



Oughtibridge
Parish Church

Psalm 11 – Refuge

Discussion Questions

Pray for God’s help as you turn to look at His word, to understand and respond rightly to what you’ll see.

Read through the psalm slowly, carefully considering the words and their meaning.

1. Identify the two ‘voices’ in verses 1-3. What point is each ‘voice’ making to the other?
2. Describe the situation the psalmist is facing in vv1-3.
3. Consider the phrase “Flee like a bird to your mountain” (v1). Why does the psalmist use the picture of a mountain here? What might be the ‘mountains’ we are tempted to ‘flee to’ today?
4. Do you think the way you respond to feeling stressed, distressed, disappointed or depressed differs particularly from the way your non-Christians friends do? If so, how?
5. In verses 4-6 the psalmist turns his attention from the threat he’s facing (v2) to look instead to the LORD. Draw out and consider the reasons (I think there are at least three) the psalmist gives for his decision to take refuge in the LORD.

6. How might each of those reasons for taking refuge in the Lord help you consider how you might respond to the difficult things you're facing at the moment?
7. The language of vv5-6 might make us feel uncomfortable – perhaps especially the idea that God might hate someone “with a passion”. How do love and hate relate to each other? How is it possible for the God who “is love” (1 John 4:8) to also hate? How might you explain this to a non-Christian who asked you about it?
8. The thought of ‘seeing God’s face’ (v7) would have been very striking to the original Jewish readers of this psalm. It was an extraordinary thing reserved for very few – Exodus 33:11 says, “The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.” To see his face meant blessing (see Numbers 6:25-26) and for God to hide his face was a curse (Deuteronomy 31:17). God has shown us ‘his face’ (see John 1:14). What will it mean for you to set your gaze on his face this week?

Pray

- For help to ‘hear’ the call of this psalm to look to the Lord rather than the threats around and to take refuge in him in a meaningful way, rather than fleeing to other things.

A prayer you might like to use:

Heavenly Father, when I am feeling stressed, distressed, disappointed or depressed, please help me to flee to you for refuge, not other things. And help me to fill my sights with you, remembering the message of this psalm. Help me to pray when I don't feel like it. Help me to trust you when I don't understand. Help me to entrust myself to you when I don't have control. Father, show me your face. In Jesus' name, Amen.