

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS FOR DANIEL

WARM UP

What is it about living here that either encourages or challenges your faithfulness to follow Jesus?

What was a primary takeaway for you from Sunday's sermon on Daniel?

EXPLORATION

1. Daniel (and his friends) are amazing examples of what it means to be faithful in a faithless world. Time and time again, Daniel chooses the path of righteousness when it would have been easier to give into the demands of Babylon or Persia. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and the Fiery Furnace (Chapter 3) and Daniel and the Lions' Den (Chapter 6) are great examples. Pick one of the stories, read the story together, and then identify steps, decisions, or actions that the characters took to be faithful to God over the nations of Babylon or Persia.

2. Daniel's interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's first dream occurs in Daniel Chapter 2. Once the mystery of the dream was revealed to Daniel, his first response is to praise God. Read this praise in Daniel 2:20-23 together. What does this reveal about the character and plans of God?

3. King Nebuchadnezzar was a pagan king who is portrayed as an antagonist against both God and Daniel throughout this book. Yet, Nebuchadnezzar explicitly praises God multiple times within the book when he encounters the sovereignty of God (see 3:28-4:3 and 4:34-37). How should we view this exultation of God's name in light of the pride and evil of the person uttering the praise? Does this bring God glory?

4. Most books of the Bible have a combination of multiple literary genres (ie. narrative, poetry, prophecy, discourse/letter, etc.). However, the juxtaposition of the more narrative accounts in Daniel 1 – 6 compared to the apocalyptic visions in Daniel 7 – 12 is one of the more startling contrasts for modern readers. This can make it difficult to read or study, and even harder to apply to our lives. How have you learned to apply biblical apocalyptic literature in your faith journey? Or why would you encourage someone to read the biblical apocalyptic literature (especially as it relates to the Revelation of John in the New Testament)?

5. Read Daniel 7:9-14 together (an awe-inspiring apocalyptic prophecy!). How does this passage increase your fear or awe of the Lord? And how does it foster divine thankfulness for the person and work of Jesus?

APPLICATION

It's always challenging to faithfully participate in a society that doesn't practice the truth and follow the Lord. When Judah was captured by Babylon and the exilic period in Judah's history began, the Lord said through the prophet Jeremiah: "seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find welfare" (Jeremiah 29:7). Let's follow the examples of Daniel and Jeremiah. Pray that God would equip and strengthen you to be faithful in your life. And pray that God would move through Corvallis and the greater Willamette Valley, blessing the people and work of our community.