



## Study 1: The Reluctant Prophet

### Discussion Starter

“Please God, anywhere but there...!”

Ask each person, if they feel able, to answer briefly: What place would you *least* want God to call you to go to? What is it about that place which would make it so undesirable or frightening?

### Worship God Together

We are going to spend a few minutes meditating on the first few verses of Psalm 139, and allowing God’s Spirit to lead us into worship through those words.

In a minute of quiet, ask each person to come before God and ask Him to speak to them. Then slowly read through Psalm 139:1-10 and allow some time for reflection. Read it twice more, using different bible translations if you have them available, and allowing time for reflection in between. Then encourage short prayers of praise based on the words of the psalm.

### Focus on the Word

Read Jonah chapter 1 and discuss the following questions together:

- From this first part of the book of Jonah, is there anything which makes him or his story stand out as different from that of other Old Testament prophets?
- Why do you think Jonah decided to run away in the first place? This is not a simple a question as it may first appear! For some interesting background, read 2 Kings 14:23-25, which gives us a brief glimpse into Jonah’s other prophetic activity.
- How would you compare Jonah’s relationship with God with that of the sailors?
- Would you describe Jonah’s faith in God as strong or weak? Explain.
- Do you think Jonah is actually repentant by the end of this chapter? Why or why not?
- Despite Jonah’s disobedience, reflect for a minute on the effects that their contact with Jonah had on the sailors. By the end of this chapter, seamen who had probably not even known the name of Jonah’s God were worshipping Him and “making vows to him”. Have you ever seen a situation where God has brought good out of your disobedience? Notice, though, that even God’s grace to the sailors does not in any way justify Jonah’s actions.
- What does this chapter teach us about the risks of disobeying God?

### Work it Through

In twos or threes discuss:

- Have you ever had a sense of God calling you to a particular task or a place? How did you react?
- Sometimes God seems to make almost impossible demands of us. Other times, like Jonah, we are not given the full picture at the start. Have you ever felt like running away from something God has told you to do? What did you actually do?
- At this point in time, do you have a sense that God is calling you to some action or task? Or, are you aware of any areas of life in which you are running away from God? Take some time to pray for one another.