

## **Sept 17 – Leader’s Guide** **Genesis 2 - “God of Hospitality, Part 2”**

### **Readings: Genesis 2, Ephesians 5:31-32**

1. What does Gen 2:18 show us about the nature of God?

*Tim Keller: "God deliberately made it so that Adam would need someone other than God... Consider what a humble, unself-centered act this is on God's part. God made human beings to need not just him, but other relationships, other selves, other hearts."*

2. Verse 18 refers to a "suitable helper" or a "helper fit for". How have you understood this in the past? Has anything changed in your understanding?

*Suitable = "like-opposite". Helper = used to describe God – cf Ps 70:5, Ps 121:1, Ps 146:5. Some have traditionally understood this phrase to say that women are inferior or created solely to be men's 'aides'; but the language used doesn't support that – there is no inferiority suggested in the terms.*

3. What does Gen 2:25, followed by the story of the fall of Adam and Eve and their subsequent need for clothing in Gen 3, tell us about the effects of sin? What are some of the 'fig leaves' we use to cover our shame today?

*Before sin there was no need to hide anything, because there was no shame. Sin produces shame, not just shame over actions but also shame related to identity and who we are. Explore with the group the effect that shame has.*

4. Given that both Jesus and Paul were single, what are we to understand about the nature of singleness today? How did they both teach us to understand family differently?

*Both Jesus and Paul upheld singleness and taught a new way of understanding family, in their example and also in their teaching (cf Matt 19:12; Luke 20:35; Luke 14:26; John 19:26-27; 1 Cor 7). While in the Old Testament blessing was conveyed through marital status and having children, in the New Testament the "family of God", the Church, is the primary conveyor of blessing. We are to understand fellow believers as family members, and singleness as valid (if not more so!) than marriage.*

5. Read Eph 5:31-32. What does Paul mean?

*This is a mystery, a revealed truth about the nature of Christ and his Church. The vulnerability Jesus displayed in coming and in dying is a model for us, as well as the commitment he shows to the Church for all time.*

6. As members of the body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, we automatically belong to the family of God – a community that ideally should be a place of safety and love, where we can be fully known and loved. Have you experienced the church that way? If not, have there been other communities that have felt that way to you?

*This is an opportunity to practice vulnerability and openness with each other. As the leader and as you are able, demonstrate that vulnerability with your group by being willing to share a part of your own story – and try to make the space supportive for people in your group who may have been hurt by the Church in the past.*