

The Awakening

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Easter 2021 (4 April - 1 May)



There are periods in the history of humanity when those living through times of great transition feel something has happened to change the whole destiny of the world. The physical and spiritual and psychological effect of the resurrection had such an effect. It was said of the first Christians that they turned the known world upside down with their convincing beliefs that God had come into the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. They claimed it was an awakening of the human spirit to a new world order.

This month we too are looking for a new world order because we believe that we are simply reflecting the longing in so many hearts today for the renewal of the church. We're starting to talk about a season of awakening. A time when the Holy Spirit is going to draw near to us all and bring about a renewal of faith. We truly believe we are living in such a moment again. It can't be the same as other times but it is a 'shaking of the foundations moment'. There is a stirring in the air, across the world, like a changing of the guard, no one can quite put their finger on it, but we know when we come out of lockdown — lockdown will have transformed everything. Nothing will quite ever be the same again.

During the next four weeks of April we are going to invite our writers to pick up on the analogy of 'An Awakening' a realisation that the time for dreaming has past and we are longing for a visitation of the Almighty. One that will heal our broken world. A visitation based not on privilege or power or historical advantage but based on the deep knowledge that God is longing to reconcile his creation to himself and to each other. Our key text for the month is found in Revelation 3:2 where the Risen Christ speaks to the Church at Sardis saying "Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God."

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- In week one we remind ourselves that the resurrection of Jesus is the beginning of God's new project to renew all of his creation.
- In week two we think of the unity that is created within Community out of Communion.
- In week three we look at the spiritual power that is available to the community of God's people through the Holy Spirit.
- In week four we focus on our core calling as God's people to be followers of Jesus.

The following discussion questions are designed to accompany and adapt the monthly theme material (see [The Awakening, Resource Pack](#)) for small group work. They are divided into 4 parts to correspond with the 4 weeks of the Daily Worship theme.

These questions are just a guideline and there is no need to go through all the given questions in a single session, or in the following sequence. Feel free to pick and choose, or adapt to what interests your group.

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Part 1: The Awakening of God's New Project

Read Acts 10: 34-43

Discuss why believing the resurrection of Jesus is more than just 'a ticket for eternal life'?

In what way does forgiveness of sins affect and restore our ability to live well in the here and now?

Read Isaiah 25: 6-9

What do you make of this very inclusive reading? It would appear all peoples are welcome at the King's feast?

Do you think the Communion service is a prefiguring of this kind of inclusive fellowship?

Read John 20: 1-18

Jesus says Mary's name and she awakes from her grief to recognise him. God's new project has begun.

What have been important moments of realisation and awakening in your faith?

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Part 2: The Awakening of New Community and Communion

Read Acts 4: 32-33

As a group, discuss the following statement.

"The awakening to a 'new belonging in Christ' is not so much a giving away of what we have but a receiving of more than we could ever imagine."

What do you think? How does it make you feel?

Read John 20: 19-31

Being awakened to the knowledge that we are being sent...

In verse 21 Jesus says 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'

What does it mean to be 'sent'?

How do you respond to this sending?

Read Acts 3: 1-10

Do you think that divine healing is something the church should talk more about?

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Part 3: The Awakening of Spiritual Power

Read Psalm 4

This psalm is an intimate prayer to God spoken in the evening before going to sleep.

What time of day do you tend to pray to God? Do you pray about different things at different times of day?

How would you describe what your relationship, your communion with God, means for you?

Read John 3: 1-7

What does it mean to be 'born of the spirit' and what are the effects of spiritual rebirth?

Read Psalm 23

Why do you think Psalm 23 means so much to so many people?

What does it mean to you?

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Part 4: The Awakening to our True Purpose

Read Mark 6: 30-34

Jesus had great compassion for those he met. Verse 34 gives a tantalising glimpse of his inner world. He set a compelling example of how to be a human.

And Jesus still has compassion when he meets us.

'To follow Jesus means we need to have eyes in our heart.'

What does this statement mean to you? What are the eyes of our heart? How do they see?

Read Matthew 10: 37-42

Why do you think describing the Christian life as a call to follow Jesus is simple yet ever so complex? What does a call to follow mean?

A chance to share...

In what ways do you see the Kingdom of God breaking into your work life, your family life, your social life, your church life?