**Connect Group Questions**

*Jonah – Who is my Neighbour?*

(Jonah 1:5-6)

Read Jonah 1:5-6.

The sermon highlighted 3 key themes from the passage.

1 Anguish

**Q** – Exactly how terrifying do you think the storm was?

**Q** – If you were the sailors, would **you** have woken up Jonah & what would you expect from him?

**Q** – An illustration of Mother Teressa was given, as someone who faced many moments of deep anguish – how surprising does that sound to you? Does anguish display a lack of faith in God?

**Q** – Can we identify with those around us who are in anguish… what help can we offer them?

2 Apathy

While the sailors panicked above deck, where do we find the holy prophet of God? V5 says, *“But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down & fell into a deep sleep.”* Jonah’s indifference to the plight of the sailors mirrors his earlier decision, to flee from God’s call to preach at Nineveh.

**Q** – Was Jonah exhibiting apathy as he slumbers sublimely in the ship; or was he being an apostate, in deliberately abandoning God and the crew of sailors… or have we ‘misunderstood’ him? 😊

**Q** – There was a suggestion made that apathy is alive and well within parts of the church today – do you agree with this, and if so, what evidence could one find to demonstrate this?

**Q** – The writer, *Leo Buscaglia*, was quoted as saying, *‘I have a very strong feeling that the opposite of love is not hate - it's apathy. It's not giving a damn.’* Do you agree with such a statement?

3 Action, A call to…

A *‘****C****all* ***T****o* ***A****ction’* was introduced, from the world of sales & marketing, and how CTA’s are used to motivate forms of action. *Keller* suggests one of the key lessons in Jonah, is that God cares deeply about how we treat people - even when, or rather especially when they are different from us.

God calls us to love, respect & serve our *neighbours* regardless of race, culture, or belief… unlike Jonah.

**Q** – Do you agree with Keller? If so, what might that look like, in terms of how we live out our lives and engage with those around us?

**Q** – How should we respond to our ‘neighbours’ if/when they dislike or are offensive towards us?

Reflection

In Revelation 3, Jesus rebukes the Church of Laodicea for their spiritual indifference. Jesus says… *"I know your works; that you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth."* (Rev 3:15-16 ESV)

The congregation were asked whether we have ever taken time to reflect upon the Anguish of God, over humanity’s suffering & sin; and the apathy shown by some Christians/the Church towards our neighbour.

Take some moments for quiet reflection, allowing space to consider how God may be anguished by the world’s suffering. Reflect on your own attitudes toward the needs of the neighbors around you.

How might God be calling you to shine His light of love to those in need? What might that require of you?

Prayer

As the time of reflection draws to a close, you may wish to pray this prayer…

*Loving God,*

*We pause in the quiet, mindful of the world’s pain and your aching heart.*

*Forgive us when we turn away from the needs of our neighbour.*

*Open our eyes to see, and our hearts to respond with love.*

*Help us to be a light in dark places, bringing hope and kindness to those in need.*

*Guide us to reflect your love in all we do.*

*In Jesus’ name, we pray.*

***AMEN***