

Dear Life Group Leaders,

The passage we are looking at this week includes two of the great “I am” statements of Jesus; “I am the gate,” and “I am the good shepherd”. These images are grounded in the rural, middle eastern world that Jesus and his disciples inhabited. As such, they require a little work for twenty-first century city dwellers to fully understand. But as we explore this passage, let's expect the Holy Spirit to develop our understanding of who Jesus is and deepen our experience of knowing him and following his leading.

God bless,

David

(This week's Life Group Guide was prepared by David Featherstone, who leads Everyday Sutton)

LIFE GROUP GUIDE

John 10:1-18

This week's BIG IDEA: Jesus promises to lead and protect all who trust and follow him

Please read John 10:1-10

1. What do you know about sheep and shepherds? In a middle eastern context where water and pasture were scarce and thieves and wild animals presented a real threat, what do think would have been the fate of sheep who didn't learn to follow the shepherd's voice?
2. Can you remember when you first recognised Jesus' voice? What competing voices were/are you aware of? What convinced you that it was Jesus' voice that you should follow?
3. What did Jesus mean by saying he is the gate (v9)?
4. What does “life to the full” (v10) mean to you? Would you say that you already have that kind of life, or would you say that you are being led towards it?

[Leaders note: Hopefully this question will lead to a healthy conversation about our experience as disciples; what we are enjoying about following Jesus right now while still being honest about our occasional disappointments and future hopes. The crucial point is that discipleship is a journey – we are his sheep safe with our shepherd now and we are being led somewhere!]

Please read John 10:11-18

5. Ask the group to quietly consider these verses for a few minutes and then share what they feel the Holy Spirit is particularly highlighting to them about who Jesus is and how he wants us to relate to him.

[Leaders note: Allow this section to be as free flowing as possible but if v16 raises questions, point out that Jesus was speaking to Jewish Pharisees (v1), we're the “other sheep” – praise God!]

Worship: Read Psalm 23 together and then spend some time thanking Jesus that he is our shepherd. This could perhaps lead to a time of praying for one another. Our shepherd prepares tables of abundance through dark valleys as well as leading us to green pastures.