

Living with Fire

Leviticus 16 “Reset!”

DISCUSSION RESOURCE FOR LIFE GROUPS

INTRODUCTION

- Where is God? Invite people to reflect on the different *places* and *ways* in which they meet with God. (You can make this very wide ranging, moving from personal quiet times, to gatherings with Christian friends, to entry into our church’s buildings, to other places that they deem ‘sacred’.)

ENGAGING THE TEXT

The following can be done as a whole group, or divided up into smaller teams. It may be that the first sections (the readings themselves) are discussed all together, with the ‘table’ exercise done in smaller groups.

1. Read Leviticus 16. Ensure that people have enough of an idea of what is taking place on this occasion. It may help to find/construct a picture of the tabernacle to explain all the movements.
2. Read Hebrews 9:1–15. Check that people have enough of an understanding of what’s going on.
3. Invite people to complete a table similar to the one on the next page. It repeats the headings and the key ideas from the sermon. (Depending on how you share results, you might invite smaller teams to answer one row each in more detail, and then share their findings with everyone else.)

THE CULMINATION OF GOD’S WORK AMONG HIS PEOPLE

The Day of Atonement ceremony in Leviticus 16 draws together everything that we’ve previously looked at in Leviticus (sacrifices, a select priesthood, the idea of being clean/unclean and able/unable to safely be in proximity to God). Once again, this is *God’s* initiative, who desires to make things safe enough for him to dwell among his chosen people!

Revisit the question of how people meet with God. Do they do this with reverence? flippantly? with no real regard for the issues (and dangers) of being so close to a holy God? with full awareness of the privilege that has been achieved through Jesus as the supreme sacrifice *and* perfect high priest? Keep using those two key questions: what remains the *same*, OT → NT? and what *changes* or *develops* as the Bible unfolds?

One way to achieve this might be to seek responses to each of the four issues discussed in the sermon and tabulated above. How do we view our past sins? our future sins? where God is now? our access to God?

FROM UNDERSTANDING TO APPLICATION

The book of Hebrews itself is keen to help Christian believers to celebrate the full access that we have into God’s presence. The key sections of that written sermon are found in Hebrews 4:14–16 and 10:19–25. As a group (or in two groups) look at each passage and see what it has to contribute to Christian confidence. Are there any hints for what this should look like in practice? Brainstorm and see how the lessons from Leviticus and Hebrews might enhance our understanding of individual and corporate approach to God.

ADDITIONAL EXPLORATION (optional)

Like Hebrews, the book of Revelation encourages Christians to fully cherish what God has achieved for his followers. You might read Revelation 5, and consider one or both of the following:

- What *themes* does Revelation 5 pick up from our last four weeks in Leviticus (i.e. Leviticus 1–16)?
- What *responses* might Revelation 5 (and other parts of the New Testament) suggest to us? Comply!

What does each passage contribute to each of the following four topics?

	Leviticus 16	Hebrews 9
removal of past sins?		
forgiveness of future sins?		
God dwelling among his people?		
access to God?		