

“What are you waiting for?”

We are offering a series of reflections for individuals and churches who may be finding it difficult to provide midweek prayer and shared learning from Scripture. You can use these by watching the YouTube video, reading the relevant Bible passage and then reflecting on the questions below. To help make this a shared activity, you are encouraged to reflect on this together with friends using an online conference package, or simply arrange with a friend for them to watch it too. Then ring each other up, share what your thoughts and responses and then pray for one another, and pray together for our world.

Read Exodus 32:1-6

Watch the YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/vKzHM4N6lvq>

It's easy to observe these events from a distance and to be critical of God's people, but how easily might we create our own “Golden Calves”? As you reflect on that – some questions you might consider are:

How am I using this period of waiting? This story reminds us that if we allow ourselves to become overtaken by impatience, that can have difficult consequences. Is this a period of impatience or of learning? Am I content to be led by those who seek God's purposes, and avoid presenting leaders with expectations and pressure to deliver? Am I seeking to have a good time in the general vicinity of God – or to learn how to live a life that is centred on God in whatever circumstances I find myself?

What am I attached to and why? The Golden Calf represented a significant investment on the part of the people, but they'd invested in the wrong thing. What have I invested in? Are they the things of God? Have I released those investments as an act of genuine sacrifice? Am I attached to things for the right reasons and are they the things that God wants me to be attached to?

What is motivating me? It may feel harsh to describe the religious activities of God's people as an act of self-indulgence, but in this story, that's what they revealed themselves to be. As you recognise the understandable human dynamics that were at work in this story, spend some time exploring your own expectations and desires and the motivations that lie behind them.

What does God want? It's interesting to notice how often in the Exodus story, the people looked back on what they'd had before. As on this occasion, they sometimes allowed the influences of Egypt to still define them; sometimes they openly craved to return to that life. But God was leading them to a new place. God was giving Moses a vision for life in a new land – not a way of re-living the rituals of the old one. As we come to terms with our new world – what do we need to let go of? What does God require of us now?

PRAYER

Ever present God; the days we live in and the journey we are taking is wracked with uncertainty and challenge. When you lead us forward, grant us the wisdom to recognise your direction and the courage to follow in your way. And when that way is unclear, grant us the patience to wait and the faith to believe that your purposes will be revealed. Help us not to become distracted by enterprises of our own invention or ideas that do not have their source in you. As we seek to be protected from all that threatens us, help us to remember that sometimes we need protecting from ourselves. AMEN