

# St Andrew's & All Saints

Partnering with God in the flourishing of our communities

## What are we here for? Vision Series – Session 1 'Encountering Jesus in worship, prayer, Word and Spirit'

### Introduction to the vision:

Our strapline, is '*Partnering with God in the flourishing of our communities.*'

- What do you think this means?  
Especially a) what does it mean to 'partner with God'
  - b) what do you think God sees 'flourishing' as
  - c) who do you think of as your/our 'communities'?
- Where have you seen this in action over the last year - personally and in the life of the church?

Stop and give thanks for all that God has done over this last year.

Over the next 4 weeks we'll look at each strand of our vision in turn. Today we're considering: '**Encountering Jesus in worship, prayer, Word and Spirit**'

### Looking at Scripture:

**Read Isaiah 6:1-8; John 4:1-30**

In both of these passages we see God encountering people and the effect that it has.

- What effect does the encounter with God have on a) Isaiah b) the woman at the well b) their 'communities'? (John 4: 28-30)
- How do you think Isaiah and the woman at the well felt when they encountered God/Jesus in this way?
- Have we experienced any significant 'encounters' with God and what effect did they have on us? Perhaps break into smaller groups to share any stories you may have [This probably won't be as dramatic as these Biblical ones, but it may be a significant answer to prayer or a particular time you have sensed God guiding or prompting you]
- Why do you think it is so important that everything we do as a church and as individuals, stems from an encounter with God?

### Encountering Jesus in our daily lives

Unlike the woman at the well, we can't encounter Jesus in bodily form, but we can encounter Jesus through His Word (the Bible), prayer, worship and through His Spirit, and through this, allow him to transform us and empower us. When we look at Jesus' life, we see how he prioritised spending time with His Father in prayer and He invited his disciples to come and '**be with him...and be sent out**' (in that order... Mark 3:14).

Next week we'll be thinking about our calling as disciples...

- **To BE WITH Jesus** - to know him and walk with him in the whole of life
- **To BECOME more like Jesus** – to become more Christ like in our character
- **To LIVE like Jesus** - in my context, on our 'frontline.'

But this starts with 'being with Jesus' and in order to do this we want to be people who develop strong 'spiritual habits' of prayer, meditating on scripture, worship and an openness to the Spirit.

**To discuss:**

- Do you have a 'rhythm' of encountering Jesus each day in prayer and scripture, worship and Spirit?
- What resources or habits have you found helpful to encourage you to do this?
- What do you find most difficult? How can you help and 'spur one another' on to develop these 'spiritual habits' of encountering Jesus daily.

There are a lot of resources available to help us develop spiritual habits of prayer and reflecting on Scripture and you can download some ideas from our website ([www.standrewsandallsaints.org/resources/life-group-material/](http://www.standrewsandallsaints.org/resources/life-group-material/)) or pick them up from the back of church.

## **Encountering God in the ordinary places – a prayer exercise.**

Dave talks in his sermon, about 'encountering God in the ordinary places' – on our frontlines - and recommended an exercise. Take time to do that together now.

- 1) Be still and open yourself to God in prayer – ask his Spirit to guide and speak to you.
- 2) Imagine Jesus sitting with you in one of the ordinary places of your life – maybe your workplace, or your home, or walking with you up your street. Prayerfully ask Jesus *'Jesus - What do you see here? Where are you at work here? What are you saying to me about this place and how do you want to transform it with your living water? What part are you asking me to play?'*
- 3) After a good amount of time, reflect together as a group or in 2's and 3's about anything which you sensed from your prayer encounter and pray for each other.

End with the following prayer and commit to praying this prayer each day on your own throughout the next week or fortnight.



**Father God,**

**By your grace, enable me to be set aside time to meet with you each day.  
Teach me to reflect and meditate on your Word and give me the grace to  
be obedient to it,**

**Draw me into a deep encounter with you in prayer,  
And may my whole life be a living sacrifice of worship to you,  
In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Amen.**