

Worship Material
Trusting God when we don't understand
Materials from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 25th February

Begin with an opening prayer

Faithful God, as we continue our journey of Lent, we come together as your family, your church, your people, to worship and to learn from you. None of us are too young or too old to follow you. All of us can be surprised by new opportunities, new challenges, new ways to serve you. We are known by name and cherished as your children, whatever our age, whatever our circumstances, for you call and love us all. **Amen.**

Read Genesis 17:1-7,15-16

Bible notes

The story of Abram-who-becomes-Abraham provides us with the origins of the people of God, the people of whom we, many centuries later, are a part. In Genesis 12, God calls Abram to leave his home, family and country to set out for a land 'that I will show you', with the promise of being made a great nation. Over the ensuing chapters Abram travels and adventures at God's direction, and the promise is clarified: Abram, who is both elderly and currently childless, will have descendants as numerous as the stars. Today's reading from chapter 17 concentrates the promise into a covenant, a formal agreement between God and Abram, with responsibilities on either side. Abram is to follow God – this is his side of the covenant. In response, God will give Abram many descendants. Unlike the covenant made with Noah (see last week), this covenant entails both relationship and choice.

God then expands on this covenant: Abram's descendants will include nations and kings, and they will be given land (v.8). As a sign of this covenant Abram and his household and descendants must be circumcised (vv.9-14) – a common practice, given a new significance. For future generations, performing circumcision at eight days old makes clear that the child has done nothing to earn their place in the covenant, it is all down to God. This is grace.

The changing of names, from Abram ('exalted ancestor') to Abraham ('father of a multitude'), and from Sarai ('quarrelsome') to Sarah ('princess'), is a demonstration of trust. Names, back then, said something about their owners. These name changes are not because of what God has done; they are in anticipation of it. We may not know how God's promises will be kept, but there is a call to choose to believe them nonetheless.

Prayer

Incredible God, we thank you and praise you for trusting in us even when we find it hard to trust in you. **Amen.**

We thank you and praise you for offering us more than we could ever imagine. **Amen.**

We thank you and praise you for making the impossible possible. **Amen.**

We thank you and praise you for all the blessings of youth and of age. **Amen.**

We thank you and praise you for everything – in Jesus' name.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Loving God,

Thank you for the wonderful times,
when our hearts are singing.

Thank you also,

that you are with us in the difficult times,
when we are confused and don't understand.

Help us to feel your presence – at all times.

Help us to hear your guidance and learn to trust you,
knowing that good times will come again.

Amen.