**WOODLANDS CHURCH**

**November 26th 2017. Shame Shifting. Family and Inclusion**

**Discussion notes: Genesis 16, Genesis 45.**

Dysfunctional family can be the source of profound shame and pain. The problem with dysfunctional family is that it can seed problems for the next generation. The book of Genesis unflinchingly describes four generations of pain and problems from Abraham through to the life of Joseph. These stories are warnings of what can go wrong in family, but also speak of the redemptive power of God to heal broken family relationships.

1. Where does the responsibility for breakdown in relationships in Abraham’s household lie in Chapter 16? What could each of the characters in the story have done differently?
2. Whose side is God on in the story?
3. Why does the experience Hagar has of God ‘seeing’ her (v 13) change things?
4. Have you ever had the experience of your feelings about a situation changing dramatically because of a revelation that God knows your situation? Can you talk about it to your group?
5. In the life of Joseph family rivalry between brothers leads to Joseph suffering profound abuse and being trafficked. What gives him the grace to forgive his brothers?
6. How much of the hatred toward Joseph is the responsibility of Jacob and Joseph himself? How important is equity and fairness in family relationships?

In Bristol today many families have broken down, and there are terrible stories of abuse and domestic violence. Bristol also will have within it trafficked people and refugees. What can we do as individuals and a Church to work for healing and restoration for these people? What agencies do you know of in the City working in these areas? How about your own story? Are you able to be open about deep hurts and find the healing prayer possible in community?