

# Church Around the Table

*A story from Rachel Sangster, Riccarton Baptist*

Our faith community have had several successful experiences over the past few months, engaging with God and each other on a Sunday morning around tables!

The most recent one was during our series on Psalms. We began by thinking about intimacy. What does this mean? What images or words come to mind? Each person flicked through a magazine looking for something that spoke to them about intimacy, and then shared it with their group and each table made a collage for their table. I asked an 11 year old boy why he chose the swiss army knife. He said, "Because all the parts are close and connected and can't let each other go – a bit like a family".

The Psalms to me are a demonstration of the relationship that God wants to have with us. A deep, personal, intimate relationship. I shared some Psalms that have meant a lot to me recently and over the years have deepened my relationship with God.

One of these is Psalm 46:10. "Be still, and know that I am God." I read verse 1-9 which have images and sounds in it and asked people what they saw/heard as I read it aloud. Then I asked them to make those noises until I raised my hand. Then I slowly said, "Be still, and know that I am God." This was a powerful and fun way to interact with this Psalm.

We had some other verses from Psalms with reflection questions at tables. Someone read the verse and each person discussed what this Psalm meant to them.

Then we had a quiet time writing or drawing our own psalm. I gave out some sentence starter sheets for those that wanted help to get started and blank paper. This was a very special, sacred space and was how we ended our time together. All ages were settled in this space for at least 15 mins! I asked people to leave quietly, when they were ready for morning tea, while others lingered in this quiet space - it was lovely to watch.

People of all ages shared with me afterwards how much they enjoyed this morning together. One first time visitor to the church confessed to me afterwards that he had read his church's email and seen that it advertised a "family service" that Sunday so he opted out and visited us! When he saw tables up he thought, "Oh no!" But he said he thoroughly enjoyed the morning and that it was not what he had expected at all!

