

## Psalm 139

(God At Work)

### **Read Psalm 139**

1. What things is God aware of in David/the psalmist's life? How close is God's scrutiny of his life?

*God is omnipotent, and he carefully follows everything that happens in our lives.*

2. What things do we learn about God from v.7-12? Does this knowledge provide us with comfort or discomfort?

*God is omnipresent. (This question is aiming to explore whether God knowing all our thoughts is an uncomfortable thing, because of the ways in which we sin).*

3. What do v.13-16 tell us about God's involvement in human lives? What does v.16 say about how God values life?

*God is heavily invested in human life – he is there with us from even before we're born, and from there he plans our every day. (If your group has previously discussed or struggled with abortion, this passage may give you an opportunity to continue that discussion).*

4. How does knowing this help you to approach the different things that happen in your life?

*Knowing that things are planned for us from even before we're born should give us comfort that God is in control.*

5. What do v.17-18 reveal about how David feels towards God? How would he answer Q2?

6. Read v. 19-22. What is your initial reaction to these words?

7. How do you see the same attitude from v1-18 in v.19-22?

*His unity with God and God's cause means that he seems to see more clearly in the way that God does. He has a great longing for evil to be destroyed, and for justice and righteousness to be restored (perhaps also informed by his own suffering at the hands of evil).*

8. Read Matt 5:43-48 (and Luke 23:34). How does this fit with v. 19-22 in the Psalm?

9. Now also read John 2:13-17. How does this fit?

10. What is Jesus' view of 'evildoers'? What should our attitude be towards evil? How would knowing God so intimately (like the psalmist) inform our attitude towards evil?

*Jesus seems to hold two things in tension – He has a great love, compassion and mercy for sinners, and a desire for them to turn and be saved; but he also loves the same things as God does – he hates sin and evil, and will fulfil his roles in judging and condemning the earth. We should reflect his 'hate the sin, love the sinner' attitude, and also be filled with a longing for the time to come when all will be restored, and there will no longer be any sin and evil, but only God's presence and his overwhelming holiness.*

11. Knowing God's attitude towards sin, how can David pray verses 23-24 (remembering back to Ps 51:1-2 might help)? How can we pray a prayer like that?

*David was confident of God's love and mercy. We have an even more sure hope in the forgiveness and righteousness secured for us by Jesus' death, and the eternal life with God which is promised by his resurrection.*

12. These words (especially considering v.1-6) are truly a plea to ask God to make him holy and righteous inside and out. Do you pray in this way?

Are you willing to have God change you in your inmost being? Do you delight in his knowing your every thought so that he can comfort you and lead you in the correct way? How can you cultivate an attitude where you love righteousness and let intimacy with God change your heart towards your own sin and towards the sin and evil in the world.