

Lightwave Study Series on Daniel

For small groups



WEEK 3: Faith in the Furnace

Aim: to consider the effect that pressure has on our faith and how we can stand firm under it.

Welcome

Take a piece of playdough and form it into the shape that represents how your week has been. Then tell the rest of the group about it.

Worship

Have a more extended time of worship and prayer this week. Begin by praising God. Use Daniel's prayer in chapter 2 verses 17-23 to help you focus on who God is. Sing a worship songs or worship through listening to a CD. Focus on acknowledging God's sovereignty – all that we are and have come from him.

Move on to praying for each other and those suffering persecution. Be creative in this time e.g. pray all together and in pairs, have some silence, use pictures of those suffering persecution and symbols such as candles. Conclude with a song of praise. Although we go through hard times, God will ultimately triumph.

Word

Read Daniel 3.1-18

1. Shadrach Meshach and Abednego were ready to lay down their lives in order to worship God alone. What has worshipping God cost you this week?
2. Which of God's commandments would the 3 men have broken by bowing down to the idol? (See Deuteronomy 31.16-19). What are you tempted to idolize?
3. In verses 17-18, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in effect say "God will rescue us, but even if he doesn't, he is still God." Does this show faith or doubt? Why is this a good attitude to prayer when we are under pressure?
4. Read verses 19-30. What good came out of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's courageous obedience? a) for themselves, b) for others. Share some of the good things which have come through your standing up under pressure.

EXTRA (if time – or do in the week):

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego didn't justify their decision but simply said "We do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter." (3.16) How do we know when it is best to defend ourselves and best to keep silent? Discuss dilemmas you face, or if you can't think of any consider what you might do in the following scenarios:

1. It is usual for the people in your office to inflate their expenses claims each month. You do not and your boss publicly praises you for your thriftiness in front of all your colleagues. How should you handle the matter with your colleagues now?
2. You are married to a non-Christian but want to give regularly to the church. Should you discuss your plans with your spouse and only go ahead if they agree, should you take the money out of your own monthly allowance or just not mention anything and hope they don't notice.

Witness

Pray for any areas which have come up during the meeting where group members' faith is "in the furnace". Continue to pray for those you have invited or wish to invite to a future event such as an Alpha course.

Give out information about "Christian Solidarity Worldwide" or a similar organisation – If anyone in your group feels called to help to do more in support of persecuted Christians around the world, you may wish to discuss what you could do together.

Continue to plan your next group social.

Decide who is going to lead the various parts of next week's meeting.

DURING THE WEEK

Faith in the furnace cont. What lessons can we learn through persecution if we are willing? Look at Job 2.3; Corinthians 12.7-10; Hebrews 12.4-12; 1 Peter v1.6-9

Continue to pray for the persecuted Christians you learned about last week

Read Mark 12.41-44, Matthew 6. 24.34 and Acts 20.33-35. What issues or questions do these passages bring up for you? Bring them to next week's group.