

1. Many people find this psalm particularly comforting. Why do you think this is?
2. Are the assurances and comforts mentioned in this psalm automatic for everyone – believers and unbelievers? Why do you think this?
3. How do we become God's sheep? Look up 1 Peter 1: 18-21 and John 10: 1-18 and discuss the implications for those who seek to follow Jesus.
4. Discuss what comes to your mind as you think about the sheep/ shepherd imagery mentioned in these opening verses.
What can you learn about God from these verses?
What can you learn about yourself?
5. What does it mean for Jesus to be Lord of our lives?

After discussion it may be helpful to explore the following quote by Colin Marshall and Tony Payne who describe a Christ-follower as someone:

'who has taken a decisive and gigantic step of repentance in accepting the salvation that God has won for them through Christ but who has also committed themselves totally to obeying him, to learning to keep all his commandments, and to living out that repentance and faith daily for the rest of their lives.'

What challenges are there for us in this?

Why do we sometimes struggle to live under the Lordship of Christ?

What encouragements do the first 3 verses of this psalm give us to press on and make this a priority?

6. Can you share with the group a specific time when God 'made you lie down in green pastures or lead you beside still waters'? What effect did this have on you?
7. Discuss the following quotes:
'God makes his saints to lie down; he gives them quiet and contentment in their own minds, whatever their lot is; their souls dwell at ease in him and that makes every pasture green.' (Matthew Henry – commentator)

'I shall be supplied with everything I need; and, if I have not everything I desire, I may conclude it is either not fit for me or not good for me, or I shall have it in good time.' (from commentary – specific author unknown)

What can we learn about God's provision from the psalm and these quotations?

What do they say to us about worry, fear and trust?

(You may like to look up Phil 4: 19, Matt 6: 33 Isaiah 58:11)

8. How can we encourage one another to worry less and trust more i.e. to rest in God?

9. What is our soul?

How does our soul get damaged?

How does God restore it?

Someone once interpreted Psalm 23 verse 3a like this: 'When the soul grows sorrowful he revives it; when it is sinful he sanctifies it; when it is weak he strengthens it.'

Has this been your experience? Share with the group if you feel able.

- Thank God together that he is the 'Shepherd of our souls' and what that means to you.
- Pray for those in the group who are particularly feeling in need of rest or refreshment in their soul. Pray for God's life-giving Holy Spirit to fill and renew them.