

**Questions
to Ponder
in Lent**

As we journey through Lent, I hope that these questions will help you to engage with the account of Jesus' Passion as told by Matthew. Housegroups will be using these questions during their meetings in Lent but, if you are not able to join a group, you can also use them by yourself at home. The readings for the five weeks take us through the whole Passion narrative. Each week, questions relate to a character who appears in that week's reading, but you might also find it useful to look up other passages where that character appears. The questions are inspired by the 'I wonder' question format used by Samuel Wells in his book, *Power & Passion* (Published by Zondervan 2007)

A suggested outline for the study

- 1) Pray and ask God to help you understand His message for you today.
- 2) Read through the passage or, in a group, have someone read it out loud.
- 3) Spend a minute or two in silence thinking about what you have heard.
- 4) Ask yourself or, share with your group, what one thing stood out for you in the reading.
- 5) Use the 'I wonder' questions for reflection or for discussion with a group – each week these relate to a particular character in the gospel account.
- 6) Close with a prayer thanking God for what you have read and what He has shown you.

Revd Kate Macfarlane

Week 1

Matthew 26:1-30 -Mary Magdalene

- 1) I wonder what it is like to know that someone you care deeply about is going to die and there's nothing you can do about it.
- 2) I wonder what it is like to see expensive material wasted.
- 3) I wonder whether there is a shortage of things that really matter.
- 4) I wonder what it might be like to discover that one's passion was always, more or less, a passion for God.
- 5) I wonder what it is to discover the greatest power in the universe.
- 6) I wonder what difference that greatest power might make to our assumptions and expectations of life.
- 7) I wonder what you could do if you didn't mind who got the credit.
- 8) I wonder what it might be like not to need to run away from anything in the past.

Week 2

Matthew 26:31-56 - Judas

- 1) I wonder what it is like to feel that the cause you signed up to isn't what you thought it was.
- 2) I wonder what it is like to be waiting for an opportunity to betray a friend.
- 3) I wonder how one comes to suppose one knows better than Jesus.
- 4) I wonder what it is like to realise that someone knows everything about you.
- 5) I wonder what it is like to know that you have let down the most important person in the world.
- 6) I wonder what it is like to know that everyone knows you have let them down.
- 7) I wonder what it is like to look back and realise everything depended on one choice.
- 8) I wonder what it is like to believe your sin is unforgiveable.

Week 3

Matthew 26:57 – 27:10 - Peter

- 1) I wonder whether the people Jesus founds the church on today are as fragile as Peter.
- 2) I wonder what it is like to feel that the other disciples are not as committed as you.
- 3) I wonder what it is like to realise you have made a promise you can't keep.
- 4) I wonder what it is like to see again someone you have let down very badly indeed.
- 5) I wonder what it feels like to be given another chance.
- 6) I wonder what it is like to feel you cannot love as much as you are loved.
- 7) I wonder what it is like to become friends again.
- 8) I wonder whether it is possible to know that someone has left you on the brink of death – and still to love them.

Week 4

Matthew 27:11-31 – Pilate and Pilate's Wife

- 1) I wonder whether God speaks to people in dreams today.
- 2) I wonder what it is like for a woman to feel that she is much more able than her husband but that no one will ever know it.
- 3) I wonder what it is like not to be able to tell anyone about your faith.
- 4) I wonder what makes people find reasons why Jesus is irrelevant to our political life today.
- 5) I wonder who seem to be the most powerful people in your world.
- 6) I wonder what it feels like to sense truth is against you.
- 7) I wonder what it is like to wash one's hands when one has done a terrible thing.
- 8) I wonder what it is like to be tormented by someone who knows they have power over you.

Week 5

Matthew 27:32 - 61– Joseph of Arimathea

- 1) I wonder what are the simplest things that Christians do.
- 2) I wonder what it is like to love someone who is being killed and yet say nothing.
- 3) I wonder what it is like to be on a committee or council and realise that others in the group are plotting something terrible.
- 4) I wonder what it would be like if 'good people' filled all the seats in government.
- 5) I wonder what it is like to be a Christian in a business or factory.
- 6) I wonder what it is like to feel your personal faith makes no public difference.
- 7) I wonder what it is like to find that people despise you when they discover you are a Christian.
- 8) I wonder what it is like to talk to your family and friends about your faith.