

Being Human study guide



SESSION FIVE

Session five of Being Human is about participation. To be human is to take part – the difference we make in the world matters.

AIMS

- To recognise that what you do affects the world around you.
- To reflect on the fact that God puts limits on our activity and invites us to find our rest in Him.
- To respond to God's invitation to partner with Him in making all things new.

ICEBREAKER | 5 MINS

Q. If you could have any role in the world for a day, what role would you like to try and why?

FOLLOW-UP | 5 MINS

Discuss as a group any questions or further thoughts that have arisen following last week's session. Discuss how you found doing the activation points throughout the week. What worked, what didn't go well and why?

WATCH | 15 MINS

Watch: Being Human: Participation

While watching this session, take notes, and if you find it helpful, consider the hits and the misses of the film (hits are what captures your imagination, gets you thinking or resonates as true, misses are what you don't understand, didn't agree with or didn't connect with you).

DISCUSSION | 20 MINS

The video starts with Jo saying that being human is to make a difference in the world. To be human is to take part and we affect the world around us. Then Peter introduces the tension – “does our humanity come from what we do, or are our actions mere expressions of our humanity?”

- What do you think influences the other more – actions or identity?

Peter brings us back to the Jenga tower and explains how the combination of the three cultural storylines we've been looking at have created an unstable society – the tower is about to topple over.

- What are some of the crises we have faced as a society recently?
- Permacrisis was the word of the year in 2022, which means living in a state of permanent crisis or instability. Have you noticed this and what effect does this have on your life and those around you?
- How do you react to a crisis?

Peter reminds us of the story of Daniel, who was able to combine his cultural expertise with his spiritual insight. He lived in the world but did not live for it. Then Jo talks about the life of Jesus and how He constantly points us to what life and partnership with God looks like.

- What can we learn from Daniel's ability to combine cultural expertise and spiritual insight to make a difference where he was?
- What do you think it means for you to make a difference?
- How easy do you find it to stop working?
- What does rest look like for you?

BIBLE REFLECTION | 15 MINS

We read in Genesis that after the dark, watery chaos comes purpose, vitality and dynamism. God brings an order to creation. Each day's activity is detailed in a couple of verses, culminating in the more expansive depiction of the sixth day: humans are made in God's likeness to represent – and re-present – Him in creation.

- Read Genesis 1:26–28. What do these verses tell us about what it means to be human?
- What does “ruling over” creation look like in today's world?
- Read Luke 8:22–25. Why do the disciples panic? Why doesn't Jesus panic? What is Jesus teaching us about rest and participation through this moment with the disciples?

PRAYER | 10 MINS

Share what you will be doing tomorrow and how you hope to see that as partnering with God to make all things new. Then spend time praying for each other in smaller groups.

ACTIVATION | 5 MINS

How could the ideas you've explored today impact your life this week? Why not commit to putting into practice an idea or a habit that helps you live out and share the truth that you are an image-bearer of God?

Here are some suggestions to get you started; pick one or come up with your own.

- Rest – Rest is central to the life of a human but it takes discipline to stop, especially when there is still work to be done. Plan a sabbath day this week, full of things that you find refreshing and restful. Spend some time reflecting on times when you are prevented from resting or why you have found rest challenging at times.
- Respond – Generosity is the conscious act of believing Jesus when He told us that the heavenly Father will provide for His children. To give away, especially in moments when our reflex is to hold on or to hoard, is a fully human act. Review your giving this week: is God inviting you into more generosity?
- Act – Fasting is the reorientation from what I want, what I control, how I depend on myself, to the declaration of dependence on God. If you have never fasted before, try fasting one meal this week and spending the time worshipping God instead. If you have fasted before, why not try fasting for a full day this week?