**WOODLANDS CHURCH**

**April 22nd 2018. Good Grief**

**Discussion notes: Longing: Romans 8:18-26**

Longing is a bitter-sweet emotion. Longing implies something wonderful exists to be longed for, but the state of longing means we don’t have what is longed for yet. Who hopes for what they already have? Longing seems to be part of the human psyche, ‘God has set eternity in the hearts of men’ says the writer of Ecclesiastes. What part has longing played in your spiritual journey?

1. Paul writes in Romans 8 that we who have the first fruits of the Spirit long for ‘the redemption of our bodies’. What does he mean?
2. Longing may be hard to express in words. What place does longing have in our worship? How is the ‘Not yet’ expressed in the Now and Not Yet of the Kingdom? What place does the Holy Spirit have in our longing (Romans 8:26 Revelation 22:17)?
3. Sometimes the ‘now’ the present moment and the material comfort and business of our lives can quench the longing for the ‘not yet’, the ‘better country’ that the writer of Hebrews refers to. How do spiritual disciplines, solitude, silence, fasting etc help us quicken an appetite for that ‘better country’?
4. Can you describe a time when longing was satisfied for you? What do you think the satisfaction of our longing for intimacy with God will be like?

C.S. Lewis wrote an auto biographical book called ‘Surprised by Joy’ to describe how beauty had awakened his desire for God. What sort of role do poets, artists and musicians play in helping us be stirred in our spiritual longings? Can you describe creativity that has helped you in this way?