

- 6 *Ezekiel 12*
Ezekiel was God's mouthpiece, interpreting the meaning of exile in terms of God's judgment upon the nation. But the people refused to listen. Can you recall a time when you've been given some insight regarding an area of your life that needed spiritual cleansing? Did you find it easy to receive?
- 7 *Ezekiel 16*
God has words of condemnation for his chosen people. Re-read the global village statistics in the notes. Do they lead you to wonder whether God's words might be for us too? What practical steps could your church take, even in some small way, to try to redress the imbalance.
- 8 *Ezekiel 20*
We read again about Israel's rebellious spiritual nature. Is there a danger that our modern 'tolerance' for other religions and philosophical outlooks on life can actually itself become an act of rebellion against God's ways?
- 9 *Ezekiel 23*
Is there any place in our churches today for the kind of sexually explicit imagery we see here (e.g. v.20)? Have you ever heard this passage read out in a service, let alone preached upon? What does this tell you?
- 10 *Ezekiel 1-28*
What picture(s) of God do you take away from your study of the book of *Ezekiel* so far?

Closing

Light a candle, reflect on the things you've shared, and pray for God's help in addressing any specific matters that have arisen for you personally. Close by saying together the Grace.

SACRED

Group Resources

Month 38

Opening Prayer

O God, make the door of this house wide enough
to receive all who need human love and fellowship,
and a heavenly Father's care,
and narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and hate.
Make its threshold smooth enough
to be no stumbling block to children,
nor to straying feet,
but rugged enough to turn back the tempter's power.
Make it a gateway to your eternal kingdom.
Amen.

(Thomas Ken, 1637-1711)

General Questions

- 1 Are there any specific ways in which God spoken to you through this month's readings?
- 2 Do you warm to Ezekiel as a person?
How do you view him in comparison with the authors of the two other major prophetic books – *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*?

Activity

Try to find a reproduction of the Raphael painting *Ezekiel's Vision* (1518), housed in the Palatine Gallery of Palazzo Pitti in Florence.

Quietly contemplate the work.
What do you notice about God in it?
Where is Ezekiel in the painting?

Further Ideas

As usual, do not try to cover all these questions but spend time on just some of them as the group decides.

- 1 *Psalm 145*
The God of mighty acts (v.4) and awesome works (v.6) has compassion on all he has made (v.9).
How easy do you find it to hold together God's transcendent Power and his love for individuals, his love for you?
- 2 *Ezekiel 1*
The chapter ends with the prophet seeing the likeness of the glory of God. What do you visualize when you imagine the 'glory of God'?
- 3 *Ezekiel 2-3*
Ezekiel is called to speak the word of God and to do so resolutely. There was no guarantee of 'success'.
Does this have anything to say today regarding how the 'performance' of a church minister might be assessed?
- 4 *Ezekiel 4-5*
How do you think the people at the time would have responded to Ezekiel's enacted prophecies – lying on his side for many days, using human excrement for fuel, shaving his beard and dividing it up etc.?
How would people respond to something similar today?
- 5 *Ezekiel 8-9*
The temple was built to be a place of holiness and beauty. To a pilgrim making their way there that's what it may have seemed. In these chapters, though, Ezekiel describes the shocking reality of the practices that were going on inside. Appearances can be deceiving. But not to God.
What does he see in your church? Is it all good?