

REDEMPITIVE FAMILY

Small Group Study 2 - Embracing our Place

THE BIG IDEA: God has a redemptive purpose for our church family being where it is. Even though we look forward to a 'new Jerusalem' God's plan for us is healthy rootedness in the place where He has planted us. Our faithful presence in our place makes transformational relationships possible.

OPEN

1. Are you more of a homebody or 'a rolling stone that gathers no moss'? How has this played out in your life?

2. Have you ever known someone who seemed to know everybody and always knew what was going on in the neighbourhood? What role did they play in the community?

DIG

Read Jeremiah 29:4-14

⁴This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵"Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. ⁷Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." ⁸Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. ⁹They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the LORD.

¹⁰This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹²Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all

the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.” (NIV)

3. Look at 1 Peter 2:11-12. How is our situation as Christians similar to God’s people in exile who are being addressed in this passage from Jeremiah?

4. The false prophets spoken of in this passage were telling God’s people not to settle down. Why do you think this was an appealing message to God’s people in a foreign land?

5. God had a purpose for His people putting down roots in Babylon. What reasons can you see from the passage?

6. God’s message to those in exile was **not** that they should assimilate with the Babylonians by losing their identity or by giving up their religious practices or hope of future rescue. What impact do you imagine they had by both ‘seeking the prosperity of the city’ and being true to their God?

REFLECT

7. If we as a church family are taking our belonging to our place seriously, what difference can we expect to make?

8. What is one thing this group can do to better embrace the place where God has planted us?