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| **Theme & Passages** | **Growing Together: Kindness**  2 Samuel 9 | Notes prepared by Dan Commandeur, Neil Casey & Steve Elmes |
| **Welcome**  **(10 mins)** | Share a story when somebody showed you kindness. | |
| **Working with God (15 mins):**  Evangelism  Discipleship  Compassion  Justice  Creation Care | This week we are hearing from our friend Pastor Said who leads one of our international mission partners - Life Center in Beirut, Lebanon. This vibrant church in one of the most deprived areas of Lebanon demonstrates all of the five marks of mission - evangelism, discipleship, compassion justice and creation care - in their work with refugees displaced by conflict. Do check out the short video from Said (link sent to all small group leaders), which is packed full of examples of people in the church showing practical acts of kindness to people who don't share their Christian faith, differ in their political views and would historically been considered their enemies. Life Center are living out the words of Jesus on the Sermon on the Mount found in Luke 6 verses 27 and 28. This is a particularly powerful prophetic statement of kindness given all the instability and unrest in the Middle East currently. In the face of the conflict in the region the church is growing because of kindness  Please pray for Pastor Said and all our friends at Life Center. Ask for God's continued blessing on their work, that they would be kept safe in the midst of the unrest that is spilling into Lebanon as a consequence of the violence in Gaza, that traditional enemies would be reconciled as they find faith and that the church would continue to grow.  Take some time as a group to reflect on the words of Jesus in Luke 6 verses 27 and 28. Ask each member of the group to call to mind someone who they find difficult or are irritated by. Ask them to pray for that person each day in the week ahead, and to commit to one act of kindness towards that person. | |
| **Worship**  **(15 mins)** | **Read** Matthew 5:43-48 aloud together.  Meditate on these words of Jesus’ teaching, think upon how you have experienced God’s kindness and goodness. Give thanks.  If it helps you may want to listen / sing to ‘Goodness of God’ as part of your thanks.  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f4MUUMWMV4> | |
| **Word**  **(20-25 mins)** | **Read** 1 Samuel 18:1 – 4, 1 Samuel 23:14-18, 1 Samuel 20:1–4  Think about the context of David and Jonathan’s relationship. Jonathan was the next in line to the throne king Saul’s first-born son, David was a man who had been anointed in secret by Samuel to be the next king. Two very unlikely friends!  *What qualities did Jonathan show to David during these recorded encounters?*  *What could have stopped Jonathan showing kindness?*  *How does this demonstrate Jesus’ teaching on how we are to treat people?*  Following these events Jonathan was killed in battle with his father Saul.  **Read** 2 Samuel 9  David remembered the kindness that Jonathan showed him during his life, and wanted to show kindness to the descendants and family of Jonathan. This can be the effect of such radical kindness shown, it’s remembered long after we’re gone, and leads others into ‘paying it forward’. This way Mephibosheth was invited into David’s household to eat, at his table ‘like one of his sons’ and his inheritance was restored to him.  *What does this say about the kindness of God?*  *Who in your life can you show kindness to?* | |
| **EXTRA** | In the light of the news shared with our church community this Sunday, how will we practice kindness in the weeks ahead? | |