



**HATFIELD
CHRISTIAN
CHURCH**

LIFE GROUP GUIDELINE TERM 2 WEEK 2

26 April 2018

Philemon

'I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. Philemon 1:6 (NIV)

Icebreaker

Can you think of a difficult decision that you've had to make in your life that you feel you can share with the group?

Introduction

The book of Philemon is a short letter Paul wrote from prison to a friend in Colosse, a wealthy Roman Christian called Philemon. In the letter Paul appealed to his friend to receive back a slave, Onesimus, who ran away from him. Onesimus somehow crossed paths with Paul in Rome and became a Christian himself. It is notable that Paul not only asks something difficult from Philemon – to receive a runaway slave back as a brother in Christ, but also from Onesimus – who may face an execution if Paul's plea is spurned.

Discussion

- Read the letter out loud in the group (it is only 25 verses long).
- Why do you think God would have wanted this book to form part of the Bible?
- Watch the Bible Project clip on Philemon together.
See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aW9Q3Jt6Yvk> .
- What do you see in the text about Christian community?
 - Is there anything in the text that you think could address our contemporary expressions of Christian community?
- Paul asks Philemon to let his Christian culture overrule his Roman culture.
 - Can you think of areas where that is true for us? Where does the Gospel trump expressions of your own culture?
- Be quiet for a little bit and think whether there is something in the text that you think may speak to you personally. Share with the group (if appropriate) if there is.

Prayer

- Pray together for our church, that God's kingdom will increasingly become visible in our homes and hearts, and that we will become better and more committed to taking it beyond the borders of our personal comfort.
- Pray together for the 'ONE-Tshwane' initiative underway, that the Lord will bless the unity of the churches in our city. Also pray that He will have his way through this movement.
- Pray for God's kingdom values to trump the divisive racial and socio-economical polarisation in the country. Pray for the leaders of South Africa, for wisdom and integrity, courage and protection.
- What is happening in the world that is niggling at you? Share briefly with the group and pray for God's life and wisdom to impact these issues.
- Also share your personal prayer needs with the group (or perhaps with someone in the group) and pray for one another.