

Small Group Material

God draws in: Exodus 33

Welcome Who was one of your closest friends when you were young? What was it about them that you really liked? (It might be one of your brother's and sisters)

Worship

Joseph Scriven was born in Ireland in 1820 and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. The evening before his wedding, Scriven's fiancée drowned. He moved to Canada to become a teacher and became engaged to Eliza Roche. Tragedy struck again and Eliza passed away from illness shortly before marriage.

Joseph used the tragedies and hardships in life to empathise with the elderly and poor. He sawed wood for the stoves of those who were handicapped or elderly.

Joseph wrote his famous hymn, 'What a friend we have in Jesus' in 1855 to comfort his mother who still lived in Ireland. His authorship was only discovered by accident shortly before his death.

Scriven himself began to experience poor health, financial struggles and depression in the last years of his life.

Sing 'What a friend we have in Jesus'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hoog1LA-oA0>

Spend time thanking God (you could go round the group) for elements of his friendship that you are very grateful for.

Word

A. Read Exodus 33. 1-6

Why does God say he would not go with the people? If God does not go with Israel through the wilderness, what are their prospects (physically, emotionally and spiritually)?

B. Read Exodus 33. 7-11

How does this description serve as a break in the action between chapters 32 and 34? Why would Moses seek God's face at a time like this? What were the people expecting?

Where do you meet with God?

What does meeting him (v11) as a friend mean for Moses? For you?

Do you consider God a friend? How could you more fully enjoy his friendship?

C. Read Exodus 33. 12-23

What three concerns does Moses bring to God? What do these concerns have in common with the people? cf 32.1

What does the presence of God (or lack of it) mean to Moses? cf v15

What ensures Israel's continuing existence?

What is it in Moses' bold appeal that persuades God to change his mind? v13,15-16

What is Moses shown and told by God?

Why does God set limits?

When is Moses' request of v18 more fully answered? cf Luke 9.30-32

For discussion: Describe a time when, while doing something for God, you were absolutely confident that his presence was with you?

When have you gone to God in a time of great distress? What was his reply? How does the memory of this make you feel about God's ability to take care of your problems now?

Witness

Pray about the problem of loneliness in your neighbourhoods. Who do you know who you could pray for this week?

Who could you invite to a Carol Service? Pray for them.