

- 6 *Psalm 51*  
This psalm focus our minds on the subject of forgiveness.  
Someone once wrote this prayer: ‘O God, I can forgive my friends quite quickly, I can forgive my enemies eventually. But how long will it take before I can forgive myself?’  
Does this ring true for you?  
And what about *God’s* forgiveness of us?  
Do you believe that he really does forgive you fully, whatever it is you may have done or not done?
- 7 *Psalm 52*  
“Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin: he will uproot you from the land of the living” (v.5). Continuing on from question 6, is there anything that God can’t forgive?
- 8 *Galatians 1-3*  
Paul is passionate that only the true gospel is preached.  
If you were asked to explain what this ‘gospel’ message is, what would you say?
- 9 *Galatians 4*  
Paul offers the analogy of Abraham’s two children, one born in ‘the ordinary way’ and one born under a promise.  
The former persecuted the latter. Applying this to a church setting, are there ways in which our ‘ordinary way of doing things’ can quench (persecute even) our life in the Spirit?
- 10 *Galatians 5*  
The fruit of the Spirit. Have you memorized all nine yet?  
Which is the most challenging one for you just now?

### **Closing**

*Quietly reflect on the discussion you’ve had, and pray for God’s help in addressing issues that may have arisen. End with the Grace.*

# SACRED

## Group Resources

## Month 14

## Opening Prayer

O Lord,  
remember not only the men and women of good will,  
but also those of ill will.  
But do not remember all the suffering they have inflicted on us:  
remember the fruits we have borne, thanks to this suffering –  
our comradeship, our loyalty,  
our courage, our generosity,  
the greatness of heart which has grown out of all of this;  
and when they come to judgment,  
let all the fruits which we have borne be their forgiveness.  
Amen.

*(the prayer was written in Ravensbruck concentration camp  
by an unknown prisoner, and left by the body of a dead child)*

## General Questions

- 1 As you read about all these kings of Israel and Judah, and their spiritual (and strategic) shortcomings, what did it teach you about God's chosen people and their walk with God?
- 2 Was there anything that especially surprised in you in what you read this month?

## Activity

Write out each of the nine fruits of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22-23*) on two pieces of paper. Fold up the 18 papers so that the words are not visible and place them in a basket. Ask each person to take a piece of paper and invite them to read the 'fruit' written on it and then meditate for, say, 5 minutes. In particular, to think and pray about:

- (a) signs that the fruit is ripening in their lives, and
  - (b) examples where it does not seem to be growing.
- Allow people to share their experience of this if they choose.

## Further Ideas

*As usual, the intention is not necessarily to work through all of these ideas, just to take on some of them as the group chooses.*

- 1 *1 Kings 3*  
Solomon gave a wise and unexpected ruling. Have you ever been on the receiving end of someone's wisdom that helped lead you to a 'good' outcome when the way forward had seemed very unclear?
- 2 *1 Kings 6*  
Solomon's temple was lavishly built. The notes, though, reflect on the wide spectrum of worship settings that can exist from the grand and ornate to the plain and simple. Which do you prefer and why? Does the 'building' actually matter that much?
- 3 *1 Kings 11*  
Solomon's time comes to an end (vv.41-43). What was your overall impression of the life and reign of David's son and successor? Did this change as his story gradually unfolded?
- 4 *1 Kings 18*  
The story of Elijah on Mount Carmel is very memorable and very powerful. What details of the story stood out for you as you read through it, possibly for the first time? What can we learn from it all in our own journeys of faith?
- 5 *1 Kings 19*  
The Lord appeared to Elijah not in wind or earthquake or fire but in a still small voice. Is this true in your own experience? Does God seem closer to you in the midst of loud worship or in quiet prayer (or both)? And does this have something to teach us about how we structure our church services?