

- 6 *Leviticus 18*
This chapter catalogues many examples of ‘unlawful’ sexual practices. Some seem clear-cut: few, for example, would sanction sexual relations with a grandchild (v.10).
But what about the ban on homosexual practice (v.22)?
Is this something that is still ‘sinful’, or has the idea of what is considered ‘normal’ now broadened to include this?
- 7 *Leviticus 19*
Continuing on this theme, how *do* we decide which of the laws contained in this book no longer apply to twenty-first century Christian life, and which do? Consider, as just one example, the ban on having tattoos (v.28).
Why was this important then? Why isn’t it now? Or is it?
- 8 *Leviticus 23*
Public festivals were special occasions, involving self-denial and giving of one’s best to God, as well as fellowship and feasting. They were a joy not a chore. Does this challenge the way *we* celebrate the major Christian festivals?
- 9 *Leviticus 25*
Notice the interplay here between economic prudence and spirituality. So, the 49th year was a Sabbath year, the 50th a Jubilee one: there was no harvest in either. But rather than gradually stockpiling to prepare, God promised a triple yield in the 48th year. How can we apply this today? Do insurance policies, for example, negate our faith in God’s provision?
- 10 *Psalms 57*
Do we recognize the cycle of ‘lament’ in our own lives?
Do we turn to praise afterwards, as David did?

Closing

Pray for God’s wisdom in addressing the issues raised during the discussion. Then close by saying together the Grace.

SACRED

Group Resources

Month 16

Opening Prayer

From the cowardice that dare not face new truth,
from the laziness that is contented with half truth,
from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,
good Lord, deliver us.
Amen.

(A prayer from Kenya)

General Questions

- 1 The introduction to the notes suggested that if a poll were taken to discover people's favourite books of the Bible, *Leviticus* wouldn't appear in many top-tens! Now that you've read through it, though, how did you find it overall? Was it more rewarding than you'd anticipated?
- 2 And did God speak to you through *Leviticus* in some unexpected way?

Activity

Have ready half-a-dozen or so different men's or women's perfumes. Invite each member of the group to sample the fragrances, and share which ones they liked best ... and least.

Then consider this. The expression "an aroma pleasing to the Lord" occurs over a dozen times in *Leviticus*. The system of sacrifice and worship seemed to involve all the senses, then, including the sense of smell. Is this something we have lost in many churches today? And is it important anyway?

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 *Leviticus 1-7*
The whole system for making sacrifices as a means of attaining God's forgiveness and blessing was very detailed and elaborate. It would also have been very bloody and messy, not just as a spectacle, but for every individual as they participated directly in the action.
Does what *we* do to make confession and seek God's forgiveness all seem rather tame in comparison?
And does it lead us to under-estimate the seriousness of our sin, and over-estimate the ease of our restitution?
- 2 *Leviticus 8*
The ordination service for priests, then and now, was a way of publicly dedicating them in their role, offering a sense of acceptance, blessing and encouragement?
Is this something which other 'professions' miss out on?

Should we routinely offer some kind of 'commissioning' within our services for those taking on other ministry roles?
- 3 *Leviticus 10*
The fate of Nadab and Abihu was frighteningly quick and decisive. Are there ways, though, in which we take for granted the 'holy' things? Does it matter?
- 4 *Leviticus 11*
The list of unclean creatures makes fascinating reading. So if I ate a chameleon casserole, while it may be tasty, I should repent, but a tawny owl sandwich would be fine. Why is this? In any case, have all such laws been superseded following Peter's revelation in *Acts 10*?
- 5 *Leviticus 12*
Old Testament laws meant that holiness was supposed to permeate the whole of life.
In our own contemporary culture, how do we guard against having a much more compartmentalized spirituality?