



Bible study

Knowing God — Psalm 146

Think about the prayers of praise and thanksgiving you usually hear in your church. As a group, make a list of the things that you most often hear people thanking and praising God for.

What are the common threads in your list? Are there any items that stand out?

Read Psalm 146.

- What aspect of God's character and activity is the Psalmist drawing attention to in verse 6?
- What about in verses 7-9?
- In what ways do you understand or experience these words to be true about God?
- What are the implications for people who worship the God who acts in this way to bring about justice and liberation for the poor, vulnerable, sick and oppressed?

Read Psalm 146:10 out loud and then follow it by reading Mark 1:14-15.

Discuss how the character of the kingly rule of God revealed in the Psalm is demonstrated in Jesus' ministry?

'It is impossible to really know Jesus and be indifferent to the plight of the poor.'

— Dewi Hughes, *The God of the Poor*

- Do you agree with Hughes' statement? How does it make you feel?

Knowing God can never be a purely academic exercise. To truly know God is always a transformative experience as He calls us into a relationship with Him that sets us free to love and glorify Him and to love and serve His world.

Break into pairs and read one of the following texts.

What does the passage tell us about the character of God? What does it say about the way that people, as they get to know God, will live out this knowledge? Share your insights with the whole group.

- Genesis 18:16-19
- Deuteronomy 10:17-19
- Jeremiah 9:23-24
- Matthew 5:43-48
- 2 Corinthians 8:1-9
- Philippians 2:1-11
- 1 John 3:16-18

Finish by using Psalm 146 to guide your prayers of praise. You may like to use some stories from Target to pick up contemporary examples of God using his people to 'execute justice for the oppressed, give food to the hungry, set the prisoners free, open the eyes of the blind, lift up those who are bowed down and watch over the stranger, orphan and widow.'

For later

Meditate on one of the passages in the section above. Ask God to allow you to get to know that aspect of his character and gracious action more deeply. Ask Him also to transform you to respond as He wants you to. Try to think of some concrete ways that you could begin or continue to respond to God in your own immediate environment and in the wider world.

Share any insights you may have had with the group when you next meet.