



LIFE GROUP NOTES

Week Beginning: 22nd September 2024



A tale of two sisters Genesis 29:31-30:15a

Warm Up

Can you remember the worst argument or fight that you had with your sibling(s)? If you are an only child, what about an argument with a best friend or cousin? What was it about? How did it get resolved? How bad did it get?

Background and context

In some ways this section of Jacob's tale mirrors the earlier rivalry between Jacob and Esau. One wanting what the other has got. Here, Leah longs for the love of Jacob and desires children. Rachel has the love of her husband but has no children. The tension and jealousy this causes leads to severe rivalry and ultimately Jacob sleeping with other women in order to bear children for his wives! Rachel and Leah are both searching for something they will not find through childbirth. French philosopher Blaise Pascal suggested we all have a God shaped space in our hearts that we try to fill with other things. However, we can only have contentment when God fills the space!

Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity



READ Genesis 29:31-30:15a What are the surprising things in the passage? What is new? What don't you really understand?

1. **Read 29:31-35.** What do we learn about Leah?
2. How does Leah react differently after Judah is born? Is this significant? Why?
3. Leah was longing for Jacob's love and not receiving it. Where does she find the love she craves? What can we learn from her story?
4. **Read 30:1.** What do we learn about Rachel? How does 35:16-18 reveal irony in what she craves?
5. **Read 30:8.** How does this verse reveal the depths of Rachel's jealousy?
6. **Read 30:14-15.** A strange story about flowers. What do you think lies behind Rachel's request? (Think about what they both long for.)
7. How does Blaise Pascal's theory (see above) fit into the story of Leah and Rachel?

Discipleship and Application



8. How is the story of Leah and Rachel relevant in our modern world?
9. How do you think Jacob's dream of the ladder/stairway is vital in understanding why we long for things in life and feel disappointed and let down by them?
10. How does **Matthew 11:28-30** help us in dealing with our unresolved longing?

Try to leave 15-20 mins to talk about prayer needs of the group and to pray.



We want to encourage the development of prayer, to help everyone grow in confidence in praying. There are many creative ways of praying together: writing prayers, using candles as a focus, reading prayers or praying for each other in pairs.