

GROUP DISCUSSION

Questions for facilitating dynamic discussion

Origins

Week 1: Stirring Our Hearts
Ezra 1:1-7

Week of August 7, 2022
(Jeff Griffin, Senior Pastor)

Our new series is a study of the first six chapters of the book of Ezra. In this study, we will learn the “Origins” of the second temple in Jerusalem. As we discover how God moved His people into the mission He had for them, we will grow in our ability to follow God into the mission He has for us.

Kicking It Off: Jeff kicked off his sermon by describing the origins of Coca-Cola and doughnuts. Do you know the origins of any foods or beverages? If so, tell the group.

Discussion:

1. In 1951, Carl Gundersen had three friends suggest that he start a new church in Wheaton. He sensed God’s call and founded the church now known as “The Compass Church.” What do you find inspiring or interesting about the origins of our church?
2. Reread Ezra 1:1-2 (NLT) *The Lord stirred the heart of Cyrus to put this proclamation in writing and to send it throughout his kingdom: “The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a temple in Jerusalem.”*

What do you think Cyrus’ experience was like when The Lord “stirred his heart?”

3. Read Isaiah 45:1 (NIV) *“This is what the Lord says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him.”*

What did Cyrus say in his proclamation (Ezra 1:1-2) that makes us think he was aware of Isaiah’s ancient prophecy (Isaiah 45:1)?

4. Reread Ezra 1:5 (NLT) *Then God stirred the hearts of the priests and Levites and the leaders of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of the Lord.*

Jeff referred to God’s guidance through A) “Observation” (letting us see His providential hand at work in our lives and B) “Agitation” (stirring our hearts). What did the priests and Levites observe that helped them discern God’s calling to rebuild the temple?

5. Are you more of a “Agitation” (heart stirring) person or an “Observation” (analyze facts) person?
6. Reread Ezra 1:7 (NLT) *King Cyrus brought out the articles that King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Lord’s Temple in Jerusalem.*

How do you think the exiled Israelites felt about seeing the long-lost temple treasures?

7. Have you ever felt God stir your heart to do something? If so, tell the group about it.

Wrapping It Up: In 1 Peter 5:7 we find this instruction: *“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”* Spend some time “casting” the issues that are stressing you “on God” through prayer. Pray that His loving concern would bring you peace.