



Week beginning June 21st

Preparing a People: Hearing the Voice

Opening Questions

- What thoughts have stayed with you from Sunday's message on this theme?
- Can you recall a time when you had to make a difficult decision? What were your feelings and emotions at the time? What helped you to make the final decision?

Getting into the text

Read Genesis 21:8-21 and Matthew 10:24-39

- What conflict arises in Genesis 21? Why did it happen?
- How does God respond to Hagar and Ishmael?
- In the reading from Matthew what does Jesus say about the cost of following him? Why might following him cause tension and division?

- What reassurances does he give his followers?

Applying the Bible to your life

- What do these passages tell you about God's love and care. How might this help and encourage you during tough times?

- Putting your faith first in your life can sometimes be a challenge in the midst of difficult situations. What spiritual practices help you to discern God's voice so that you make the right choices?

- What do you think 'taking up your cross' means for you in your everyday life?

Something to pray about

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, **'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.'**

- Give thanks for God's care for you.

- Offer him any difficult decisions you or those you know are facing at the moment, asking for his guidance and protection.

- Pray for those who are facing hardship or persecution because of their faith today. Ask God to give them strength to persevere.