

- 6 *Judges 17-18*  
We are called to be salt and light to a hungry, dark world (*Matthew 5:13-16*). The very sorry story of Micah and the Danites raises the following, challenging question for us: Is there any noticeable difference between the behaviour of those in churches and the rest of society? How would outsiders know that Christianity makes a difference?
- 7 *Amos 4,7*  
Falling away from God's standards often happens one step at a time. So does our acclimatisation to the culture of the society around us. How do you manage to hold on to a strong and consistent day-to-day faith?
- 8 *Amos 5,6,8 (and the Activity)*  
Amos sees the pursuit of wealth for personal gain and the rise of injustice as being inextricably linked. Do you agree?
- 9 *Amos 8*  
James Packer describes worship and glorifying God as a six-fold activity, with the Israelites of Amos' day falling short of all of them. Quickly read these notes again. Which of the six is the most difficult for you personally?
- 10 *Amos 9*  
Amos longs for his listeners to live more simply, more faithfully and more honestly. Is 'simplicity' a realistic mantra for modern-day living? Is there one thing you could aim to do in order to try and live more simply?

### **Closing Prayer**

*Spend some time calmly winding down after your discussion, which may have thrown up some extremely challenging issues.*

*Pray for God's strength and guidance in addressing them.*

*After a few minutes, close by saying together the Lord's Prayer.*

# SACRED

## Group Resources

## Month 30

## Opening Prayer

O God of integrity, of the fair measure and the just weight,  
may we show forth your holiness  
not only in our worship but in our business deals:  
that the world may be freed from its slavery to unjust trade,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(Janet Morley for Christian Aid)*

## General Question

- 1 Did God speak to you in any specific way this month?
- 2 As we've seen with other Old Testament 'heroes of faith', several of the judges were flawed characters. How do you react to this - are you disappointed? surprised? encouraged?

## Activity

This month - something very different. A game with a dice!  
Make sure you have a dice (!) and select someone to keep score.  
These are the rules of the game:

1. Draw out a number from 1 to 6 for each player.
2. Each player starts with an allocation of five points.
3. Take turns to throw the dice. Whatever number is thrown, and whoever by, each person who drew that number (in rule 1) scores that number of points. So if a '3' is thrown, anyone who initially drew '3' scores three points, and so on.
4. If a player throws their 'own' number (as per rule 1), then as well as adding that number to their own score, they deduct a total of four points from other players' in whatever way they choose (e.g. 4 points from one player, or 3 points from one player 1 from another, or 1 point from four players, etc.).
5. If anyone's total falls to zero, they are out of the game.
6. Have four or five rounds of the game, then compare scores.

Reflect on what the game was like to play, from both the winners' and losers' perspectives, and what it might teach us about the wealth, power, and unfairness issues so rife in Amos' day (and ever since).

## Further Ideas

*As usual, discuss whichever of these ideas the group sees fit.*

- 1 *Judges 4-5*  
What does the person and character of Deborah have to teach the church about the role of women in leadership?
- 2 *Judges 6*  
How did Gideon use 'fleeces' in seeking God's guidance? Have you ever done something like this? What happened? Is it right to do so given Jesus' words: "do not put the Lord your God to the test" (quoting *Deuteronomy*)?
- 3 *Judges 11*  
The example of Jephthah shows us how God can have a role for us in ministry regardless of our background or our past. Does this increase your confidence that he can use you?
- 4 *Judges 11*  
Jephthah's story also shows the danger of making foolish vows. Have you ever committed yourself to something in a rash moment, or under duress, only to deeply regret it later?
- 5 *Judges 13-16*  
Samson is nothing if not a complex character. What examples did you notice in his life where he used his God-given gifts wisely and well, and where he used them for more selfish reasons?  
  
Do we do the same with the gifts God has given us?