



## SESSION 4 A HEAVENLY FATHER AND AN EARTHLY FAMILY

A 10 Session Study based around the Lord's Prayer

Drawn from material prepared by J John and the Life Builder Study series of booklets (Douglas Connelly)

All bible verses quoted are from Matthew Chapter 6 NLT

<sup>9</sup> **Our** *Father in heaven....*"

Opening Activity (Welcome)

- ❖ Your idea of Heaven on earth – Chocolate, football, shopping, travel, or what?
- ❖ Which of these do you expect to find in heaven
  - Angels with harps, people on fluffy clouds, dogs, Elvis
- ❖ Do you prefer
  - Deserted beach or one full of people
  - Table for two or banquet for fifty
  - Quiet night with a book/dvd or noisy party
- ❖ BRIEFLY – which TV family do you most identify with? Which TV family would you most like to be part of? Why?

Exploration

- ❖ How would you answer the question where is God now?
- ❖ When, if ever, do you think about heaven? What sounds best about it for you?
- ❖ Have you ever walked into a church service and suddenly felt really at home
- ❖ When you pray how much of your prayer relates to personal issues – how much relates only to others (not immediate family)
- ❖ What difference would it have made if Jesus had taught His disciples to pray "My Father .....feed me this day, forgive my sins etc"?

Study (Word)

Let's look at some of the things the bible says about heaven:

Each person take and read one of the verses below without any other comment:  
Genesis 1:1; 1 Kings 22:19; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 103:19; Isaiah 40: 21 – 26;  
Isaiah 63:15; Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 66: 1 – 2; Matthew 3:17; Mark 13:32;  
Acts 7:54 – 56; Rev 21: 1-2

From the above readings (rather than our ideas) answer the following:

- ❖ Where did heaven come from;
- ❖ Who are the occupants of heaven;
- ❖ What are the characteristics of heaven;
- ❖ What will happen to heaven?

Someone read out Revelation Chapter 4. Everyone else think about the following questions whilst this is being read:

- ❖ Who is the central figure in the vision;
- ❖ What is the chief activity in heaven? What is its focus?
- ❖ If you were there, how do you think you might feel?
- ❖ This is happening in heaven NOW! If we were more aware of this how might it change our lives?

Do we need our eyes opened to see the heavenly side of things (2 Kings 6: 8 – 23)

God doesn't just save individuals, he makes a holy people

- ❖ How did someone become a member of God's people in the OT? What did God promise His people & what did He expect from them in return? (See Gen 17: 1 – 8 & Deut 27:9)
- ❖ What does Jesus say is the condition of becoming a member of his family? What does he imply about the significance of natural family relationships? (See Matt 12:48 – 50)
- ❖ How are God's people defined now? What do Peter and Paul say about the relationship between NT believers and OT people of God. What significance – if any – does this have today? (See Galatians 3:29, 1 Peter 2: 9 – 12; 2 Cor 6:18 and Eph 2:19)
- ❖ How should we relate to other believers in Christ (See Gal 6:10; 1 Tim 5: 1 – 2 & Heb10: 24 – 25)

Think point – Our Father in Heaven; His family on Earth

- ❖ How should the fact that God is in heaven affect our prayers when we – praise him; confess sin; make requests?
- ❖ If the church should be family as God intended, how does that affect our view of and our approach to being part of God's family?
- ❖ What more do we learn from looking at Jesus attitude to his Father?

What next? (Witness)

- ❖ How can we develop the art of seeing things from heavens perspective?
- ❖ What more can you do to improve relationships within the family of God?
- ❖ How can we help draw in those who are not yet family?

Praise, prayer and worship (Worship)

Focusing on the matters considered during this session and the matters before us in the coming week.

Select appropriate music to help in our worship and response.