

An Enduring Hope

Week 1: The True King's Table

CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- Where do you feel most at home?
- When have you felt least at home? What did you do to endure that time?

TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

This week, we're beginning our series *An Enduring Hope*.

Throughout this series, we'll be reading from the book of Daniel. This week we're in the first chapter of Daniel, learning that *enduring hope begins at the true King's table*.

TURNING AWAY

READ: Daniel 1:1-16

DISCUSS: In your own life, what is the "king's food" and the "king's drink" that you need to turn away from?

There's nothing wrong with food and drink in and of themselves; but Daniel and his friends knew that to maintain their identity as exiles outside God's kingdom meant that they would have to distance themselves in certain ways from the practices of Babylonian culture and from reliance on Babylon's king. We live as exiles too: our home is waiting with Christ and isn't here yet, and we try to live by its rules amidst a world ruled by a different king. What do you think you should abstain from right now, during your own exile?

TURNING TOWARD

READ: Daniel 1:17-21

DISCUSS: What does God give Daniel and his friends? What might He give you?

Daniel's determination to live as God's citizen rather than a Babylonian one led to a far greater blessing—God gives better gifts than the world does, and He gives them freely. What would you like from God? Have you asked Him for it? Are you eating at His table, or at the world's?

GRACE *SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS*

Read Daniel 1:15.

God loves to bless His children. We don't leave His table hungry; we go away refreshed, better-fed than we can imagine. Take a moment and remind each other of God's love for you. If there are any needs in the group—if anyone is 'going away hungry'—see if there's a way you can be vessels of God's generosity to one another.

CHANGE *APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS*

- What is God calling you away from?
- What do you desire enough that you'll be willing to give that thing up?

PRAYER *RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER*

- Praise God for His greatness and generosity!
- Pray for one another that you would be "undefiled", citizens of God's kingdom rather than of the world.
- Pray blessing over one another; pray that God would not only meet needs, but give abundance.