



Empowered by the
Holy Spirit

Discovering ways to help you draw on the Holy Spirit for strength and encouragement

REVIEW

Recap on your experience of the challenge. Ask the following questions:

How did it go? Was it helpful?

If you weren't able to try the challenge, explore the question:

Where and how did you experience God last week?

SPIRIT LYFE LONGING

We may long for lots of things in our lives – a good marriage, happiness, children, increase in salary, security. These longings are not wrong in and of themselves. However only God can truly satisfy desire. St Augustine wrote 'You have made us only for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in you.'

READ

† Psalm 42

Longing for God

¹ As a deer gets thirsty for streams of water, I truly am thirsty for you, my God. ² In my heart, I am thirsty for you, the living God. When will I see your face? ³ Day and night my tears are my only food, as everyone keeps asking, "Where is your God?"

⁴ Sorrow floods my heart, when I remember leading the worshipers to your house. I can still hear them shout their joyful praises. ⁵ Why am I discouraged? Why am I restless? I trust you! And I will praise you again because you help

me, ⁶ and you are my God. I am deeply discouraged as I think about you from where the Jordan begins at Mount Hermon and from Mount Mizar. ⁷ Your vicious waves have swept over me like an angry ocean or a roaring waterfall.

⁸ Every day, you are kind, and at night you give me a song as my prayer to you, the living Lord God.

⁹ You are my mighty rock. Why have you forgotten me? Why must enemies mistreat me and make me sad? ¹⁰ Even my bones are in pain, while all day long my enemies sneer and ask, "Where is your God?"

¹¹ Why am I discouraged? Why am I restless? I trust you! And

I will praise you again because you help me, and you are my God.

Contemporary English Verse - CEV

REFLECT

Setting the scene:

- ▶ Psalm 42 is the prayerful lament of a musician who longs to return to Jerusalem (around 1,000 miles away) to serve God at the Temple. The tone of the Psalm suggests captivity and permanent separation from his homeland.
- ▶ He faces the taunts of 'Where is your God?' from his captors. He senses abandonment and

discouragement deep down in his soul. But he comes back to God's faithfulness and trusting God to help him.

- ▶ The Babylonians worshipped gods made of gold, silver, wood and stone – idols that did not have life. In contrast the Psalmist believes and trusts in a living God who is able to satisfy his longing.
- ▶ Worship is a natural outpouring of our longing for God and an essential aspect of deepening our relationship with God.

- ▶ What are the 'shockers' and 'blockers' for you in this passage?
- ▶ Record a time when you were longing to be near to God
- ▶ Describe a worship experience where you felt very close to God.

RESPOND

Longing challenge: This session leads us to explore the theme of longing for God. As a group, create a challenge to increase a sense of worship in your life this week.

Challenge ideas:
If you struggle to come up with your own challenge then why not try one of the following...

01 Pilgrimage

Try to take the time to arrange a mini-pilgrimage. It could be as simple as taking a couple of hours or a morning off to travel to a significant destination – perhaps where you first encountered God or to meet with people who significantly inspired you. You might

want to attend a worship event or conference. You could also visit a Cathedral or an old church that reminds us of our history. You might like to do this as a group? As an alternative you might want to use the time to tour key places such as Jerusalem or Iona via the web – cheaper and quicker! Pilgrimages remind us of our longing for God and of his faithfulness and goodness to us as Christ calls us to 'Come and follow me'.

02 Meditation

Take time each day to read and reflect on Psalm 42. Read it slowly and use it as a prompt to encourage prayer. Talk to God about your personal longing to be with him and for his Spirit to be at work in your life.

03 Sacrifice

In the Old Testament, worship was often linked to sacrifice and making an offering of grain or animals to God. This week, as an act of worship – consider a series of small sacrifices you could make. For instance you could give spare change to charity, give up a parking space or seat on the train, be the first up in your house to prepare breakfast (if you don't already!), offer to put out the neighbours bins, washing up, paying a toll for the car behind you etc. Think of each offering as a way of being obedient to God; that way your sacrifice will not be empty, but will show God honour and respect.

Westminster Shorter Catechism: *'What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.'*

Don't Forget

1. To record your experience of the challenge so that you can accurately share it with your lyfe group when you next meet. You might like to text/tweet each other throughout the experience!
 2. Consider posting your created challenge on the lyfe facebook site for others to view.
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More resources on 'Spirit Lyfe'

- Listen to video interview with Pete Greig
- Read article by David Spriggs on the Worship
- Read 'lyfe story' biographies on John Wimber and Jackie Pullinger
- Recommended reading – *'Come Holy Spirit'* by David Pytches

GROUP PRAYER:

You might like to commit to praying for each person in the group this week as you look to explore and experience more of the Spirit