

Small Group Questions – August 22 – Leader's Guide

Read John 7:1-2, 11-24, 37-44

1. John 7 is an extension of the Passover controversy in chapter 6 when Jesus claimed to be the bread of heaven. John 7 is when Jesus will claim to be the living water of heaven during the Feast of Booths. How does both Jesus' claims to be the bread and the water of heaven coincide with each other?

The bread and water were the symbolic tokens of God's provision in the desert. God prescribed certain feast days for Israel to celebrate in order for them to enshrine and commemorate the story of God's care over them. Jesus' claim to be both the bread and water is His claim to be the ultimate fulfillment of God's provision for the life of the world--bread as food and water as drink.

2. In verse 17, Jesus challenges His inquirers and even those who were skeptical of His teachings to test God's will for themselves. New Testament scholar, D. A. Carson, wrote that divine revelation can only be assessed from the inside. How could we personally "step into" the will of God and begin to test it for ourselves?

Allow space for mutual sharing of personal stories and experiences. Responses will vary but it is important in the end to frame the responses around the parameters set by the revealed word of God in the Bible, and to be wary of making our personal feelings and opinions the standard of judgement about the truthfulness of Scripture.

3. One of the main themes of the Feast of Booths is God's provision of water to Israel during their 40-year wandering. In this festal backdrop, Jesus declared in verse 37 that He is the water of heaven. How have you personally experienced Jesus' offer to drink of His living water? And if you have not, how would you imagine the experience could be for yourself?

Answers will vary. Encourage one another to be as open and honest as they feel.

4. In verses 38-39, Jesus promised that whoever believes in Him will flow rivers of living water from within them, that is, the Holy Spirit. How does Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit overflowing and spilling over out of our lives transform the way we live our faith in Toronto?

Jesus' promise comforts and assures us that we are not left on our own to "do" God's will and calling in our lives. Let us be reminded of this rather famous quote: "God does not call the equipped, but equips those whom He has called." And He has equipped every Christian with His Holy Spirit -- to have power to believe, to have faith, to trust and obey His Word, and to delight and love His Word.