

into discussion

Encourage each person in the group to answer the question “What is the most frightening thing that God has ever asked you to do?”

into God’s presence

We are going to use a ‘breathing prayer’ to lead us into worship. This is a meditative prayer which is said at the pace of natural breathing, and which takes the act of breathing in and out as a means of focusing our minds on the words being prayed. In both the Hebrew and Greek languages (which are the languages of the original Old and New Testaments) the words for Spirit, wind and breath are the same, so it is quite natural to use this kind of prayer as a means of asking God for more of the presence and fruit of his Holy Spirit in our lives.

You may want to have some quiet background worship music playing. Encourage everyone to relax, close their eyes and focus on breathing in and out slowly. Explain that as we breathe in we are going to ask God to grow more of each of the fruit of His Spirit in our lives, and as we breathe out we are going to ask His forgiveness for the times where the opposite of those fruit are evident in our lives. As the group just breathes, read the prayer below. You may want to allow a minute or two of silence and then repeat the prayer. Don’t rush this.

Breathe in love	Breathe in patience	Breathe in faithfulness
Breathe out selfishness	Breathe out impatience	Breathe out deceitfulness
Breathe in joy	Breathe in kindness	Breathe in gentleness
Breathe out stress	Breathe out harshness	Breathe out rudeness
Breathe in peace	Breathe in goodness	Breathe in self-control
Breathe out discord	Breathe out anger	Breathe out recklessness

into God’s word

Read 1 Samuel 17:1-58 and think about the following questions together:

- For many of us this is one of the most familiar stories in the Bible. As you read it this time, was there anything which struck you about the story that you had forgotten or never noticed before?
- Do you think David comes over as arrogant in verses 34-35? Do the following two verses throw any different light onto this? What can we learn about the role we play and the role God plays in our successes?
- What do you think David’s motivations were for offering to fight Goliath? Does this passage have anything to teach us about serving God with mixed motives?
- “This is a story about a shepherd boy being tempted to believe that God would only be able to use him if he became a warrior, and eventually discovering that God actually wanted to use him as a shepherd.” Do you agree with this statement? Why, or why not?

into life

Discuss together as a group:

- Have you experienced God bringing challenges across your path which are in some way a test of your ability to trust in him?
- What are your “swords and spears” – the things you are likely to be tempted to place your trust in rather than the Lord?
- Is anyone in the group facing such a situation at the moment? Take the time to pray for them.