

HOUSEGROUP NOTES: ADVENT SEASON Beginning 27th November 2016

‘BEYOND THE MAGICAL TO THE MIRACLE’

(These notes are to be spread over the whole of advent and used as required)

START HERE:

Using the unfinished phrases below numbered 1-10 go round the group and see if the person can finish the phrase and explain WHY? If you change the starting point, you can do this many times over with everyone having a different phrase to answer. It's a good starting point for the whole of advent.

1. The most exciting thing about Christmas is...
2. The happiest Christmas I ever had was...
3. My favourite food at Christmas is...
4. The best party I have ever been to was...
5. The worst thing about Christmas is...
6. The best present I ever had was...
7. I like Christmas because...
8. I think Christmas is important because...
9. The present I most want for Christmas is...
10. My most embarrassing moment at Christmas was...

Q. WHAT makes Christmas MAGICAL still to so many today do you think?

Q. WHY is the MIRACLE of Christmas still lost on so many today do you think?

THE MIRACLE OF THE MOMENT: (Isaiah 49:8-13, Gals 4:1-7, Hebs 4:14-16)

In (Isaiah 49) the people of Israel were in suffering and turmoil.

Q. WHAT are the images of God's "salvation" that you see in this passage?

Q. HOW do each of these images relate to your own experiences of struggle and suffering?

(Galatians 4) speaks to God's divine plan and timing so that we can become adopted as children of God.

SHARE a story from your own life in which you experienced God's divine provision and timing.

Q. HOW has that experience shaped your faith journey do you think?

(Hebrews 4) reminds us that Jesus knows and has empathy for our struggles.

Q. HOW does this (or not) personally give you confidence to call out to God?

Q. WHAT are you waiting on for God to do in your life at present?

Q. IS the Holy Spirit nudging you to act on something in your life or to invite someone to come to church, or into deeper spiritual conversation?

Q. WHAT keeps you from allowing this to be the miracle of your moment?

PRAY the Spirit opens doors and creates these divine moments of opportunity

THE MIRACLE OF THE MESSAGE: (Isaiah 9:2,6-7, John 1:1-18, Hebs 1:1-3)

(Isaiah 9:2) talks about the light that has come into the darkness.

Q. WHAT are the ways that knowing Jesus has brought light to your life?

(Isaiah 9:6-7) describe the character of the coming Messiah.

Q. WHICH of these titles resonates most with you and WHY?

DISCUSS how these names for Jesus might shape our daily lives & actions?

Q. HOW does (John 1:1-18) change your understanding of the creation story

and in what way (if any) does that impact on the message of the gospel?

(Hebrews 1:3) says that Jesus is the “*exact representation*” of the Father.

Q. WHAT are 4 things that you know about the person and character of Jesus, and in what ways is this how you have understood what God the Father is like?

The message of Jesus changes our lives!

Q. What are a few of the life changing messages you have received in your life circumstances this past year? (e.g. Bad test result? Loss of a good friend? etc)

Make these a matter of **PRAYER** - supplication or thanksgiving as appropriate.

THE MIRACLE OF THE METHOD: (Isaiah.40:1-11, Philippians. 2:1-13)

Isaiah’s words of comfort offer the hope of His presence to a people in exile.

Q. WHAT are the circumstances that cause you to call out for God’s presence?

Q. WHAT would it look like in your life for God to make the road smooth?

Philippians 2 shows us the radical way in which God comes to be with us.

DISCUSS the WHY, HOW and WHAT of this true MIRACLE of Christmas.

Q. HOW can we show others by what we do that God is for them?

SHARE just one way that God has worked miraculously in your own life to transform you and/or accomplish His purposes?

PRAY for those you know who need this MIRACLE in their lives too.

Shaun