

Awaken

The Lord is doing a new thing

Anne Calver & John McGinley

Session 1: Awaken (Chapter 1)

Pre-reading

Chapter 1. Awaken: An Introduction

Look Back

How are you (any news, important updates, how' is work / family life like at the moment)?

Where have you seen God at work recently?

As we begin these sessions on being awake to the things of God, what is your hope or prayer for what God might do in your life?

Look Up

Take some time to worship God together.

Here are some songs that would connect with the theme of Awakening.

I will make room

I surrender all

All for Jesus

Majesty

Or you could use this Psalm 146 that declares the Lord's reign and rule.

Print it out / ensure everyone has access to the same version.

Ask people to read it out as a psalm of praise to God.

Then ask them to read it quietly and find a verse that they connect with, and then ask them to pray a prayer of thanksgiving based on that verse. Give people time to prepare this and then invite people to do that.

The Word

Theme Introduction

To introduce the discussion you could play the Big Church Read Session 1 video from John or Anne for this session or you could introduce it using the following summary:

Chapter 1 is a prophetic "wake up" call to the UK church, arguing that God is already stirring a fresh spiritual awakening and the danger is complacency—thinking we are awake while actually asleep. The signs of this are the signs of hope: new forms of church emerging, younger generations seeking Jesus with hunger, and wider culture showing renewed spiritual openness. This moment is not due to human strategy, but to the Spirit of God creating spiritual hunger—through dreams, curiosity, Bible-seeking, and people turning up at church.

From this comes the call to a sustained urgency because we may be unprepared to meet those being drawn to Christ. The Titanic becomes a parable of pride and unreadiness, contrasting those who ignore warning signals with those who respond and rescue. Like Noah, the church must act on God's

call to prepare for “things not yet seen,” even if it feels absurd, and prepare for a harvest that current patterns of church cannot contain. Rather than bigger programmes or platform-led Christianity, we need many “rescue boats”—mobilised disciples and communities ready for mission.

Four contributing attitudes to the sleepiness in the church are explored: atheist, intellectual, independent, and comfortable. And five heart-postures are offered to awaken to God; saying yes, repentance, surrender, consecration, and the lordship of Jesus—rooted in “word and Spirit,” self-examination, and a willingness to be reformed for what God is doing now.

As you were reading the introduction of the Awaken Book what really struck you?

Or: what sections of this chapter felt particularly relevant to your life or our situation in the church today?

Read Romans 13:11–14

1. What reasons does Paul give for waking up now? (“present time,” “salvation nearer,” “night nearly over,” “day almost here”)

This is all about the significance of the time they are living in, which produces an urgency. For Paul it is the imminence of Christ’s return, and this is something we believe God wants us to recover. But in our time, where do you see signs of “slow awakening” in our context (or where do you not)?

2. Paul’s call to “wake up” implies they are asleep and complacent.

In what ways do you recognise this in your experience of the church

Which part of the Titanic story most challenges how the current state of the church?

Which of the four attitudes that contribute to the church’s sleepiness (atheist, intellectual, independent and comfortable) are relevant in your context?

3. What two actions does Paul command (put aside / put on)? What do they imply?

Which of the five postures (saying yes, repentance, surrender, consecration, a fresh submission to the lordship of Jesus) feels most needed for you right now?

What “business as usual” assumption might Jesus be disrupting in your discipleship or church culture?

4. This passage talks of God working out his plan of salvation in this world. The chapter gives examples of moments of God breaking in through his word and Spirit and renewing his people in biblical and church history. What gives you hope that God can move again in our nation?

Look Forward

How is God calling you to wake up: awareness, repentance, urgency, prayer, mission, obedience?

In pairs discuss what is one concrete “put off” and one concrete “put on” you will act on this week?

Pray for each other and agree how you can connect during the week.

Or as a group you could pray together and ask for holy urgency and a hunger for God in your lives and for him to move in your church and community.

Next Session:

Remind people to read Chapter 2 “The Journey Out of Captivity”. Encourage group members to read it prayerfully looking for what God is saying to them and to come ready to share at the next session.