



LEADER NOTES

WHAT YOUR GROUP WILL NEED

- A quiet spot
- Something to watch a video clip on from YouTube or
- A Bible
- A pen and some paper

This session has been adapted from the *Isolated Church: Waiting* reflection so you can use it with your group online. Feel free to pick and choose parts of it, if you are short on time.



Make sure you send round the link to the videos ([click here](#)) to your group before you meet or have it ready in your video chat to watch at the right time.

Tip: There are a few prayers, passages and quotes included in these notes. As you'll most likely be using this session on a video chat service, text or message certain people in the group with the prayers or quotes at the start or throughout the session and ask them to read them out at the right time - it'll help break up your meeting and involve others too!

1 INTRO

Explain: Everybody loves waiting right? Waiting for that new season on Netflix to binge on, waiting for that YouTube video to stop buffering, waiting for COVID-19 to be over and social restrictions to be lifted. There have been glimmers of hope in the news headlines and daily briefings about the lifting some of the restrictions. However, we are still being asked to wait: "Stay at home. Protect the NHS. Save lives". At times this can be frustrating. However in our time together we want to be encouraged and challenged with stories from our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world who are holding onto their faith in Jesus whilst they don't just wait, but wait on God.

ACTIVITY: AWKWARD SILENCE

Don't give the group any explanation, but just say 'Now, we are just going to wait'. Let it hang, see how long it is before someone starts talking (or typing). If it's not long, try it again and see if they do any better.

Ask

- How did it feel waiting in the silence?

Explain: Waiting can be uncomfortable but as we are going to find out, sometimes that is where the gold is. We often grow in those times when we feel uncomfortable and the best things are often the hardest earned.

PRAY

Encourage the group to be still and pause. Ask them to slow down their breathing and focus on God. Ask Him to speak to you all whilst you go through this session!

You might want to ask one of your group to read out this prayer:

Father God. You are good. You are everything we need. Please speak to us as we read these stories. Help us put aside distractions and focus on You. Teach us something new. Let us know You are with us. Amen.

VIDEO: INDONESIA – BRING YOUR CHURCH TO PRISON SUNDAY?

If you haven't already - send round the link to the video for people to watch ([click here](#)). Naomi tells an incredible story about how, in a notorious prison, Sunday school teacher Rebecca heard God and transformed the prison into a safe place for her church to meet.

Ask

- How would you feel about heading into prison with terrorists and murderers?

Explain: Instead of just biding her time, keeping her head down, Rebecca faced up to the situation and waited not just for her sentence to be over, but she waited on God. He gave her an idea of how she could use her time.

Ask

- Have you asked God what you should be doing in this time of waiting? If you have heard from God, write it down on a piece of paper. If not, pause right now and ask God to speak to you. Now listen. Don't be discouraged if you don't hear anything straight away. Keep asking and waiting. Write 'How do you want me to use this time?' on your paper.

Tip: Give your group a few mins just to pause, pray and think. You may want to ask if your group want to share what God has said to them. You can also ask who has yet to hear from God as it is good to share a variety of experiences. If no one offers, don't worry just move on.

Continued...

"You can say whatever you want to your church when you are in here."

Explain, then ask: How incredible is that? In prison, a place that was meant to crush Rebecca, turned into a safe place for her church. Sometimes God can surprise us during times of waiting - have you experienced anything that has surprised you during lockdown so far?

VIDEO STORY: NOEH IN IRAQ - '*The Holy Spirit makes me strong'*

Watch the video 'Iraq: Noah says, 'I want to be a teacher' ([click here](#)).

Ask

- When this video was shot, Noah had been waiting three years to move back home. How would you feel if your home was destroyed? Would you be willing to wait three years to move back?
- Noeh says 'the Holy Spirit makes me strong.' Sometimes waiting is hard. When did you last ask the Holy Spirit for strength not to give up hope whilst you wait?
- Does anyone know any Bible passages on strength and hope?

Tip: Here are some Bible promises on strength and hope. Have a couple of people look them up and read them out (highlight Jeremiah as it will be referenced later on).

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with the power through his Spirit in your inner being.

Ephesians 3: 16

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29: 11

Now watch another video: '[Hope for the Middle East: Home and hope for Noah in Iraq](#)' - [click here to find it...](#)

Noeh visited his house a few times in the five years he was displaced. Each time it was clear that his room was still not ready for him.

- Have you been tempted to venture out and break social restrictions? What are you most tempted to do? Go to Maccies?

Noeh waited for his house to be ready and now says 'life is good.' If he was in his room whilst the work was being done, it would have taken a lot longer - a bit like how current social restrictions will be enforced for longer if people break them.

- Ask your group to describe what it will feel like when social restrictions are lifted and then get them to write down their answers.

Explain: Whilst we know the end of lockdown won't necessarily bring celebration (there will be plenty of people badly affected by the crisis - maybe even some in the group), we do know that when social distancing restrictions are lifted, there will be a feeling of relief and happiness.

BIBLE: GENESIS 8: 3-20 - ANOTHER NOAH

Read Genesis 8: 3-20 together

Explain: When flood waters started, Noah and 7 others were trapped in an ark with quite a few animals! There is no written account of what happened inside the ark but we can safely say it would have felt cramped

and restricted. After 150 days (yes, 150 days of being trapped in the ark), the waters are described to have 'gone down'. But that doesn't mean the waiting was over.

Ask

- How many times does Noeh test whether it's safe to leave the ark (*He initially sends out a raven, then a dove. Then he sends out a second dove, which comes back with a olive leaf. Then, a week later he sends out yet another dove. It's a long process*)
- What is it that makes Noah know the waiting was over? (v15-16)

Explain: From when Noah first saw the flood-waters subside, it could have been up to three months before the ground is described as being 'completely dry'. But what a moment that must have been! There were times when Noah and his family were cleaning excrement, like Rebecca. There were times when it would have been tempting to leave the ark before things were ready, like Noeh wanting to return to his home in Iraq. But Noah was prepared to wait – he was only going to leave the ark when he was sure God had told him to. God wanted to give Noah and his family a hope and a future, just like in the passage from Jeremiah above, but Noah had to wait on God.

RESPOND:

The group have already written down some prayers asking God how to use them; prayers for strength and hope. The thing about waiting is that it takes time, so encourage them to stick those prayers somewhere obvious and keep adding them as they hear from God. *You may want to offer prayer for those who may be struggling to hear from God at this time. Take a note of who asks and follow up in the coming weeks, keep praying and journeying with them. God wants to 'give you hope and a future.'*

Secondly, encourage the group to use this time of waiting well, just like Rebecca. Prayer encourages action, so ask the group to wait again, like we did at the beginning of the session. Give just three minutes. In this time get everyone to ask God to put something or someone on their hearts. This may be for individuals or your whole group.

Afterwards, get the group to share if they heard anything they felt and get them to write it on their piece of paper. Make sure they leave room on the paper for more as God can also speak outside of youth group!

Finally, as a group, why not use this time of enforced waiting to really impact the lives of your persecuted family? [Take on a 2.6 Challenge over the next month to raise money for emergency supplies for poor Christians struggling with the impact of the lockdown](#). Could your group run a marathon relay together (but apart?). Could you climb 26 mountains? Could you all spend 26 hours in full Minion fancy dress? [Find out more about the challenge and sign up here....](#)

PRAY

As you close the session ask the group for any prayer requests. Then pray the following prayer:

Father God, we thank You for the example of Christians like Rebecca, Noeh and our other brothers and sisters around the world who are persecuted for their faith in You. Christians who wait on You for strength and hope and turn situations around by waiting on You. Help us to wait on You, hear from You, place our hope in You and not just wait for this all to be over. Amen.