

Restraint

discussion guide

based on **1 Samuel 23.7 – 24.22** (Linked to sermon of 6/11/16)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

This was the third in our series on David from the OT – looking at his characteristics that made God describe him as "a man after God's own heart" (Acts 13.22). The aim of this series is to see how we can be people after God's own heart as well.

Intro: (maybe in 2-3s) Describe a situation where you have had to show (or should have shown) restraint.

The context: Up to 15 years elapse between David being anointed King-in-waiting and actually becoming King. Saul (the King on the throne whom God has rejected) increasingly despises David and tries to kill him.

Read 1 Samuel 24. David shows great restraint in not killing Saul when revenge would have been easy.

Up (relationship with God):

God is merciful so David was merciful (v10). See also Micah 6.8; Mt 5.7; 9.13.

Think of some examples where Jesus was merciful, too.

How might focusing on God's mercy to you help you be more merciful to others?

David trusted in God's advocacy (v15). See also Rom 8.34; 1 Jn 2.1; 1 Pet 2.23.

Think of some examples where Jesus trusted God's advocacy, too.

How might trusting in God's advocacy help you be more merciful to others?

David chose to repay evil with good (v17). See also Rom 12.20; Mt 5.43.

Think of some examples where Jesus chose to repay good for evil, too.

How might trusting in God's ultimate justice help you be more merciful to others?

In (relationship with each other):

It's hard to show restraint when revenge feels like a natural instinct. How could you help each other to show restraint?

Are there any other Christians you should share this story with because you think it would speak into their current situations?

Out (relationship with the world):

Think of some situations at work, in your family, or in the wider world where restraint is needed. How could you help bring restraint?

Read Romans 12.17-21 together.

Pray for the situations where you need to show restraint. Pray that 'self-control' as one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5.23) would be evident in your life.

Pray for Christian brothers and sisters around the world who are persecuted because of their faith – that they would know how to respond.

Pray for Christians in our congregation on the receiving end of injustice (through racial discrimination, workplace bullying, domestic abuse etc). Pray they would know how to respond.