

Re: Set

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

May/Pentecost 2021 (2 -29 May)



In the beginning was *the Word*.

Then there was *light* and *dark*. That's two more words.

And then the words just kept coming and coming...

The story of Christianity, indeed of the world, is an ongoing conversation that began with the 'Word' — God addressing creation in the person of Jesus — with the meaning at the heart of everything.

When humanity — made in God's image — came crying, shouting and whooping into being we had mouths full of our own words. We responded to the Word of life with our own words of delight, shame, sorrow, curiosity, anger, wonder and love as we worked out what it means to be alive. And since then the words have continued to flow as we have learnt more about what it is to 'be'.

Every so often in this ongoing conversation it comes time to reset, refocus, and rediscover the thread. We take stock and respond again to that initial Word at the heart of the universe.

For God always invites our reply.

The last several months have been a profound interruption to the status quo affecting everything from seismic global trends to the minutiae of our ordinary day to day lives. Society is in a state of

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flux and we face an uncertain world on the brink of great cultural change and transformation. There is apprehension but also expectancy in the air.

And it is in this mood we that we turn our attention to Pentecost — when the church as we know it was born — in the midst of a state of flux, facing an uncertain world on the brink of great cultural change and transformation...

What can we learn from how they reset then that can help us reset now?

God is speaking.

And it's time for us to reply.

Ready, set...

These discussion questions adapt our monthly themes for small Connect Groups or personal Bible study (look up the [Re: Set, Resource Pack PDF](#) for more information on this month's theme). The questions are divided into 4 parts to correspond with the 4 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: Re: Set to Rediscover

Read Acts 8: 26-40

Re: Discover

You've got to love the honesty of that Ethiopian eunuch. When asked if he understands what he's reading there's no bluster or bravado or excuses. He presses the reset button and says "How can I, unless someone guides me?"

Who has helped you to discover — or *rediscover* — things about God, the Bible, and your faith?

And who could God be drawing you towards to explain the puzzle they are looking at as they try to make sense of their faith?

Read Psalm 81

Re: Tune

Chances are you don't have a lyre lying around that you can grab. But you probably do have another portable, handheld device that makes noise and that can help you retune into God.

This psalm is a stirring invitation to reconnect that invites us to engage our senses creatively and use technology imaginatively to help us focus on the divine.

What are the sounds that help you tune in and connect to God?

Read John 15: 1-8

Re: Grow

What are the fruits you long to see grow this year — the hopes that you are nurturing and tending to in your life, in the church, in your local community?

As branches of the true vine, how do we ensure that we abide with Jesus so that he flows through everything we are working towards?

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Part 2: Re: Set to Reimagine

Read Exodus 35: 4-35

Re: Designing

There's a lot of detail here giving us a window into a vibrant community that is pooling together resources and skills in a great shared endeavour: constructing the Tabernacle (a kind of portable sanctuary).

Enormous shared tasks like these can unite a community, weaving people together with a common purpose.

As we look ahead to the rest of the year and decade, how can we come together in these challenging times to engrave, design, embroider, and weave a better world?

Read Hosea 11: 1-11

Re: Engaging

In the midst of all too human conflict and calamity, rejection and recklessness comes the voice of God — tender, frustrated, in pain — and sounding astonishingly human.

Getting our heads around what it is like to 'be' God is phenomenally difficult. How can we possibly imagine what it is like to be the ageless creator of everything!? But knowing that we ourselves are made in the image of God might give us some clues...

As we see in this reading: a heartbroken parent raising a child making their way through the miraculous and the mundane, the incredible and the everyday, teaching their child to walk and then bracing themselves for rejection, offers an echo of the divine love at heart of the universe.

What do you imagine it is like to 'be' God? Are there other aspects of human experience that might give us other insights into 'being' God?

Read John 15: 9-17

Re: Claiming

As followers of Jesus we can lay claim to an earth-shattering fact: Jesus — the Son of God, the Word at the beginning of the universe — is our friend.

Jesus lives with us as our friend. As a group, come up with different ways you could spend quality time with your friend Jesus today.

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Part 3: Re: Set to Reconfigure

Read Acts 1: 1-11

Re: Calibrate

Just like the apostles looking up into the sky, we are sometimes guilty of looking at where Jesus **was** rather than where he **is** now. What he **was** doing and not what he **is** doing now.

What ways do we need to recalibrate our church communities? To reassess where Jesus is calling us to join him?

Are there things that we currently do that, while good in themselves, have run their course and are no longer where Jesus is calling us to be?

Read Ephesians 1: 15-23

Re: Member

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. (15-16, NRSVA)

Remembering one another in prayer, sharing our gratitude for others is a powerful thing. Gratitude transforms communities, relationships, and lives. As we seek to rebuild in the wake of the pandemic how can we build simple gratitude for one another into our institutions and across society?

What does a justice system or a health system or an economic system with gratitude at its heart look like?

Read Matthew 28: 16-20

Re: Commission

When we think about reconfiguring something we often prioritise implementing brand new approaches and methods. But, as we refocus on 'The Great Commission' to go and make disciples in this reading, are there things from our rich Christian tradition which we can re-commission, that we can bring back into use? Are there things that we have stopped doing that we could re-adapt to our current age in order to better live out this Great Commission from Jesus?

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Part 4: Re: Set to Restart

Read Ezekiel 37: 1-14

Re: Animate

This is a vivid, startling picture of new life bursting forth. How would you have felt as Ezekiel witnessing this vision?

And where do you see a coming together of dry bones in the church today? Where do you see God resetting bones so that God's people can come to life?

Read 1 Corinthians 12: 4-13

Re: Gift

Unlike an unloved box of bath salts that nobody wants and get re-gifted to somebody else every Christmas (sorry Aunt Joan...) Spiritual gifts are *meant* to be shared.

Why do you think the Spirit often breaks up the gifts into interlocking pairs?

What gifts do you have that could be shared in a ministry team with others to build up the church?

Read Numbers 11: 24-30

Re: Setting

Even when we don't set out to reset or restart we can find ourselves suddenly moved by the Spirit and resetting anyway.

Eldad and Medad didn't go looking for the Spirit, but the Spirit found them...

As we look to restart, to set out again, having set our eyes on God, how can we be more open to the Spirit calling unexpected voices? What steps can we take to be better and more generous listeners? In this context, how can you be more of a *Moses* and less of a *Joshua*...?