

**LIFEGROUP STUDY**  
**WITH: Where Heaven and Earth are United**  
**20211107**

**LEADER NOTES**

**OVERVIEW**

Welcome to our LifeGroup study – WITH. God’s plan from the beginning is that He would dwell with us and we with Him. This theme is seen throughout the Bible in the image of the temple, the place where God dwells. Over the next four weeks we will trace this temple theme from Genesis to Revelation. For week 1, we will focus on Genesis to see how the creation narrative paints creation, and more specifically Eden, as a temple where heaven and earth are united. The goal of this 4 week study is that we would come to read our Bibles with this temple imagery in mind and see how it brings the story of scripture to life in a new way.

**ICEBREAKER** If I Could Go Anywhere

If you could travel to visit any wonder of creation in the world, where would you most want to go? Would it be, for example, the Rocky Mountains of Alberta, the Great Barrier Reef, the deserts of Egypt? What would you want to do when you were there? **How might this experience help shape your view of God? Share your dream destination with the group!**

**STUDY**

1. On Sunday, Pete talked about how God’s plan is that He would dwell WITH us and we WITH Him. This is seen in a powerful way in Scripture through the image of the temple.
  - **What was a highlight for you from Pete’s sermon?**
  
2. Complete this sentence – Living a LIFE WITH GOD is/looks like \_\_\_\_\_ .

LEADER NOTE: Your LifeGroup members may think back to what Pete taught in this area. They may also draw from their own experiences and from what Scripture teaches us. A life with God includes being filled with His Spirit (Eph. 5:18) being aware of His presence (Matthew 28:20) and practicing His presence (Psalm 63:1-8).

3. Watch this video from The Bible Project that shows the parallels of creation to the temple and compares Adam and Eve’s role to the role of priests.  
<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/priests-of-eden/>

- **What do you think of the parallel of creation to the temple? What questions do you have about it?**
- **How does this video help you understand more the themes of temple and priesthood in the Bible?**

4. READ: Genesis 1

- Focus in on verses 26-31. **What do you notice about our unique image as people?**

LEADER NOTE: According to these verses we are unique because we are made in the image of God. (vs. 26) Part of that image means we are given the responsibility to reign over God’s creation. (vs. 26). We are unique among creation in that we have a material body as well as an immortal soul. We are uniquely like God in that we are rational and volitional – we can reason and choose (Gen. 3:6). We have free choice. We are creative (Gen. 5:17-22). We are designed for community (Gen. 2:23). Each of these represents a way that we reflect the image of God.

- **What did it mean for Adam and Eve to be “priests”? What does it mean for us today?**

LEADER NOTE: Adam and Eve were priests in that God gave them charge over all He had made (Gen. 1:26). In that role they both communed with God and stewarded God’s creation for His glory. Today, as followers of Jesus, we have a unique role as God’s priests, relating with God on behalf of other people and showing God’s love, compassion and justice in our world.

5. Read the following quote from The Bible Project.

“The creation account invites us to ponder and reflect on our ideal role as priests, our failure to live up to that ideal, and the hope we have because of Jesus, the future “seed” who created a new humanity and new kingdom of priests, and who will one day reunite Heaven and Earth. And in this new creation—this new garden—humanity will “work and serve” and rule once again as God’s image-bearers and priests in his cosmic temple.” The Bible Project

- **How does this quote help you see your role as a priest?**

LEADER NOTE: As descendants of Adam, we represent fallen humanity that has messed up our role as priests. We are a broken people. Jesus came to redeem and restore us. Now we are priests of His kingdom, (see 1 Peter 2:9) designed to actively serve now and in anticipation of the future when all things will be made new.

6. READ: Genesis 3:22-24

At the fall, Adam and Eve were banished from God's presence in Eden. Our relationship with God was broken.

- **Give 4 or 5 examples of how this brokenness is seen in our world today.**

LEADER NOTE: Our brokenness is seen in everything that we lost in Eden. The primary thing that was lost is our relationship WITH God. This broken relationship brings brokenness into every other area of our lives. Our relationships with each other are broken. Our image of ourselves is broken. Our values and ideals are broken. Our desires and ambitions are broken.

7. Imagine you have an opportunity to tell a friend how the creation account points to God's goal for our life today – that we would be WITH Him and He WITH us. **What would you say?**

LEADER NOTE: Eden is a picture of God's ideal. Before the fall, God walked freely in the garden with Adam and Eve. There was no barrier between God and people. Then sin entered the world and our relationship with God was broken. Jesus came to be Immanuel - God with us (see Matthew 1:23). Through Jesus, our relationship with God is restored. The creation account shows us what Jesus has made possible for us again today – to experience God WITH us.

8. What is a key takeaway for you from today's study?

## **EXPERIENCING GOD: God With Me**

Breath Prayer can be a powerful way to appreciate God's presence and work in your life. This simple exercise is something you can try together in LifeGroup and/or practice on your own. For this exercise, we'll focus on Psalm 23. As you move through the following steps, allow God to speak to your spirit about His peace and presence. Breath Prayer makes space for God to remind you He is WITH you – physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually.

NOTE: This exercise is designed to encourage your habit of biblical/Christ centred meditation. Instead of emptying yourself, as a new age mediation might encourage, this exercise fills you with God's truth.

### STEPS:

1. Take a minute to slow yourself down. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing and heartrate. Breath slowly and deeply.

2. Take a deep breath in. Pray, “The Lord is my shepherd.” (Psalm 23:1) Hold in your breath for a few moments and think of Jesus – He is your Good Shepherd. He is with you.
  
3. As you breathe out, pray, “I shall not want.” (Psalm 23:1) Release to God anything you have been wanting that is not of Him. This may include a temptation to sin, trying to solve a problem or find a solution outside of God, a damaged relationship. Whatever God brings to mind, give it to Him.
  
4. Breathe in once more and pray, “He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.” (Psalm 23:2-3) Take time to appreciate how God WITH you means life! Thank Him for his presence.
  
5. To finish, read Psalm 23 in its entirety. Allow God to speak to your soul as you spend time with Him.

## **PRAYER**

This week let's focus in on 3 of our local missions partners.

- Ray of Hope. Thank God for the great amount of hygiene items collected for our Halloween Hygiene Drive! Pray that God would use these items to bless those in need in our cities and to show them His love.
- Sunnydale Community Centre - Sunnydale is a community of approximately 200 families living in four large townhouse complexes in the Lakeshore Village area of Waterloo. The Sunnydale Community Centre strives to improve the quality of life and well-being of residents of the Sunnydale Community. Creekside makes a difference through volunteer and financial support. Pray for the Creekside volunteers who help with things like volunteer driving and food assistance. Ask that God would use these things to show the residents His love.
- Compass Refuge Centre - Creekside partners with Compass in their advocacy work as they provide assistance and journey with people who need Canada's protection. Creeksiders can volunteer time and skill in the offices, at the Guest House, provide translation help, and befriend a person who needs Canada's protection. Pray for Compass as they continue to work with refugees as they find their way here in Canada.

