



**HATFIELD
CHRISTIAN
CHURCH**

LIFE GROUP GUIDELINE TERM 2 WEEK 1

19 April 2018

A body of heroes – Daniel

'Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.'

Jeremiah 29:7 (NIV)

Icebreaker

What is the worst thing you have ever had to eat? Describe the event surrounding this.

Introduction

Daniel shows us that we should neither adopt the ways and values of the world nor form 'holy huddles' that are disconnected from the culture we live in. Rather, we should be fully engaged in the culture in which God has placed us, mastering its wisdom, while at the same time remembering who we are as God's people.

Discussion

- What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon? What nuggets did you take home with you?
- Read Daniel 1 and Jeremiah 29:1-9 out loud.
- What connection do you see between the two passages?
 - *Both passages deal with the Babylonian exile. Jeremiah tells the exiles how they should engage while in Babylon, and the book of Daniel tells the story of Daniel and his friends living out what we read in Jeremiah 29.*
- Did Daniel and his friends willingly engage in the Babylonian training? Why?
 - *Yes, Daniel did not refuse the education at this leading pagan 'university' because he wanted to become thoroughly familiar with the knowledge and ways of the unbelieving Babylonian culture.*
- How does this agree with Jeremiah's message to the exiles?
 - *Jeremiah encourages the exiles to be fully engaged and invested while they are in Babylon (Jeremiah 29:5-7).*

- What is your approach to the culture or society in which God has placed you? Do you tend to withdraw from it or engage with it? What areas could God be calling you to step forward in?
- Where did Daniel draw the line and refuse to participate in the Babylonian practices? Why?
 - *Daniel refuses to eat the king's rich food. This food was not unlawful in terms of the Mosaic laws. But, perhaps it was a temptation to move beyond just learning about the priorities and values of the Babylonians to adopting them (being assimilated by the culture).*
- 'But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine' (vs. 8, emphasis added). The word *defile* implies *spiritual pollution*. If the food was not unlawful, why would Daniel regard it as defiling or spiritually polluting?
 - *The extravagant royal food epitomised the rich, luxury-loving lifestyle of the idolatrous Babylonian society. Daniel may have realised that, should he eat of it, he may get drawn into the idolatry of the Babylonians in terms of their love of wealth, status, beauty, luxury, and power. He didn't want to lose his heart over these things.*
 - *Even though Daniel and his friends were given pagan names, they refused to give up their distinctive identity as people of God. Refusing the royal food was part of their bearing witness to the Babylonians.*
- Are there elements of your culture, work environment, or relationships that you should be abstaining from in order to preserve your Christian witness?
- Can you identify the idols of your culture?
- Was Daniel's witness effective?
 - *In verse 9 we see that God began to work in the heart of the chief official through Daniel's witness.*

Prayer

- Pray for the city of Pretoria, the place that God has placed you. Read Acts 17:26-27 and pray that the people of your suburb would seek and reach out to God.
- Pray for those in the group who have retreated from their community and who need to be more engaged.
- Pray for those who have adopted too much of the culture around them and must reclaim their Christian witness.
- What are the idols of your culture that you are susceptible to? Pray for one another.
- Spend time in worship together, recognising that the God of the universe, who has only ever been generous and good to us, is the only one worthy of our hearts' worship.