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COMMUNITY GROUPS

RIVERS CROSSING CHURCH

Community Group Discussion Guide

April 28, 2024

Women in the Bible Week #1 / Deborah

Pastor Paul Taylor

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Question | Discuss a time someone empowered you to fulfill your purpose and/or accomplish a goal. How did their support impact your actions and decisions.
2. Is there a particular woman, or group of women, who have significantly impacted your faith? Share about that with your Community Group.
3. Read Genesis 2:18 together. During his sermon, Pastor Paul explained the phrase behind God's creation of woman - "ezer kenegdo" (*a helper who is just right for him*). Women aren't second-class citizens in God's kingdom. Additionally, every other Old Testament use of the Hebrew word "ezer" describes God when people desperately needed him to come through for them.

Genesis 2:18 (NLT) - Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him."

"The function of the helper would be complementary to the man's - "a helper fit for him"—literally, "like opposite him" or "according to his opposite." The woman would be a corresponding counterpart. As a counterpart she would share in his nature. Male and female were created in the image of God (cf. 1:27). And as his matching opposite, she would supply what was lacking in him." - R. Kent Hughes

- a) Reflect on your understanding of and experience with - whether in contexts like family of origin, work, church, etc. - the relationship of men and women (i.e. gender roles). How does this compare with God's creation of women?
- b) How does this description of "ezer kenegdo" challenge views of gender roles in both society and the church?

DIVING DEEPER

4. Read the story of Deborah from Judges 4-5. Then discuss the connected questions.

Judges 5:6-12 (NIV) - ⁶"In the days of Shamgar son of Anath,
in the days of Jael, the highways were abandoned;
travelers took to winding paths.

⁷Villagers in Israel would not fight;
they held back until I, Deborah, arose,
until I arose, a mother in Israel.

⁸God chose new leaders
when war came to the city gates,
but not a shield or spear was seen
among forty thousand in Israel.

⁹My heart is with Israel's princes,

with the willing volunteers among the people.

Praise the Lord!

¹⁰“You who ride on white donkeys,
sitting on your saddle blankets,
and you who walk along the road,
consider ¹¹the voice of the singers at the watering places.

They recite the victories of the Lord,
the victories of his villagers in Israel.

“Then the people of the Lord
went down to the city gates.

¹²Wake up, wake up, Deborah!
Wake up, wake up, break out in song!

Arise, Barak!

Take captive your captives, son of Abinoam.’

- a) What stands out to you regarding Deborah’s leadership over the nation of Israel and her interactions with Barak? Explain your answer. If it helps, here’s a reminder of Pastor Paul’s primary sermon points regarding Deborah:
- Deborah led with wisdom, faith, and God’s anointing in a world out of control.
 - Deborah had faith against impossible odds.
 - Deborah spoke the truth.
 - Deborah empowered others to fulfill their purpose.
 - Deborah went to war with and worshipped with men.

b) How you apply what you see in Deborah to your own faith in God and leadership?

5. Deborah’s leadership was defined by stepping into what God had called her to and encouraging/empowering others to do the same. This was undergirded by a great faith in God and her practice of worshipping God.

- a) In what sense have you “stepped into” what God has purposed for your life? Are there things you believe God is calling you to that you’ve haven’t stepped into? If you’re willing, explain your answers.

If you don’t know God’s purpose for your life, how can you work to discern that?

- b) How is encouraging and empowering others the call of every Christian? How can you seek to live this out in your daily life?

1 Thessalonians 5:4-11 (NIV) – “⁴But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

TAKING IT HOME

6. How does the person and work of Deborah anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ? If it helps, think about the broader relationship of God and His people.

Colossians 2:13-15 (NIV) – ¹³When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NIV) – ⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.

7. What's your biggest takeaway from this week's sermon and our group discussion? How can you put that into action this week?

PRAYER REQUESTS

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RIVERS CROSSING - THINGS TO KNOW

1. **When Ordinary Becomes Extraordinary** | Join us for a night of worship and prophetic ministry on Sunday, April 28th at 6pm at our Rivers Crossing Mason campus. When Ordinary Becomes Extraordinary is an incredible way to experience God's power firsthand in a tangible way through extended worship, ministry time, and corporate prayer. Come expectantly and join us as we seek the extraordinary life together.
2. **Men's Night** | We're hosting a FREE Men's Event on Sunday May 5th! We'll start at 5pm with a message from our Lead Pastor Paul Taylor. Then we'll have an extended and unhurried time of food (City BBQ), fun (outdoor games, fire pits, etc.), and fellowship as we enjoy our renovated outdoor lawn and lobby spaces! You're not going to want to miss Men's Night and you're going to want to invite a friend!

If you're planning to join us, please let us know by registering. Thanks!

<https://riverscrossing.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2212814>

3. **Baptisms - Saturday May 18th** | We believe baptism is an integral part of your spiritual journey and necessary as you seek to become a fully engaged follower of Christ. If you've recently decided to follow Jesus or you've been a Christ follower for a while but never gotten baptized, now is the perfect time to take this next step! This baptism service will be held on our renovated lawn space at 3pm. Learn more and sign up by visiting <https://riverscrossing.com/grow/>