Welcome, opening prayer and worship

[Pray as you begin, asking God to be at work in your group, and enjoy a short time of worship together (e.g. singing, soaking, waiting on God in silence, praying through a Psalm, journaling, etc.).]

Introduction

[Read the paragraphs below aloud to introduce the session.]

In the Land Between course, we are looking at the biblical story of the Israelite's journey through the Sinai desert as a metaphor for being in an undesired, transitional space. Last week we looked at the way in which God provided Moses with a group of leaders to help him carry the burden of leading the Israelites. We thought about the way God provides for us in supernatural ways and in our everyday needs. We learnt that the nature of the father-heart of God is that He loves to provide for us, and He loves for us to come to Him to have our needs fulfilled.

[Ask everyone in the group to name a moment in their lives when good discipline had a positive effect on them.]

Bible study

[Read Numbers 11:10-20 aloud and work through the following questions.]

1. How do the events of the Israelites in the desert serve as a cautionary tale?
2. What was the true nature of the Israelites' offense? How did it go beyond complaining about manna and meat?
3. Read Numbers 14:11-32. What are the consequences of the Israelites' rebellion in chapter 14? How did God try to avert this disaster?

Movie/Audio Clip

[Watch/listen to the clip from Jeff Manion's talk on ‘The Land Between’.]

Youtube link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NkpQyQvGHQ
Questions and discussion

[Work through the questions below.]

1. Was there anything from the DVD that was new to you, or had an effect on you? Did you hear anything that raised more questions in your mind?

2. In what area are you prone to make the same mistake over and over again? How has that mistake caused pain? Have you chosen to learn from the pain and change your direction? How?

3. What can happen when we demand that God respond in our timing and on our terms?

4. Hardship is intended to build trust in God, but in the case of the Israelites, hardship resulted in contemptuous complaint. In what way might God be using hardship (now or in the past) to build your trust in Him? What is your response?

5. People wake up early in the morning to drive to the gym, where they spend an hour with a fitness instructor who leads them through a series of exercises that will challenge, push and stretch them. And on top of it all, they pay money for this! How does the example of a gym help us to understand the purpose of pain?

Prayer ministry and closing prayer

[Close by reading the following prayer aloud.]

We give thanks to our gracious God that He is a just and a fair God. We thank Him that He always has our best interests at heart. We pray that our hearts may be protected against a spirit of complaint, ungratefulness and self-righteousness. Reflect on Hebrews 12:11: No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

[Ministry idea: Pray into the area that you feel God is speaking to you about: 1) In the Land Between what feels like weakening is strengthening, 2) In the Land Between notice what idols God is pointing out in you, 3) In the Land Between be assured that God has a dream for your future.]