

# PRODIGAL GOD

prod•i•gal - adjective:  
1. wastefully or recklessly extravagant  
2. lavishly abundant

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## THE TALE OF TWO BROTHERS & THEIR WASTEFULLY EXTRAVAGANT FATHER

The following questions are intended to help you reflect on your reading of the book, *The Prodigal God*. They are also intended to form the basis of discussion questions for use in our Gospel Communities. The leader should select which questions are most appropriate, and take the initiative to take the group in the direction they feel the Spirit is leading them.

### PRAYER

Spend some time praising God and praying for one another

## CHAPTER 6: REDEFINING HOPE

Read Luke 15

1. What are you nostalgic for? What are your fondest memories? What emotions does 'home' arouse in you?
  
2. Tim Keller writes, *"Home" exercises a powerful influence over human life... Many of us have fond memories of times, people, and places where we felt we were truly home. However, if we ever have an opportunity to get back to the places we remember so fondly, we are usually disappointed... Home, then, is a powerful but elusive concept.*' (p. 91) Do you agree? Why do you think this is that case?
  
3. Re-read the extract from C.S. Lewis', *The Weight of Glory*, on page 93-95. What does he mean that, *'Our life-long nostalgia, our longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we feel cut off... is no mere neurotic fancy, but the truest index of our real situation.'*
  
4. How does the book of Genesis teach us why we all feel like exiles, that we are far away from home? (p. 95)
  - a. Describe the home we were created for?
  
  - b. How did our first parents sin – and our sin – exile us from this home?
  
5. What are some stories (a) in the Bible, and (b) in our world that reveal how we are in exile today? (p. 96-97)

6. Why does the younger brother know '*that a successful return [home] is not inevitable.*' (p. 98)
  - a. How do the following two kinds of 'brokenness' prevent us from the final and full homecoming that the prophets and everyone longs for? (p. 90)
    - i. '*the brokenness within human beings.*'
    - ii. '*the brokenness around human beings.*'
  
7. How will Jesus 'make the world our perfect home again' (p. 104)?
  - a. Where do you see the theme of exile, abandonment and homecoming in his story? How does that affect our stories?
  - b. How does he promise to heal
    - i. the brokenness *within* human beings, and
    - ii. the brokenness *around* human beings?
  
8. What do you add if you read the story of the lost son in the context of:
  - a. Verses 25-32 (the elder brother)
  - b. Verses 3-10 (the good shepherd and good woman)
  - c. Verses 1-2 (sinners gathering, religious muttering, Jesus welcoming)
  - d. The whole bible (today's study)
  
9. Reflect on your need for a perfect 'home'.
  - a. In what sense are the problems in your life the result of trying to create a home on earth rather than waiting and longing for the home Jesus one day will recreate?
  - b. What aspects of this new home do you particular long for?