

PSALM 23 PART 3 THE SHEPHERD – HOST

As you start this study spend some time together praising God for being your shepherd and guide (Psalm 23: 1-4)

READ v5

What kind of enemies do you think David was thinking of as he penned this verse?

What 'enemies' do we encounter today in 2017?

How did God provide for David in the face of his enemies? For an example, look at 2 Samuel 17: 24-29. (NB: Absalom was David's son who was seeking to kill him and take his crown)

See also Psalm 3: 1-4.

Can you think of a time God provided for you/ sustained you/ vindicated you in the face of your enemies?

What comfort and encouragement do the other verses of this psalm give us in these difficult times? See also James 4: 7-10, Hebrews 4: 15, Matthew 5: 38-48, 2 Corinthians 5: 10

What challenges are there for us in these verses too?

How is Jesus' death the ultimate example of God's abundant provision in the face of our greatest enemy Satan? (See Colossians 2: 15)

When the shepherd went ahead to prepare the 'tablelands' for his sheep i.e. the lush, high summer pastures he would:

- Work out the safest route for getting there
- Look for the best grass
- Scatter salt and minerals to replenish the flock after the harsh winter
- Clear debris out of the watering places
- Look for the best places for his sheep to sleep comfortably and safely
- Look for potential enemies of the sheep – predators and poisonous weeds
- Make plans to guard against any hazards

Discuss how this analogy might relate to God's care of us today.

Think together about some of the things that might hamper our walk with Jesus – how can we guard against these things?

Psalm 23: 6 talks of God's love and goodness following David all the days of his life.

What would you like people to remember about you when you leave a room? Do you leave the fragrance of Jesus behind you?

Read Revelation 7: 15-17 again.

How does this passage make you feel?

How do you feel about the fact that there are many people who don't share your hope because they haven't heard/ haven't understood the cross and don't know Jesus personally yet?

Spend some time thinking about your family, friends and neighbours and ask God to show you who it is He wants you to be praying for and reaching out to.

Think about how you could do that over this Christmas season and share your thoughts and resolutions with the group.

Spend some time praying for each other that we would all:

- be obedient in carrying out this biblical imperative
- look for and use the opportunities God gives us to share Him with others
- invite people to hear truth proclaimed/ explained
- be bold, sensitive and prayerful

Finish by sharing something that has really stuck with you from this series in Psalm 23 – it might be something new you have learned, a challenge or an encouragement, and then read the psalm again together as an act of worship putting the emphasis on **the Lord** and what **He** has done rather than ourselves.