

Worship Material
How we respond to God's call
Materials from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 21st January

Begin with an opening prayer

Faithful God, with Andrew, Peter, James and John,
we praise you Father, Spirit, Son;
with Jonah who you called and sent
to people who could then repent,
we'll do what you would have us do
and speak of all that's good and true.
We'll start today, we'll start right now,
and trust you'll show us where and how.

Amen.

Read Jonah 3:1-5,10

Bible notes

A lot has happened in Jonah's life when God calls him a second time to go into Nineveh. The focus of this part of the story is on the grace and mercy of God: when people respond positively to God's call to repent, God quickly forgives. In fact, what the text suggests is that when the Ninevites repent, so does God; God has a change of heart and mind, and stops threatening to bring calamity on the city.

The story is told without fanfare. Jonah goes partway into the city, begins to share his message, the people hear it and change their ways, so God relents from threatening to bring calamity. End of story! Except we know what preceded these verses (Jonah and the 'whale') and what comes after it in chapter 4 (Jonah and the plant). In particular, we know that Jonah is a reluctant prophet. He didn't want to go because he knew this is what God would do and he was afraid that he'd look a fool. I wonder how often we shy away from telling people about God because we are similarly afraid of the reaction and how we'll look.

Prayer

A prayer of praise

Response after each phrase:

and we will praise you, now and always.

God of now and always,
you are our refuge and our shelter:
To you we can bring our concerns and our joy:
With your Spirit we can overcome fear and respond to your call with courage:
With you by our side we can be more than we ever thought we could be:

A prayer to conclude

Lord, some things you ask us to do are right up our street.
Some are more tricky.
Some can be downright difficult.
Help us grow in love for you,
and in confidence and trust,
so that we really want to do them for you – and do!
Amen.