

ABUNDANT LIFE

Reflections on the Raising of Lazarus

WEEK ONE: JESUS COMES TO BETHANY

An outline for group study

Introduction

This outline for group study is written to accompany *Abundant Life: Reflections on the Raising of Lazarus* by Bishop Steven. Ideally, members of the group should each have a copy of the booklet and be working through the sessions in the week before you meet to discuss the material.

Copies of *Abundant Life* can be ordered at store.oxford.anglican.org

Worship and Prayer together

You may want to use the simple order on the separate sheet or worship and pray in some other way.

Dwelling in the Word

Read the first part of the story of Lazarus together (John 11:1-27).

Keep a few moment's silence. In the silence notice where your attention lingers. It may be a word or phrase which strikes you, or a question you want to ask.

In pairs share where you have noticed your attention lingers.

Each pair shares what they have heard their partner share about what they noticed in the passage and their reflections from the daily readings.

Read part of the passage for second time (John 11:17-27). You may want to divide the reading with a narrator, Jesus and Martha.

You may want to end the reflection by reading aloud or listening to one of Bishop Steven's reflections (we suggest Reflection 6).

Application together

Reflect on what you have learned from this week's reading for your own life as a Christian disciple. How do you need to be more contemplative in your own discipleship? What are the next steps for you?

Reflect on what you have learned from this week's readings for the life of your local church. How do you need to be more contemplative, thoughtful and prayerful together?

Reflect on what you have learned from this week's readings of the life of the Diocese of Oxford. What kind of Church do we want to build together as we follow the contemplative Christ? What do you want to see that is different in the life of the Church in the Diocese of Oxford in 2025?

Look together at the six areas of focus on page 5. What would it mean to be more contemplative as we approach each of these six areas?

Moving Forward

Invite one of the group to write a summary of your answers to Questions 1-4. Circulate the answers round the group and then send them to the person in your community who will add them to the diocesan vision page oxford.anglican.org/commonvision (or email to commonvision@oxford.anglican.org)

Concluding prayer

Keep a short time of silence together and pray for one another, for your local Church and for the Diocese of Oxford.

God of gentleness and love
Draw near to us as we draw near to you
Dwell in every heart and conversation
Fashion in us the likeness of your Son Jesus Christ
Help us to discern together all that you are calling us to be
And all that you are calling us to do.
Assist us, by your Spirit to become a more contemplative,
more compassionate and more courageous Church
For the building of your kingdom and the glory of your Son.

Amen