are some of the weights and distractions we need to leave behind so that we are better able to run along with Jesus?

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Part 4: Wedding, wine, wings, and worship!

Intro

A week of vivid imagery to inspire us as we re-imagine church in the context of God's time. We contemplate joining together, things being more than the sum of their parts, and generosity.

Do the everyday and extraordinary acts of celebration and worship in our lives give us a glimpse of what 'all in good time' could mean for us?

(This material is drawn from the Re-Imagining Church theme.)

Read 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11

Paul describes here individual gifts that are given for the common good. In our churches we each have an individual part to play but in a shared project — we rely on one another. Why are we given different gifts?

How do we balance the contributions of individuals and the needs of the whole community?

Read John 2: 1-11

In contemporary Scottish culture (and in much of the world) church occasions for the last several decades have often been associated with (both fairly and unfairly): cold, restraint, prudishness, and judging others.

Whereas in this reading we see:

- warmth
- excess
- generosity
- welcome

What would a church directly inspired by the Wedding at Cana look like?

Read Psalm 36: 5-10

The cry of verse 7 is deeply evocative, using romantic and poetic language. The choice of the word 'wings' here is striking. Rather than another word such as 'walls', 'fortress', 'shield', or 'arms', why use the word 'wings'?

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Part 5: Turning to God

Intro

Many parts of Christianity — from kneeling to pray, or approaching a communion table, or even going on a pilgrimage — are acts of physically turning towards God. God is not located in any one particular place but by turning intentionally to focus our minds, we are in a sense turning to face God. Our bodies and minds are closely connected and physical movement can concentrate our attention. When do we find the time to emotionally, spiritually and physically turn to God? And what happens when we do?

(This material is drawn from the Ready Pilgrim theme.)

Read Psalm 138: 1-3

Think about the physical act of bowing down in verse 2. What happens mentally and emotionally when we literally move our bodies, to bow towards God?

Do you ever physically turn towards God? If one wants to turn towards God, how does one go about it?

Read Psalm 130

One way of reading this psalm is to see prayer as a form of echolocation!

Echolocation is a sensory technique used by animals like bats to navigate. By sending out high-pitched cries they are able to 'read' the space around them by tracking how the sound comes back to them.

Similarly, sometimes it is in the process of praying, and hearing our own voice coming back to us, that we are able to process our thoughts.

When you're by yourself praying to God what is the difference between praying in your mind and praying out loud? Both are valid ways of praying but can feel quite different.

Read 2 Corinthians 4: 13-5:1

What are the things that hearten and encourage you as a disciple of Jesus making your way in the world?