

# Week 1 - Setting the Stage and Psalm 1

## Welcome and Intros:

Leader: Some recommendations for your first gathering and for each subsequent gathering

- Bring nametags and sharpies; have each group member print their first name on a tag and wear it.
- Repeat this for the first four weeks (or the whole time if new members come)
- Give details on day/time/place of the study. Include an ending time and stick to it.
- Have members each say their name, a quick overview of who they are, and what drew them to this Bible study (**have a new leading question each week**)
- Pass around a sheet for names, email address, and phone numbers

## 1. CONTEXT:

This week will mostly be spent getting a wide overview of the book of Psalms. To help with that overview, watch **How to Read the Book of Psalms video (5:30mins)** from the Bible Project Website



<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/book-of-psalms/>

**Follow-up with some or all of these discussion questions:** What did you learn from the video about the context of the Psalms? Who wrote them? What were they used for in ancient Israel? Where do they fit in the larger story of Scripture? What kind of literature are they? Did you learn or hear anything new about the Psalms from the video?

The video helps us to understand two important things about the Psalms.

1. **The Psalms are POETRY:** They don't report word-for-word on how life IS, but use words to help pull us into the middle of what it means to be human in all its beauty and complexity.
2. **The Psalms are PRAYER:** Our habit is often to talk ABOUT God, but the Psalms teach us how to talk TO God. The Psalms present us with this invitation: How do I answer the God who speaks to me?

## 2. CONTENT:

*Psalms 1 and 2 introduce the whole collection of poetry and prayer. Read Psalm 1 together as a group (verse-by-verse or in unison). Then enjoy a few moments of silence, re-reading the psalm quietly.*

Follow-up with some or all of these questions:

1. What do you notice in this psalm? Are there words or phrases that stand out to you?
2. Why do you think this psalm is placed first?
3. What does the psalm invite the reader to do? What are the descriptors for the person who says "yes" to this invitation? What are the descriptors for the person who says "no" to this invitation?

## 3. APPLICATION:

*How does all of this connect to our lives? Here are some questions to help guide this discussion. Feel free to use several or to just focus on one or two.*

- The video says that the Psalms are "a prayer book for exiles". In what way are we connected or not connected to that description?
- What is your experience with poetry? What is your experience using written prayers as your own prayer words?
- Psalm 1 connects the words "delight" with "the law of the Lord". Do you think these concepts connect? How has "the law of the Lord" been talked about or presented to you in your home, church, school, among friends? What might delight in the law actually look like in a regular life?
- Does this Psalm teach you anything new about who God is? Who you are?

#### **4. PRAYER:**

Close your time together in prayer using one of the suggestions below:

- Use words/images/themes from the passage to guide your prayer.
- Take prayer requests and pray over each other as a group or in small groups
- Use this written prayer:
  - *Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe. You have given us the psalms and invite us to dwell in them as a way to know you. Help us to delight in your Law, so that we might become like trees planted by water. This week, we especially ask for your care in these ways.... (include items named in your group). We pray this through Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.*