



A Worship Discussion Guide for Individuals, Groups & Families for the week of June 8, 2025

Read the Bible passage aloud in your group meeting. This is a worship discussion guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for your meeting, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

Warm Up

- It's hard for us to ask for help. Describe a time you were slow to ask Jesus for help. Why? If you eventually cried out for help, what brought about that change?

I Samuel 7:3-17

Help

Last week, we saw God's holiness and justice on display as both His enemies and His covenant people attempted to use Him for their own means. The Israelites entered into a familiar cycle of disobedience, affliction, repentance and rescue. Amidst their losses, God graciously preserved His prophet Samuel, the last judge of Israel. This week, we will see what happens in the hearts of those who return to the Lord and the victory found through trusting Him. Yet, for Israel, even miraculous victories against their enemies cannot overcome their forgetfulness. Israel will soon reject God as King and look for an earthly monarch, so they may be like the other nations.

³ And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroath from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." ⁴ So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroath, and they served the LORD only.

- Twenty years have passed since the ark was taken to Kiriath-jearim under the care of Eleazar. And, the nation of Israel has spent those years lamenting ([I Samuel 7:1-2](#)). What did Samuel tell the Israelites to do in order to return to the Lord? Why was this action necessary?
- Baal and Ashtoreth were Canaanite deities believed to hold authority over crops, fertility and military strength. Why do you think God's covenant people kept these foreign gods among them?
- What "foreign gods" are you, your family, or your community tempted to keep handy—just in case.

⁵ Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you." ⁶ So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.

- Why did Samuel gather the people at Mizpah? What is the significance of pouring water and fasting?

⁷ Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. ⁸ And the people of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines." ⁹ So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. ¹⁰ As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel. ¹¹ And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car.

- How did Israel respond to the threat of the Philistines? How did the LORD intervene?
- What does Israel's use of prayer as the weapon against the Philistines indicate (8)?

¹² Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, "Till now the LORD has helped us." ¹³ So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. ¹⁴ The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

¹⁵ Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. ¹⁶ And he went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. And he judged Israel in all these places. ¹⁷ Then he would return to Ramah, for his home was there, and there also he judged Israel. And he built there an altar to the LORD.

- **What is the significance of the stone called "Ebenezer"? (12)**
- **What do we learn about Samuel's leadership and his role among the people of Israel? (13-17)**
- **What is one "Ebenezer" in your life that reminds you of God's faithfulness?**
- **Where do you need God's help today? Turn to Jesus, trust Him, and ask him for help. Pray together in response to God's Word.**

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Questions? Contact Pastor Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org

