



EXILE & PEACE

Session 4: Exile & Peace

Small Group Guide

Warm up (activity to connect with the theme)

Listen to 'The Sound of Silence' by Simon and Garfunkel, and consider the themes of darkness/silence/exile in the lyrics. Does this song, written over 50 years ago, still resonate today?

Despite great advances in science and technology, experts have dubbed our time the 'age of anxiety'. How do we see this played out in our world today? How do we deal with our anxiety?

Is real peace a possibility today, or more like a mirage?

Message (summary video)

Watch the video by Andrew Ollerton that summarises the big story of the Bible and its relevance to our lives.

Scripture readings (for the group to read together)

Jeremiah 25.8–14; Daniel 1.1–21; Jeremiah 29.10-14

Discussion time

- What are your initial reactions to the film?
- In what sense are we all living away from home, in a state of exile? How do we experience the sharp end of this in everyday realities?
- During the era of the judges and kings, Israel got stuck in negative cycles. What patterns of behaviour in our lives rob us of peace? How can we end these negative cycles?
- Read Jeremiah 25.8–14. In the sixth century BC, the Israelites experienced the darkness of exile. When have you faced seasons of suffering and pain? How have you, or people you know, experienced God's peace in and through the storms of life?
- Read Daniel 1.1–21. Despite exile, Daniel shows that God's people can 'win away from home'. What specific practices can help us stand strong in a hostile culture?
- Overall, how has the Bible's story of exile and peace helped to make sense of life today?

Response time (a reflection to lead into prayer time)

Write out some of the things that are threatening your peace today. Then listen to 'Surrounded' by Michael W Smith, and let God surround your fears with his presence today.

Read Isaiah 43.1-7 and pray together for God's peace to come into your situations.

Who in your life needs peace today? Could you reach out tonight via a message and bring them comfort through the Scriptures?

Daily content

Continue the journey this week by reading the daily chapters of content and Scriptures in the series book by Andrew Ollerton, *The Bible: A Story That Makes Sense of Life* (Hodder).

