

HOW WOULD JESUS LEAD WORSHIP?

study guide

WHAT IS THIS MATERIAL?

These notes are written to help you explore the content of Sam and Sara Hargreaves' book 'How would Jesus lead worship?' They could be used by a church leadership team, a worship team or a group of worship leaders. The book is ideal for people who have grasped the biblical and practical basics of worship but want to take their understanding and practice deeper and broader. Studying it as a group and applying your findings in church could have a transforming effect on your corporate worship and beyond.

You could do these sessions weekly, monthly, or even less frequently, perhaps spreading the material over a year. Everyone taking part ought to have a copy of the book (available at engageworship.org, other online retailers and your local Christian bookshop).

For you as the leader - the session outlines are intended as guides which you can adapt to suit your group. Different activities, questions and responses will be more appropriate for different groups and settings, so read through the material before each session and customise for your context. Remember that people have different learning styles - some more active, some based around discussion, whilst others will connect with reading and writing, so tailor the session to meet these needs where possible.

BEFORE THE FIRST SESSION

Meet together with your group for a meal, a coffee or another relaxed setting. You could begin some discussion by asking people what they feel is great about your church's worship at the moment, and then where you would like to see it grow.

Give out the books and explain that before each session people will need to do a short set reading as preparation, and that they can read the other sections of the book at their convenience. Give an introduction to the book (perhaps by summing up pages 7-17), giving special weight to the definition of worship found on pages 9-10, which the rest of the book assumes. You might want to have a discussion around this three-part definition.

Point out that it is fine to question and debate with the book and one another during this study. The book should be a launch pad for looking deeper into the scriptures mentioned (especially the gospel of Luke which is the main text). Spend more of your time in the sessions talking about what the scripture says and how that applies to your context than debating the book.

Discuss your expectations of this 8-session study. Have an open time of prayer and worship together.

If you have time, read Luke 1 together and then engage in the worship experience on pages 18-19 (see below, adapted for corporate use).

Spend a moment considering the people you have seen and met today. What kind of people were they? What were they doing? Did they look happy or sad? Did they seem



excited, tired, nervous or bored? Did anyone appear to be in pain? Were they with friends, with family or alone?

Now consider the people in the first chapter of Luke's gospel, real, flesh and blood people. Zachariah, the priest - old and alone. His wife, Elizabeth - past her best, shamed in a society that valued women for their fertility. Their relative, Mary - young, poor and frightened. Do you know people who are like them? Have you seen anyone today that reminds you of them?

In what ways are you like Zechariah, Elizabeth or Mary? Are you considered too old or too young to make a difference, perhaps in leading worship? Have you been shunned or shamed? Are you seen as a failure – by others? By yourself?

Hear God's messenger speak to these people of flesh and blood:

'Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. ... he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' (Luke 1:13,17)

'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.' (vv.30-33)

Can you hear a message from God to you echo down through the generations? 'Remember: you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God...' (1 Peter 2:9) You are chosen, like Zechariah, Elizabeth and Mary.

Notice too that it's okay to have fears and doubts:

'Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."' (1:18)

'"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"' (v.34)

What are your questions for God about his calling on your life? What are your fears about how that might work out? What aspects of being involved in leading worship cause you self-doubt or worry? Write them down or speak them out to God. He is gracious and he will listen.

While we can admit our fears and doubts, we can pray that we will arrive at Mary's state of heart: "'I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."' (v.38) We can pray that in the midst of our questions and doubts, we will rise up again to worship the God who chooses the small people:

'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation...' (vv.46-50)

SESSION ONE: JESUS HAS MADE A WAY INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES.

Read chapter 1, pages 20-24 (up to 'The Incarnation') before the session.

Opening Activity

Start by focusing yourselves on God. Ask the members of the group to close their eyes and consider what they are bringing to today's session; which experiences of the day, emotions or states of being.

Give everyone a tealight, and ask them to begin giving their thoughts from the day over to God.

Light a large candle, centrally placed, and explain that this candle symbolises the presence of Jesus, the Light of the World, with us by the Holy Spirit.

Ask the members of the group to, when they feel ready, light their tealight from the big light and place it next to it, as a symbol of themselves being fully present, and as an acknowledgement that they need the Light of Christ in their lives. Perhaps finish with a prayer or a song.

Discussion

- Can you sum up the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus? (go around the group, challenging each other to use as few words as possible)
- What impact, if any, does our idea of the gospel have on our approach worship?
- Read Exodus 33:20; Leviticus 10:1-3 and 1 Chronicles 13:9-10, and explain to each other the need for the Old Testament sacrificial system.
- Read Hebrews 9:1-7, and try to visualise what the Tabernacle looked like (perhaps use pictures, drawings or set the room up so that you get an idea of the geography of the Tabernacle.)
- Read Leviticus 16:1-6. How many rituals do Aaron need to perform before he could enter the Most Holy Place (if you have visualised the Tabernacle in your meeting place, try to imagine where Aaron would be performing the different rituals)?
- Now compare the previous Scripture passage with Hebrews 10:19-22. What words would you use to describe the contrasts?
- What does Hebrews 10:19-22 specify as the reason for this change?
- Read Luke 23:44-46, imagining what these events must have looked like.
- What impact could the stories you have read today have on your personal worship of God?
- What impact could they have on corporate worship, how worship is led and experienced in your church?



- This concept addresses the tension between immanence (the nearness of God, intimacy, closeness, familiarity), and transcendence (otherness of God, holiness, awe, fear) in worship. Which of these does your church major on? How could you better hold this tension, in the light of these scriptures?
- How often do you sing about, or worship Jesus as our High Priest, or him opening the way to the Father? Think of examples. Do you need to create more space to respond to these stories?

End the session by worshipping God for making a way for us to draw near to him through Jesus. You could...

...use a song focussed around the theme, eg. *Jesus lead us to the Father* (Sam Hargreaves, available on RESOUNDworship.org), *Father God we come* (Andy Irons, available on RESOUNDworship.org) or *Before the throne of God above* (Charitie L. Bancroft / Vikki Cook).

...offer up spontaneous prayers of thanks.

...tear a curtain in half as a symbol of the way being opened to God.

...write prayers of thanks on different coloured papers, and stick them together on a large sheet to make a cross shape.

SESSION TWO: WORSHIPPING THE TRINITY

Read chapter 1, pages 24-31 (up to 'Worship the worship leader') before the session.

Opening activity:

Download 'hand meditation' from the 'worship ideas' section on engageworship.org. This is a powerpoint led meditation aiming to help people release their stress and burdens to God. Run it off a computer screen for a small group, or project onto a big screen for a larger group. You can either do the meditation in silence or put your own choice of music on in the background.

Discussion:

- When you think of Jesus, do you find it easier to think of him as fully God, or fully human?
- Why is the ancient Christian belief that Jesus is fully human important to us today?
- What impact does the concept of the incarnation, of Jesus being God yet becoming one of us, have on our worship?
- **Additional activity** - listen to the song "One of us" by Joan Osbourne and look at the lyrics. How would you respond to her? Would the worship in your church connect with her longings?
- Can you think of any songs, liturgies or resources that affirm Jesus' humanity?
- How did the first Christians come to the conclusion that Jesus was also fully God? What Scripture passages do you know that supports Jesus' divinity? (for example Matthew 28:9, 17; John 10:30; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Colossians 1:15; 2 Peter 3:18)
- How many songs do you use which explicitly name members of the Trinity? Do you use any liturgical or other material which would help people to engage with God as three-in-one in corporate worship?
- Do you agree that 'understanding the Trinity makes great worship possible' (p28)?
- How would you express the different persons in the Trinity's roles in worship?
- 'It's not up to us to make something happen, to create an atmosphere or attempt to generate a response' (page 29). What is your reaction to this – does it come across as lifting a burden or an excuse to scrap preparation?
- If you agree that Jesus is the ultimate worship leader - what then is our role?

End the session by, for example...

...engaging in the worship experience on p33 (one person leading the group by reading out loud).



...a time of confession for when we have tried to 'generate a response' in our own strength, relying on music or skill rather than coming to the Father through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. Receive God's forgiveness and his empowering to lead his way.

...singing songs which focus you on the trinity, eg *Jesus lead us to the Father* (Sam Hargreaves, available on RESOUNDworship.org), *We give glory and praise* (*Awesome Trinity*), Matt Osgood, available on RESOUNDworship.org).

SESSION THREE: HUMBLE SERVANT - THE TEMPTATIONS

Read chapter 2, pages 38-43 (up to 'Don't tell anyone...') before the session.

Opening activity:

Collect lots of magazines and shopping catalogues. Ask the group to go through the magazines and tear out anything that represents what they risk putting before God (eg. money, possessions, skills, recognition, family etc.). Chat throughout this activity with one another about how temptations appear, are they, for example, disguised as 'concern' for family or are there friends who speak temptations into your lives (eg. 'you shouldn't work that hard for church without being paid' etc).

When everyone has pulled out one or several pictures, put the pictures somewhere central, or stick them up on a board. Either have a open time of confessions and prayer or lead the group in a pre-prepared confession appropriate to your group.

Discussion:

- What's your reaction to the story on page 38? Have you ever met anyone with a similar attitude? Do you recognise this in yourself?
- How have you defined 'success' in worship ministry in the past? What would people in your church view as a 'successful' time of worship?
- What can a wrong definition of success lead to?
- Read Luke 4:1-13. What jumps out at you from the passages? Which of the three temptations do you think you relate to the most?
- Jesus countered all the temptations by quoting the Bible. How much scripture do you know by heart, so that it equips you to come against temptation? What role might corporate worship have in helping people to internalise scripture? What could that look like in your church?
- The book talks about idols which come in the way of worshipping God only. What might be some 'idols' for those involved in worship ministry. How do you as a church intentionally turn from idols?
- Have you ever felt tempted to 'test God' (page 42) in your worship leading? Where is the line between relying on him in a good way, and testing him in a negative way?
- Re-read the paragraph at the end of page 42 and the beginning of page 43. What does the path of humility, service and self-sacrifice look like for you as a worship leader / team member? What practical things can you do to develop a servant heart?

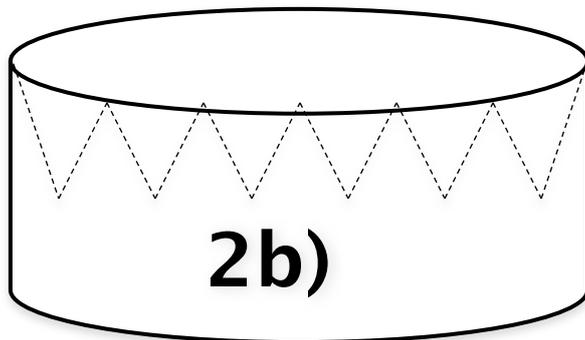
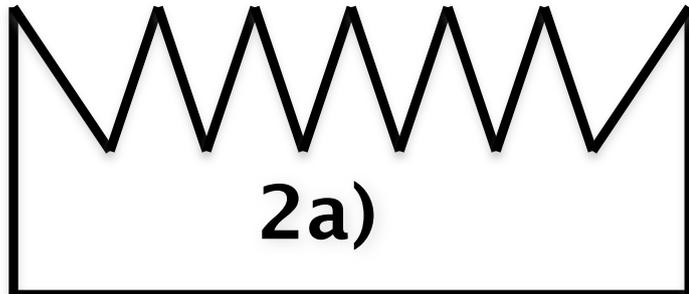
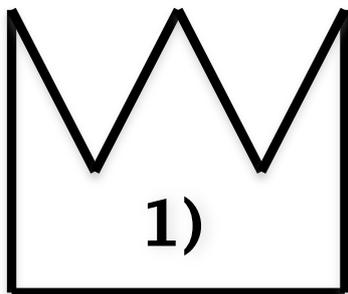
End the session by, for example...

...singing something like *Humble King* (O kneel me down again) by Brenton Brown, *We bow down* by Viola Grafstrom or *We fall down* (we lay our crowns) by Chris Tomlin.



...spending some time praying for each other and for each person's specific temptations that they struggle with in ministry.

...making some yellow card / gold card crowns (either make them two-dimensional (easiest, see 1)) or make a longer two-dimensional crown (2a) that you bend and stick together to make a three-dimensional crown (2b)). Encourage everyone in your group to write something on the crown (on the back if it's personal) that they struggle humbling themselves on / laying down before Christ. Pray for humility and help to 'lay down our crowns' (representing our own kingship in our lives, Revelation 4:10). Place the crowns symbolically before a cross or on an altar table.



SESSION FOUR: HUMBLE SERVANT - AT LEAST CARE FOR THE LEAST!

Read chapter 2, pages 55-60 before the session.

Opening activity:

Put lots of different coloured pieces of paper, cardboard and fabrics in a pile.

Encourage your group to think about their day:

What emotions have you experienced? Think about the people you have met, the news that you've heard, the circumstances and events that have happened – what have you felt about all these?

Encourage your group to pick colours out of the pile of materials that symbolise their emotions during the day in some way (there is no 'right' way of doing this, everyone will connect different colours to different emotions) and then share why they picked those (eg. I picked white, because today I met my newborn grandchild for the first time, and he made me feel all fresh, happy and renewed).

When everyone has shared, stick all the colours on a board or piece of paper in the shape of heart. Pray something like:

Father God, we open our hearts before you. You see what our hearts contain, our joy, our thankfulness and our peace, but you also see our stress, our grief and our anger. We give all these emotions to you, touch us where we need to be touched. Help us to move the focus from ourselves to you now. Help us to be fully present. Amen.

Discussion:

- Read Luke 4:16-19.
- In what contexts have you heard people talking about 'anointing' before? For what purpose does Jesus claim to be anointed?
- Can you think of any Scripture passages or stories that shows Jesus bias towards the 'unlovable'? Perhaps split the group up into pairs to look at a number of different encounters Jesus has with 'the least' listed in footnote 14 on page 134. Get the groups to feedback what they discovered, and then talk about the cumulative picture these accounts paint.
- "Jesus' life of perfect worship to the Father is not only to do with spiritual matters... It is a mission of words and action, proclamation and demonstration. He preaches and lives out good news to the poor, the sick, the lonely" (page 56). Do you agree with this? Which is most important to you - words or action, spiritual or practical? Can we follow Jesus' example of emphasising both?
- What does your local church do to engage with justice issues? How does that relate to your sung worship? Can you think of songs or other expressions of worship you have used, or could use, to underline God's heart for the least and our commitment to being used by him in blessing the world?
- "The worship team of a church should be leading the way when a congregation decides to bless its community or address a global justice issue, rather than waiting



around until the church has 'got over' its social action urge and come back to 'worship'" (page 57). Do you agree? Why / why not?

- How did the Andy Flannagan quote of page 57 make you feel?
- How well do your worship services reflect the three dimensions mentioned on page 58?
- How could your worship team engage with a social / justice issue?

End the session by, for example...

...using any of the ideas on pages 59-60, or any of the ideas on engageworship.org on the theme of 'justice'.

...using today's paper to pray. Let people flick through the papers and rip out the things they want to pray about. Pray. Then talk about if there are any issues that you've prayed about that you can actually do something about.

...spending some time in prayer confessing and repenting of the ways the Evangelical Church in general, and perhaps also us as individuals, have ignored the needs of the poor and vulnerable people of the world, and in our corporate worship.



SESSION FIVE: LEADER WITH AUTHORITY- BEING A LEADER

Read chapter 3, p ages 61-71 (up to 'Leadership and service planning) before the session.

Opening activity:

Sing a song like *Jesus, be the centre* (Michael Frye) or *Jesus, we are here* (Patrick Matsikenyiri) to centre yourselves on him. Perhaps end in an open time of prayer and praise.

Discussion:

- Do you think of yourself as a leader? Why / why not?
- Read Luke 6:39-49. What speaks to you from this passage?
- How important do you think our 'life foundations' or our 'secret life' are for our public leadership? What can we do to sustain a healthy 'secret life' (in things like emotions, finances, sexuality etc)? How can we help each other?
- **Additional activity:** you may be in the kind of relationships as a group where it is appropriate to have a time where people listen to God and then share any 'secret life' issues that might be damaging their leadership. This might be a good time to commit to accountable relationships with one another (perhaps in twos or threes), share your struggles, pray for each other and remember to ask each other how you're getting on.
- Read Luke 7:1-10.
- What do you associate with the word 'authority'? What does Jesus show authority to be? Who is Jesus under authority of, and who does he have authority over?
- Why did Jesus marvel at the Roman Centurion?
- Who are you under the authority of? Who is under your authority?
- What are your authority structures in church? Does it work and is it respected?
- How can we submit to the authorities over us in our worship leading? Is it ever right to rebel?
- What does it mean to *lead* worship? Where is the line between too much timidity on the one hand, and coercion and manipulation on the other? Have you seen helpful / unhelpful models?
- Are you encouraged say things from the front as you lead (if not, why do you think that is)? How could you use instructions from the front helpfully in your setting? What would be inappropriate?



- Do you know where you're going; where you're leading people? Do you (perhaps as a team) take time to seek God, search Scripture and listen to advice from people of where the worship team and the worship life of the church should head?

End the session by, for example...

...using the worship experience on p68.

...identify who you are under authority of and pray for wisdom and guidance for those leaders. Identify too whom you are in authority over and pray a blessing on them.

SESSION SIX: LEADER WITH AUTHORITY- BEING A TEAM

Read chapter 3, pages 73-80 before the session.

Opening activity:

Use the 'Names of God' PowerPoint from engageworship.org. Introduce it by asking people to get comfortable, and if they are the type of people who needs it to think, to grab a pen and paper. Play the PowerPoint with some instrumental music in the background (make sure you have seen it yourself first so that you know if it is appropriate for your group, and also have an idea of how long it is) and then, share which name of God stood out to each person and why, *and / or* have an open time of prayer and worship, praising God for who he is.

Discussion:

- Give everyone a piece of paper and ask them to scribble honest notes about the following question (with the promise that no one else will read them):
 - 1) Do you feel that the ministry team you're in at church feels like a team, or more like a group of random people thrown together?
 - 2) If a 'team' feeling is lacking, what would make it feel more like a team?
 - 3) Is everyone in your team (either the one you're in, or one you're leading) there because they have a strong calling to be there? If not, what are their reasons for being there?
 - 4) Is everyone in your team being mentored by a leader and on a growth curve?
- Read Luke 5:1-11. How does this story relate to you?
- Discuss together: What does Jesus seem to be looking for in the people that he picks for his team? Is it the same as we look for?
- What are the criteria for joining your team? Are they the right ones?
- Read Luke 6:12-13. When Jesus prays about who to call as disciples, do you think God dropped unknown names in Jesus' mind, or how do you think it worked? What can we learn from this leadership principle of Jesus?
- Pages 75-77 talk about how Jesus went about mentoring his inner circle. What do you think about these observations? Can you think of other ways he equipped them to be his core team?
- Are you being mentored in a similar way? Are you mentoring someone else in a similar way? What ways could your church and worship team be intentional about this?



- What did you think about the story on pages 77-79? Have you had experiences of someone you try to lead hurting you? How did you react? What can Jesus' reaction to Peter teach us?
- How much do you identify yourself as a disciple of Jesus? How does that impact your life?

End the session by, for example...

...discussing some of the issues people jotted down in the first question, if you think it would be helpful for your group. Plan your own discussion questions beforehand relating specifically to your team's situation, and cut out some of the other questions above.

...spend some time in quiet listening to God, asking him to bring people to mind who would fit in your team and / or who you could mentor.

...appreciate your team! If the group you're doing this study with is your ministry team, then pass pieces of paper around with people's names on them, so each person can write something encouraging about everyone else, why they like being on team with them.

...have Jesus given you leadership tasks that seem impossible? In light of Jesus' command to give 5000+ people food, spend some time praying for each others as leaders. Pray for faith to believe Jesus' promises and trust to accept his help.



SESSION SEVEN: CREATIVE WORSHIP

Read chapter 4, pages 82-90 (up to 'Worship ideas') before the session.

Opening activity:

Give every member of your group a lump of play-dough. Ask them to form something that represents where they are at with God today. After a few minutes, share with one and another and then pray for each other.

Discussion:

- Have you ever thought of Jesus as being creative?
- Brainstorm the different creative ways people worship in the Bible (see page 86 for some examples, but you will probably come up with many more.)
- Read Luke 13:18-21.
- If mustard seeds, fields and birds were everyday objects that resonated with Jesus' listeners, what are equivalents for your congregations? How often do we use modern objects in teaching, worship or prayer at church?
- If you are a musical worship leader, how can you add creativity to the worship music in your church? Look at the examples at the end of page 83 and the beginning of page 84 - have you tried any of these? Could you add your own examples of how to bring creative innovation to worship music?
- Pages 87 and 88 talks about the strengths and weaknesses of corporate singing in church. Do you agree with these observations? Have you got your own thoughts on where it is more and less appropriate to use singing as a form of worship?
- Other than music, what art-forms do you use in your church, for worship, teaching and evangelism?
- Have you noticed certain groups of people (for example men, young people, unchurched visitors) struggling to engage in worship or pay attention to long sermons? How might a more creative approach to church engage people with different learning styles and attention spans? Can you think of specific things which have worked or could be used in your church?
- Are there people who have creative gifts in your church, but they are not being used in worship?
- **Additional activity** - get a print-out of your church membership list or electoral roll. Prayerfully look through the list and note down anyone you see who has creative gifts (could be in traditional arts such as dance, drama, music or painting, but also other less obvious ones like video editing, carpentry, flower arranging, baking or interior design). Consider asking these people to join you in service planning on a regular basis or for special services. Talk through the practicalities of using alternative artforms in your meetings.



- Read Luke 7:36-50. Talk about what strikes you from this story. Which characters can you relate to?
- Is the worship in your church 'costly'? Do you give it your best efforts, creativity, resources and time? What holds you back from offering a 'sacrifice of praise'?
- The 'sinful woman' poured over Jesus the most precious and expensive thing she had. What is the most precious and expensive thing you have? Would you be prepared to sacrifice it for Jesus? (if you feel that this question is too personal, then ask people to not answer out loud, but to simply consider it).

End the session by, for example...

...using any of the worship ideas on pages 90-91 and page 99.

...share the Lord's Supper together, possibly incorporating any of the ideas on page 98.

...get together the tools-of-the-trade of the members of your group to get creative with (instruments, pen and paper, art materials etc.). Decide on an aspect of God (eg. his love, his power or his humility in Christ) and worship him for this in a creative way.

SESSION EIGHT: BEING RELIANT ON THE SPIRIT

Read chapter 5 (pages 103-115) before the session.

Opening Activity:

Play a meditative piece of music (use a piece of classical music if you never usually do so!) Suitable pieces could be any of the Gymnopedies by Eric Satie or perhaps Pachelbel's Canon. Ask people to sit or lie down in the room and to close their eyes, listening to anything that God might want to speak through the music. Share and pray together.

Discussion

- What are the immediate word-associations with for people in the group when they hear 'Holy Spirit'? Encourage people to be honest - this will produce some very different answers depending on the church and the individual.
- In what way was the Holy Spirit involved in Jesus life? (p103) Look up and read Luke 1:35; 3:22; 4:1, 14; 4:18-19.
- Read Romans 8:9-11. Knowing what you know about the Holy Spirit's power in Jesus' life, how does Romans 8:9-11 make you feel? What impact should the facts of this verse have on your life?
- Acts 1:4-5 – The disciples were asked to 'wait' for the Holy Spirit: how often do we wait, rather than rush into decisions, worship services or the next song on our list?

Activity

Go through the worship experience on p106, perhaps engaging in a corporate confession which feels right for your group (eg. saying a pre-written liturgy together, hammering the confessions to a cross or burning the pieces of paper). Thank God together for the forgiveness he offers through Christ. Say the prayer on p107 out loud together.

Discussion:

- Read and compare the occasions in Luke when people are 'worshipping in the Spirit': Elizabeth 1:41, Mary 1:46-55, Zechariah 1:67-79 and Jesus 10:17-24.
 - What is similar in their prayers? What is different?
 - What has the Spirit *revealed* before he inspires this *response*?
 - Share an experience when the Spirit has revealed something to you which has caused you to respond in worship?
- How can we make space for more 'revelation' of who God is into our worship services (there are some ideas on pages 109-110)?
- On a scale between scared and excited, where is your church at when it comes to receiving the gifts of Holy Spirit and welcoming his presence?
- How does Luke 11:11-13 speak into your context?



- What can you do in your church to invite the Spirit, but also be sensitive and pastoral to the different needs of your congregation?

End the session by, for example...

...sharing ideas and with one another of how you can keep your spiritual life healthy (eg. ideas for retreats, 'quiet times', personal worship ideas etc.) If Jesus needed the Holy Spirit for his ministry, how much more shouldn't we seek to be filled again and again.

...spending some time waiting before God in silence, asking the Holy Spirit to come and speak and fill you for the task he has for you.

...sing songs like *Spirit of the Living God* (Daniel Iverson) or *Come, Holy Spirit descend on us* (Iona Community) or *There must be more than this* (Tim Hughes).

...prayerfully reflecting on what you as a group will take away from this study. In what way has your group been affirmed? In what way have you been challenged? What one thing will you take away?

