

- 6 *Isaiah 27*  
Isaiah prophesies that one day God will gather up his people one-by-one. Do you believe that each individual is important to God? Do you believe that you are?
- 7 *Isaiah 29*  
Returning to the plight of Israel, re-read (vv.13-16).  
For what offences are God's people being condemned here?  
Now, honestly consider whether we are guilty of the same?
- 8 *Isaiah 30*  
Again, we move quickly from judgment to hope ...  
"Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion" (v.18). It's a picture of God waiting so patiently to forgive, and to embrace the people he loves.  
Can you imagine such a scene?  
And, again, can you imagine yourself within the scene?
- 9 *Isaiah 35*  
Isaiah now offers a description of a homecoming when the exile will finally be over. The notes offer an illustration of of this drawn from the Antony Gormley art installation *Another Place*. Re-read these notes.  
What does the word 'home' bring to mind for you?
- 10 *Isaiah 39*  
Choosing in who or what to put your trust has been a central theme of the first part of Isaiah.  
So, how about you? Have there been times when you have stayed faithful to the word of God in making some decision, despite pressure from others to act in an alternative manner?

### **Closing**

*Be still for a few moments, reflecting on the discussion you've had.  
End by saying together the Lord's Prayer.*

# SACRED

## Group Resources

## Month 24

## Opening Prayer

O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the need of others,  
open my ears that I may hear their cries,  
open my heart so that they need not be without succor.  
Let me not be afraid to defend the weak  
because of the anger of the strong,  
nor afraid to defend the poor,  
because of the anger of the rich.  
Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,  
and use me to bring them to these places.  
Open my eyes and ears that I may, this coming day,  
be able to do some work of peace for thee.  
Amen

*(Alan Paton, 1903-1988)*

## General Questions

- 1 How did you find this month's readings?
- 2 Were you surprised in any way by what you read?

## Activity

Try to obtain images of the following two paintings: Michelangelo's *The Prophet Isaiah* (from the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican) and Gustave Dore's black and white woodcut, *The Prophet Isaiah*. Spend some time quietly contemplating them ... their similarities and differences. In what ways do they reinforce your own mental picture of the prophet? In what ways do they challenge this?

Use the artwork to think about what you made of Isaiah as a person? How does he compare with some of the other key Old Testament prophets you have studied such as *Jeremiah* and *Daniel*?

## Further Ideas

*As usual work through some of these ideas as the group chooses.*

- 1 *Isaiah 14*  
Isaiah was prophesying the fall of the Babylonian empire half a century before its rise in the first place!  
It demonstrates the power and reach of God's Word.  
Does this lead you to be even more mindful of scripture, in terms of trying to apply it in your own life?
- 2 *Isaiah 16*  
The notes offer three applications of Isaiah's message to Moab for the church today:  
(i) Do the leaders love the people?  
(ii) Is the church a witness to the glory of God?  
(iii) Does it point to Jesus in its outlook and values?  
Do you agree these three are important?  
How does your church fare on these three criteria?
- 3 *Isaiah 20*  
Isaiah was prepared to be barefoot and naked for 3 years.  
How much are you prepared to be a 'fool' for God?  
Have there been times when you've found standing up for your faith to be very costly, even to the point of personal embarrassment?
- 4 *Isaiah 24*  
Does God's compassion last forever?  
Or might there come a time when any 'parent' has had enough of their wayward 'child' (vv.1-3)?
- 5 *Isaiah 25*  
Did the extract from *Michel Quoist's* prayer challenge you at all about the power of money in dictating our lifestyle?  
Are there things that *you* need to change in this regard?