

FOOD TIME: (30-45 minutes) – Remember to give some direction for this time.

MEETING TIME: (45 minutes)

We have finished our study through the book of Acts and we transition now to another amazing book in the bible. As a church, we are putting our focus into the book of Jonah. Well known for him being swallowed into the belly of a fish, there is so much to pull out of the four chapters in the book. This week we are going to be in chapter one, where we are introduced to Jonah, who gets a call from God, and his first reaction is to run in the other direction. We can relate in so many ways as to who Jonah is and we can reflect on how God is also working in our lives.

READ Jonah 1:1-9

1 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, **2** "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me." **3** But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. **4** But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up. **5** Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god, and threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep. **6** So the captain came to him, and said to him, "What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish." **7** And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. **8** Then they said to him, "Please tell us! For whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?" **9** So he said to them, "I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the god of Heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

FACILITATE Discussion Questions

1. How have you been like Jonah and run in the other direction when God has called you to do something?
2. What is it like to feel like Jonah and have everything come against you when you are not doing what the Lord wants?
3. What does it tell you when the lots were cast and it came upon Jonah?
4. How does verse 9 impact you in that even in his defiance of the Lord, Jonah still recognizes a fear of the Lord?
5. How can we use Jonah to help others who may be walking through something difficult?

PRAY- Take the last 10 minutes to pray about the needs of the group.

APPLICATION- Jonah is a very poignant picture of someone who is called by God to do something, and after being afraid, tries to run in the opposite direction. But this opening chapter shows us that when God has a plan for us, we cannot escape it or run away from it. As we are going to continue to read, we see that even though there is a struggle in what Jonah has to do, and that it was not easy, God still loved Jonah through it all and waited for Jonah's obedience. As we have discussed tonight, think about what you are doing that goes against what God is wanting for you. What are you doing about it? If you are walking through something, put your trust in God by getting into His word, praying to Him, and waiting on His guidance.